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Delaware river ship arrivals continue to increase

Despite changing tariffs, 2025 vessel arrivals exceeded previous year

Despite uncertainty in the world market throughout 2025, Delaware River vessel arrivals finished on a positive note compared to 2024. The year started with a strong vessel count in January, but quickly demonstrated year-over-year losses as arrival numbers fell in February through March. Undoubtedly, the ever-changing tariff landscape coupled with a potential labor strike in January contributed to the decline. However, by the end of the year, vessel arrivals finished two more than in 2024.

Vessel arrivals continued to decline for the first half of the year, but fortunately rebounded in June and demonstrated growth over 2024 for the remainder of the year. Containerized cargo and fruit held the top commodity types for import cargo into the region, with containers and vehicles on the export side.

On the import side, arriving container vessels finished at 850, up 8 ships from last year. Fruit vessels showed the largest increase with 46 additional vessels to finish at 296, and the petroleum industry increased by one vessel, closing the year at 275. The total value of

imported goods to the region was \$124.7B representing over 34.2M metric tons.

For exports, container vessels demonstrated the biggest increase with 56 additional vessels, closing at 1100, and vehicle export ships increased to 75, up by 22 ships over 2024. The total amount of exports for the region was over 1.5M tons, totaling \$16.5M in value.

It should be noted that although the Delaware River showed a slight increase in the number of vessels arriving to its ports, the tonnage and value of import cargo to the region decreased by 1.94% or approximately \$3.5 billion. In comparison, export tonnage increased 22.6% or \$2.9 billion. Overall, the region saw a 1% drop in total tonnage and \$619 million in value moving through the port complex.

The Exchange anticipates a modest increase in arriving vessels for the coming year. The Maersk TA3 weekly service and the new Philadelphia cruise terminal will certainly contribute to a successful year.

continued on page 8

Data Gathering Initiative wins international award!



The Exchange's Delaware River and Estuary Ecosystem Data Gathering Initiative gained international recognition when the Environmental Business International Inc., or EBI, awarded Mott MacDonald a Business Achievement Award in the Technology category for the DGI system. The project team included ICI Innovations who developed the DGI web platform, Normandeau Associates, Environmental Research and Consulting, and Verdantas, who contributed their expertise on GIS, Atlantic Sturgeon, Critical Habitat, obtaining approvals under the Endangered Species Act, fisheries, sediments, maritime construction needs and Best Management Practices.

Since 1988, EBI has been generating strategic market intelligence on emerging opportunities in the environmental and climate change industries. With more than 32 years of environmental market research and analysis in all key industry segments, EBI provides proprietary information for executives, investors, policymakers, and management consulting firms in the form of business journals, environmental industry summit meetings, research reports, and statistical data packs. Each year, EBI and its award selection committee present Business Achievement Awards in several categories to worthy recipients in the environmental and climate change industries.

EBI will formally present the award at the Environmental Industry Summit XXIV in San Diego from April 1-3, 2026.

The maritime industry, by standard practice, conducts its business at the land and water interface and into highly prized coastal ecosystems. Estuaries and oceans and associated habitats like wetlands, provide humans with food, recreation, employment, and trade opportunities.

continued on page 17

USACE holds Keel Laying Ceremony for "Donnelly"



The new dredge is named after the late Ray Donnelly, who retired as chief of resource management for the USACE Philadelphia District in 2020 after a 44-year career with both the U.S. Navy and USACE. The vessel will replace the Dredge "McFarland" and is on track to be placed into service in fiscal year 2028. *Photo courtesy of Eastern Shipbuilding Group.*

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers representatives Stephen L. Hill (center), headquarters director of operations and regulatory programs, and Lt. Col. Ryan A. Baum, Philadelphia District commander, pose with Russ Donnelly (far right), son of the ship's sponsor, and shipbuilding project partners while holding commemorative plaques to celebrate the keel laying of the Dredge "Donnelly" at Eastern Shipbuilding Group's Allanton Road Shipyard in Panama City, Florida on January 22, 2026.

Electronic Export Manifest mandate process commences

On February 10, 2026, U.S. Customs and Border Protection formally announced its proposal to mandate the use of its Electronic Export Manifest system to satisfy federal reporting requirements for outbound cargo from the United States. In the Federal Register Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, CBP would also require the transmission of export cargo data prior to departing the country.

