



27 July 2018 Port Aransas Conservancy

In his interview with the *Port Aransas South Jetty* (July 26) Charlie Zahn [made a number of claims](#) about the Port of Corpus Christi Authority's (PCCA) plans for a VLCC port on Harbor Island with which the Port Aransas Conservancy strongly disagrees. There's also a lot he chose to omit.

Would the ship channel have to be deepened to 75 feet to accommodate VLCCs? Zahn dodged the answer, which is definitely yes. When on May 26, 2017 the VLCC Ann made its way past Port Aransas to Occidental Petroleum's facility in Ingleside it had to arrive almost empty and at high tide. Even then its wake almost swamped those fishing on the south jetty [as the newspaper photo on our site shows](#). A Port commissioned study in 2015—which they've chosen not to publicize—showed substantial wake damage to Cline's Point Marina from ships far smaller than a VLCC.

There's no way they're going to load one of these behemoths by dredging another seven feet. Zahn's saying "Everyone is a little ahead of the game, talking about 75 feet" is disingenuous at best. It's a sure bet that environmental impacts will take a distant second place to the big bucks a VLCC port would put in PCCA's bank account.

Zahn also extolled the virtues of spinning VLCCs around in the Port Aransas Inner Basin just off the tip of Harbor Island. Aside from the massive traffic jam that would create for commercial fishing and recreational boats, in [Coast Pilot 5 \(San Luis Pass to the Rio Grande\)](#) the Coast Guard warns specifically about traffic conflicts in the Aransas Pass Inner Basin area: "The Coast Guard advises vessels to exercise particular caution where the channel intersects the alternate route of the Intracoastal Waterway at Lydia Ann Channel, about 1.6 miles above the entrance jetties [aka the Inner Basin]...Situations resulting in collisions, groundings, and close quarters passing have been reported by both shallow and deep-draft vessels."

We don't believe any of Zahn's claims about how little impact the terminal would have. Check our web site for the Port's plans for [Deepport](#), its previous shot at this.

We're urging the construction of an offshore oil terminal. "It's not feasible" according to Zahn. Bologna. The [Louisiana Offshore Oil Port \(LOOP\)](#) has been in operation since 1982 without incident. Houston and Brownsville are building offshore ports. Instead of being forward looking PCCA is being characteristically obstinate.

We urge the city and citizens of Port Aransas to join us in opposing a VLCC terminal on Harbor Island.