

Public Meeting

Minutes

Discussion of Proposed Fast-track Permit Regulation for Disposal of Dredge Material on State-owned Submerged Lands

March 12, 2019

3:00pm

Virginia Marine Resources Commission

Fort Monroe Office

Commission Meeting Room

Commission Staff present: Tony Watkinson, Randy Owen and Justin Worrell, as well as Sea Grant Fellow, Lauren Pudvah

The meeting was attended by three representatives from local planning district commissions, two from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, one from the seafood/aquaculture industry, one from the University of William & Mary Coastal Policy Center and a representative from VIMS.

Commission staff provided a PowerPoint presentation that covered background leading up to the Acts of Assembly 2018 Chapter 449, which requires that the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) develop a regulation to establish and implement a fast-track permitting program for dredge material disposal sites. Discussion focused on the Corps no longer dredging shallow draft channels, and the desire for local governments to assume this role along with the fact that funding is now provided by the State through the Port Authority.

Commission staff explained that Fast-track permitting can only apply to the Commission's authority to issue permits for use of State-owned submerged land and the fast-track provisions should apply to local government projects only. Currently §28.2-1205.2 of the Code of Virginia establishes a coordinated review process for beach replenishment projects using Chesapeake Bay sand. This section of code establishes time limits for review and necessary application information. As such, it provided a template for the application requirements and review procedures in the proposed regulation. A draft of proposed elements for a Fast-track permit regulation was presented.

There seemed to be general agreement the regulation should only apply to local government projects, and with the list of information needed for fast-track review as well as the situations where the fast-track review would not apply. The draft regulation was generally well received. Comments were provided and Commission staff invited any additional comments the attendees wanted to make following the meeting. Attendees were advised that Commission Staff planned to present a draft regulation to the Full Commission at their April meeting and request a public hearing at the May meeting.