



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### ALABAMA PORT AUTHORITY ANNOUNCES EXTENDED PUBLIC NOTICE PERIOD FOR ITS UPPER MOBILE BAY WETLAND CREATION PROJECT

**MOBILE, Ala. – January 3, 2022.** The Alabama State Port Authority (ASPA) requested and received permission from the US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) to extend until February 3, 2022, the public comment period associated with a planning project to create 1,200 acres of wetlands in the Upper Mobile Bay. The project, known as the Upper Mobile Bay Beneficial Use Wetland Creation Site (Planning) Project, considers an area in the Bay about 1.5 to 2.5 miles south of the Causeway (Hwy 90/98) and I-10 Bayway for construction of wetlands through the beneficial use of dredged sediments.

Technical details of the project design and instructions on how to provide comment to the USACE are provided in the USACE Public Notice. Interested individuals can submit comments to the USACE Mobile District Engineer, Regulatory Division, Attn: Mr. Dylan C. Hendrix at Post Office Box 2288, Mobile, AL 36628-0001 or by email at [dylan.c.hendrix@usace.army.mil](mailto:dylan.c.hendrix@usace.army.mil), or (251) 694-3772. Interested individuals should reference Public Notice Number SAM-2021-00246-DCH when filing comments. A link to the Public Notice is available at [www.UpperMoBayWetlands.com](http://www.UpperMoBayWetlands.com). Copies of all comments should be furnished to the Alabama Department of Environmental Management at [coastal@adem.alabama.gov](mailto:coastal@adem.alabama.gov), or mailed to the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, Mobile Branch / Coastal Section, 3664 Dauphin Street, Suite B, Mobile, Alabama 36608. All comments received by February 3, 2022, will be taken into consideration during the permitting process.

The ASPA requested the comment period extension to provide for increased public and intergovernmental agency engagement. "This wetland creation project is vitally important not only to the Port, but to community partners seeking environmental restoration and recreational enhancement opportunities. As such, we are committed to seeing that everyone has opportunity to become engaged," said Judith Adams, vice president of internal and external affairs for ASPA.

The \$2.5 million planning project is funded by the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf States Act (RESTORE Act)-Bucket 2. It is a Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council-approved project, sponsored and directed by the Alabama Port Authority.

Utilizing dredged sediment to create wetlands rather than losing it to upland or open-water management areas is a wise use of this valuable Alabama natural resource. Benefits resulting from this wetland creation project include improved water quality, more habitat for living coastal and marine organisms, and improved dredging practices that support navigation-related industries and thus the region's economy.

Upon completion of the planning phase, and if successful in securing the federal permit, the Alabama Port Authority anticipates requesting construction funds in 2022 for the first 100 acres of wetlands from the RESTORE Council. It is anticipated that continued monitoring and successful phased construction could deliver an additional 1,100 acres of wetlands over the next 10 to 20 years.

Additional information may be found at [www.UpperMoBayWetlands.com](http://www.UpperMoBayWetlands.com).

**CONTACT:**

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**BACKGROUND**

Each year the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Alabama State Port Authority remove approximately six million cubic yards of sediment from Alabama's federal navigation channel and adjacent public berths. Current practices place dredged materials in permitted open-water or upland management areas. These valuable sediments can be used to create wetlands and habitat. Current Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) wetland mapping indicates there are 6,200 acres of wetlands (emergent marsh) in the Upper Mobile Bay/Lower Mobile-Tensaw Delta area. By constructing this project, dredged materials tested and determined suitable for open-water disposal in accordance with the Southeast Regional Implementation Manual (SERIM) Requirements and Procedures for the Evaluation of Ocean Disposal of Dredged Material in the Southeastern U.S. Atlantic and Gulf Coast Waters could remain in the Upper Mobile Bay system, increasing these important wetland habitats by 15 percent.