On December 1, 2025, CBP retired the use of the Document Image System, or DIS, as a method for submitting outbound cargo documentation. Beginning on that date, the agency no longer accepted Form 1302A, Form 168, or associated documents via DIS, and carriers needed to transition to the Electronic Export Manifest system pilot program or submit a hard-copy filing.

For many industry partners, the discontinuation of DIS as a filing method sounded the alarm bell that a proposed rule was finally on the horizon.

"CBP has been promising for several years that mandatory electronic filing was coming," said Exchange Chief Administrative Officer Michael Fink. "We had many discussions over the years with CBP at the Customs Electronic Systems Action Committee about this very topic, but the ruling was continually delayed. Here at the Exchange, the announcement ending the use of DIS in December gave us a pretty good idea that we might see it soon."

In addition to the mandatory filing requirement, CBP will also modify the submission timeframes. An initial filing would be required as early as practicable, but no later than 24 hours prior to loading of cargo on the outbound conveyance from the port of export, with the remaining data to be transmitted at least two hours prior to departure. This represents a major change as the current regulations allow filers, with some exceptions,

continued on page 9



Think Global, Act Local

On entering this new year (that just so happens to be the nation’s 250th anniversary), we have heard words like “uncertainty” and “instability” used to describe the global markets. As members of the maritime trade industry, we are both custodians of and participants in that market; we are therefore both responsible for and affected by the consequences of that uncertainty and instability. Which begs the question: How can we best navigate the coming year to ensure we do our best for ourselves, our industry, and our global community?

The country’s historic anniversary (our semi-quincentennial if you want the ten-dollar word) warrants a look back to the past and its frequent tumultuous times. The Maritime Exchange’s 150 years of archives are replete with descriptions of one global issue after another and their negative effects on local companies. From the stealing of U.S. merchant mariners for British

ships to the embargoes of U.S. goods, we have been through the turmoil that comes with international trade before and have pushed forward on through to today. In other words, while decidedly not unchallenging, these times are also not so unprecedented as some alarm-raisers would ask you to believe. During other such turbulent times in business in our country’s history, sticking to one’s long-term plans and only making minor changes to immediate items appears to have been the best advice throughout such periods. Moreover, leaning on our friends and partners at the local level can keep our industry focused and on the right track to weather whatever storms are in store for us.

Patrick Geddes, a Scottish biologist, sociologist, and pioneer of urban planning, who coined the phrase "think globally, act locally" in 1915, believed in working with the environment versus against it. Though originally said about the possible environmental impact of a company’s actions, the phrase later found its way into the broader business world, resulting in multinational corporations working to build local connections to better cater to local culture. Stretching the adage just a tad further, it can be instructive to local businesses like those in our region in finding a way to survive or better yet, plan and grow, amidst these seismic trade shifts.

Fortunately, if you are reading this, you likely already have the best access to a network of local businesses working together to achieve and

maintain positive outcomes for maritime trade on the Delaware River in the form of the Maritime Exchange. Via the Exchange’s own membership in various pro-maritime trade associations such as the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA), The National Association of Maritime Organizations (NAMO), our lobbyists and letter writing campaigns, we keep a national-level pressure on wherever and whenever possible. Our committees and working groups have also proven to be invaluable environments within which any Exchange member can come and compare notes from takes on trade and regulatory concerns to logistics coordination during complex or unexpected circumstances. The Exchange and/or individual attendees do the necessary research and make the relevant connections and keep our ports running the best they can. Local teamwork makes the whole dream work!

While the rough waters do not appear to be letting up for us all, at least not in 2026, it behooves us to keep an eye towards the world but to focus on our local business with the help of local resources; To “change the things we can” as it were, and to do so in coordination with those who share our interests and our fate.

George E. McCarthy

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Our shipping members remember to renew membership

As we enter another year full of uncertainty in global maritime shipping, one thing you can be sure of is that a Maritime Exchange membership is the best way to stay in touch with the Delaware River maritime community and to identify and take advantage of the opportunities available within the industry. With many benefits including an industry calendar of events, job postings, daily briefings, critical shipping data, intra-industry committees, and up-to-the-minute updates that impact maritime trade, a membership with the Exchange is more valuable than it ever has been.

The majority of the Exchange’s existing membership has already renewed for 2026, and that should come as no surprise to those familiar with the organization. As it has done for over a century and a half, the Exchange continues to keep its members informed with the latest changes to federal regulations and policies, and through its advocacy efforts, works to affect positive change locally and nationally using the collective strength and voice of the community.

