

SUMMARY

Execution of maritime infrastructure projects has recently become difficult in Finland and all over the developed world because of environmental issues. The permitting of the projects may now take a decade and the outcome is unpredictable. Heavy conditions are routinely imposed on projects.

Analysis of the scale of the environmental impacts connected to the projects indicates modest impacts. Some typical environmental details that have been used to hamper the projects are shown to be blown out of proportions. Thus there is no real justification to the recent development.

However, power theory provides an explanation. The recently built jungle of legislation, guidelines and interpretations has increased ecobureaucratic power significantly. This power is multiplied by the opportunity of sinking a project into a lengthy permitting process using the justice system.

Power is sweet and cognitive dissonance is a further obstacle for the bureaucratic elite to change course. The social and economic consequences of this sociological process are dire.