

Would a Megaport at Southport Mean Jobs for Brunswick County?

The Megaport Plan. A marine container terminal, as large or larger than the ports at Savannah, Charleston, and Hampton Roads. The 600-acre terminal site is north of Southport, next to the Brunswick Nuclear Plant and immediately south of the Military Ocean Terminal at Sunny Point, the largest ammunition terminal in the world. Cost has been variously estimated at \$4.4 to 6.1 billion; the most recent estimate, \$6.1 billion, appears in the NCDOT's Maritime Strategy Study draft report.

Direct Employment. The model for the megaport is the APMoller terminal at Portsmouth, Virginia. This is a new, highly-automated facility. It employs 44 to 47 full-time, and 50 to 100 longshoremen when ships call.

Indirect Employment. The North Carolina State Ports Authority engaged Martin Associates to study the direct and indirect employment at its existing ports and at the planned megaport in Southport. They found that the totals of port employees, employees of stevedore companies, the truck-drivers, railroad workers, and related government workers would be slightly lower for the planned megaport than at the port at Wilmington. The difference is due to automation.

The extent to which the planned megaport at Southport would simply move jobs from Wilmington is not known.

Construction Employment. A \$4 to \$6 billion construction project would involve many jobs. But most would be filled by specialist trades brought in by the specialized companies that would do the work. Local workers may be employed at the lowest levels. Much of the wages received during the construction period may go into the local economy, but when the construction is over, the workers and the wages will go away.

Displacement of More Efficient Job Creation. \$6 billion for 200 jobs is \$30 million per job. Far more efficient methods are available for job creation. \$6 billion could construct and endow an entire university, along with associated incubator developments for high-technology business.

Deterrence of Desirable Development The Brunswick County Economic Development Commission Web site and literature have a theme of "Work Where You Play." This seeks to attract quality knowledge and technology-based industries to the area because of recreational and aesthetic values. Introduction of a massive, around-the-clock, noisy and noisome industrial operation sending large numbers of trucks onto our roads would drive those quality industries away.

Deterrence of Tourism. Brunswick County's principal economic driver is recreation and tourism. The County is tenth in the State in tourism dollars. A megaport and associated activities are wholly incompatible with the natural features that draw those dollars.

Displaced Opportunity. Spending \$4 to 6 billion on a single project would effectively take Brunswick County out of the running for allocations of State and Federal funds for decades.