Members have the unique opportunity to work not just with the Exchange, but with one another. The organization’s various committees and work groups provide a forum through which colleagues, and even competitors, within the industry, can meet and communicate. This level of openness and collaboration allows organizations and individuals to have their voices heard and amplified to policy- and decision-makers who can affect positive change. Key groups such as the Maritime Operations Committee, the Chilean Fruit Working Group, the Cold Storage Facility Task Force, and the Government Affairs Committee identify and actualize real initiatives that benefit our shared community.

To help facilitate vessel and cargo movement, the state-of-the-art Maritime On-Line® system lies at the heart of the Exchange’s operations, providing partici-

pants access to advanced vessel schedules, historical reports, statistics, real-time vessel tracking, cargo manifest processing, stow plan filing, and more. Backed by a VHF radio network spanning the river, operators provide ship-to-shore communication services and live expert phone support every hour of every single day, 24/7/365.

Beyond the legislative actions and online services, the Exchange hosts training sessions that help some members meet required certifications, educational seminars that help orient professionals of all experience levels to our port, and even an answering service.

Perhaps most important of all are the services on the horizon. The Exchange is a dynamic organization that adapts to current needs of its constituents including the services and programs the members need that they just have not quite discovered yet or will need as a result of upcoming legislation or policies. All of the programs and benefits that the Exchange offers—in fact, the Exchange itself—only exist because the maritime community needs them. As new needs arise, the Exchange has and will continue to identify and implement solutions with the help of its members.

If you are among the majority who have already renewed your membership with the Maritime Exchange for 2026, thank you! The organization’s work would not be possible without the support of the many businesses and people that have been the backbone of the organization. If you have not yet renewed your membership for the year, there is still time! Access your profile through the membership portal and pay online or via mail with a check. Please reach out to Yair Farkas at yfarkas@maritimedelriv.com or 267-670-7946 for any questions.

The Exchange looks forward to working with everyone for a prosperous and successful 2026!



Welcome New Members

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hboyle@wacphila.org
www.wacphila.org

USDA appeals halt of Chilean fruit systems approach

In a September 30, 2025 ruling, a U.S. District Court judge effectively reversed decades of research and negotiations between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Chile to implement a systems approach for grape imports from certain regions of Chile. In the decision, the judge sided with the California Table Grape Commission, the National Grape Research Alliance, and the California Table Grape Export Association, forcing a last-minute reversal requiring Chilean growers and shippers to revert to methyl bromide fumigation for all grape imports into the United States.

Rather than undergo the standard methyl bromide fumigation process, the systems approach involves a series of mitigation measures applied at the origin of the fruit including strict guidelines that must be followed by the grape farms, the use of insect-proof packing houses, and a rigorous inspection process in Chile.

The Delaware River saw its first fruit imports under the systems approach on December 18, 2024. Cargo continued to arrive throughout the 2024-25 season under the approved methodology without in-

cident, and Chilean growers were ramping up for another successful season and expansion of the systems approach when the decision was handed down.

At the urging of the Exchange and Frutas de Chile, which represents 200 Chilean fruit companies, the USDA appealed the judge’s decision and started a 90-day period for the agency to present its arguments. Unfortunately, the judge’s decision has not yet been stayed while the appeal process plays out, and trading partners have been forced to revert to pre-systems approach plans.

“Not only is the overall decision truly disappointing given the amount of work that went into the systems approach approval,” said Exchange President George E. McCarthy. “But the timing is terrible. Issuing a ruling at the beginning of a growing season negatively affects not only the Chilean growers, but has consequences to U.S. terminal operators and warehouses that now must accommodate additional fumigation quantities. We’ll continue to work with our members and Frutas de Chile to advocate for the reinstatement and expansion of the systems approach allowance.”

Delaware River 101 continues to educate Delaware River stakeholders



After delays due to the protracted federal government shutdown in October and November, the Exchange’s Delaware River 101 program was held on December 9, 2025 at Geodis’s office in the Navy Yard. Over 30 Delaware River maritime industry professionals attended to learn about how our river works and the many different businesses, agencies, and disciplines that work in tandem to keep our regional trade flowing. Pictured (l-r): Ed Fitzgerald, Emily Roberts, and John Rowan field questions from the audience following their panel on port jobs.



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Meet Kyle Reynolds

Maritime Exchange IT Manager



The Exchange is pleased to welcome aboard Kyle Reynolds as its newest team member and Information Technology Manager. Kyle brings extensive IT experience in both military and civilian environments and continues to serve in the Pennsylvania National Guard.

As part of his responsibilities in the National Guard, he led an IT field support team overseeing signal systems and terminal devices, ensuring reliable operation of radio and data distribution networks. In his recent deployment as Security Forces Communications NCOIC at Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti, Africa, Kyle managed over \$1 million in technology assets, implemented new standard operating procedures for asset tracking, and allocated, maintained, upgraded, and life-cycled all necessary telecommunications and IT equipment while providing first-line technical support to 129 personnel.

Kyle is no stranger to the transportation logistics industry. He served as Senior Operations Manager for American Freight Distribution where he had oversight into distribution center operations including shipping/receiving, HR, facilities, expense control, and full P&L management. In his position, he coordinated weekly truck logistics and routing, optimizing transportation plans to cost-effectively replenish over 100 locations.

In his role at the Exchange, Kyle is responsible for overseeing the organization's IT infrastructure, including computer systems, networks, and software. He will implement and maintain technology to meet business goals, manage IT contractors and vendors, and ensure data security. Kyle will be involved in strategic planning, budget management, vendor supervision, and proactive troubleshooting to ensure smooth and secure operations.

"It is with great enthusiasm that I join the Maritime Exchange crew," said Kyle. "As the IT Manager, I am excited to make meaningful contributions to the organization's development while continuing my lifelong pursuit of professional and educational growth. I look forward to growing with the organization through both smooth sailing and rough seas."

Achieving Summa Cum Laude, Kyle has a BA in Political Science/Analysis from West Chester University. He is certified in Computer Information Systems from CCIU Technical College High School and completed U.S. Army signal communication training at the Fort Gordon Signal Center of Excellence.

Welcome aboard, Kyle!

Get involved and make a difference!

Joining the Exchange is not just about being added to mailing lists to receive critical port announcements and gaining access to the Maritime On-Line port community portal, although those are very good reasons to do so. It is an opportunity to get engaged, make your voice heard, and to help make a difference in our business community. The best way to do that is to join a committee or working group.

Through its active groups, the Exchange provides opportunities for members to connect with the tristate region's federal law enforcement and regulatory partners, colleagues throughout the region, and even competitors to engage in meaningful and constructive dialogue to affect change for the betterment of the port as a whole. When the Delaware River succeeds and becomes more competitive, business opportunities for all members increase.

Maritime Operations Committee

The Maritime Operations Committee includes Exchange members from the agent, steamship line, broker, terminal, and other sectors within the port community. Mem-

bers meet semi-annually, or more if appropriate, to discuss significant federal and local regulatory issues relating to cargo and vessel processing. Representatives of key federal agencies, such as the Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and Department of Agriculture are on hand to provide critical updates and listen to industry concerns.

Chilean Fruit Working Group

Now in its fourth season, the Exchange's successful Chilean Fruit Working Group explores ways to improve pre-season planning and enhance communication between local supply chain partners and overseas counterparts before and during vessel and cargo operations. Of equal importance is the dialogue between local transportation partners—terminals, fumigators, storage facilities, and others to help anticipate, and thus minimize, bottlenecks and improve operations overall. The group kicked off with its first meeting of the season in November and will continue to meet bi-weekly or weekly as the season ramps up.

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How can AI help with document management?

By: Corey Tucker, President
ICI Innovations

Do you use SharePoint Online to manage and share documents? Most organizations do, as Microsoft’s collaboration platform has become ubiquitous with remote and distributed work. But while SharePoint makes it easy to store information online, many users still struggle to know where to put documents or how to find them later. The result is often the same problem that existed before: bloated folder structures, unclear naming conventions, duplicated files, and outdated or inconsistent permissions, only now migrated into the cloud.

Despite migration improving issues like duplication and access control, organizations often omit the long-term guardrails needed to prevent the same disorder from recurring. People continue using SharePoint with familiar habits, and over time the system becomes just as confusing as traditional file servers.

SharePoint Online does provide affordable and powerful enterprise document management features, but these capabilities are often underutilized. The main barriers are implementation effort and overcoming organizational inertia. Instead of relying on folders and manual naming standards, SharePoint is designed around metadata (aka. document properties) and

searching. Documents are uploaded to libraries and classified by type, such as contracts, engineering drawings, or studies, along with additional required or optional properties. Searches then become far more precise, allowing users to filter by document type, revision number, author, title, keywords, or other structured fields.

However, this approach requires significant upfront configuration and a commitment to analyzing and categorizing documents. Organizations may find this too slow or expensive, especially if it depends on specialized staff or consultants. As a result, many revert to the less effective but familiar folder-based approach.

This is where artificial intelligence can help. While AI is excellent at searching and summarizing scattered content across the internet or within Microsoft 365, it does not replace SharePoint’s efficiency when metadata is properly used. Users usually know exactly what they are looking for—such as a company name, document number, or specific keywords—so structured, property-driven search remains the best foundation.

AI’s real value is in making metadata easier to apply. Instead of requiring users to manually classify every document, AI can analyze each upload,

extract key properties, and suggest default metadata values. With accuracy often exceeding 80%, users can quickly review and adjust the extracted values, ensuring documents are consistently searchable with minimal effort.

Some initial configuration is needed to align the AI system with an organization’s document standards and test extraction performance. Once in place, adoption can be rapid, and accuracy improved over time through machine learning as more documents are processed.

AI can also enhance the search experience after results are returned. Even with metadata-based searching, users may still need to open multiple documents to determine which contains the required information. AI tools can summarize or answer questions across the set of retrieved documents, helping users identify the right file(s) quickly. When AI is constrained to only use information contained within the documents themselves, AI hallucinations may be eliminated and responses can be fully citable and trustworthy.

By combining innovative AI capabilities with SharePoint Online’s proven metadata and search framework, organizations can achieve a cost-effective solution that greatly improves how staff find, trust, and share critical information.



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The Port of Philadelphia breaks ground on new cruise terminal

On December 2, 2025, PhilaPort started construction of the future **PhilaPort Cruise Terminal**, a 16-acre site adjacent to Philadelphia International Airport that will serve as the region’s newest gateway for cruise travel beginning in April 2026. The announcement marks a major milestone in the partnership between PhilaPort and Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings (NCLH), which named Philadelphia as its newest Homeport back in July 2024.

The terminal’s inaugural season will begin during a historic year. As the U.S. celebrates its 250th anniversary in 2026, Philadelphia will host a wide range of nationally significant events and tourism experiences. Launching Norwegian Cruise Line’s seasonal sailings to Bermuda and other destinations during this commemorative year will give travelers a new way to experience both the city’s deep maritime heritage and its vibrant modern culture.

“This is a unique opportunity, and we are fortunate to have two outstanding partners in Energy Transfer and Norwegian Cruise Line, both of whom see tremendous potential in Philadelphia,” said Jeff Theobald, PhilaPort Executive Director and CEO. “It took a lot of hard work to bring this agreement together, and Energy Transfer and Norwegian Cruise Line were committed every step of the way. We have a lot of hard work ahead of us, but we are ready and excited to welcome cruise passengers this spring.”

The new terminal is the result of coordinated efforts and partnership among PhilaPort, Norwe-

gian Cruise Line Holdings, and Energy Transfer Marketing and Terminals. PhilaPort and ETMT finalized the agreement of sale of property for the site in Tinicum Township, formerly known as the Hog Island Dock Terminal Facility, clearing the way for its redevelopment. PhilaPort will manage all marine-side improvements, while NCLH will lead the land-side construction and development of the terminal. Under a seven-year berthing agreement running from April 15, 2026 through March 31, 2033, NCLH’s cruise brands will operate as Philadelphia’s exclusive homeport with an initial commitment of 41 sailings per year.

Cruise operations at the new terminal are projected to generate 2,185 direct and indirect jobs and approximately \$300 million in annual economic output throughout the Commonwealth, supporting labor-intensive services that contribute to regional economic well-being.

“Philadelphia’s debut as our newest homeport marks a strategic milestone for Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings and our three award-winning brands, Norwegian Cruise Line, Oceania Cruises, and Regent Seven Seas Cruises,” said Daniel Farkas, Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Chief Development Officer at Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings. “Together with PhilaPort, we’re expanding access to exceptional cruise experiences, connecting guests to world-class destinations with the convenience of sailing from a city rich in American history. As we prepare to launch in 2026, this terminal

represents the next wave in our commitment to innovation, regional growth, and delivering an unmatched guest experience from ship to shore.”

Additional information regarding construction schedules, project milestones, and terminal amenities will be shared as development progresses.

“The PhilaPort Cruise Terminal will help fulfill a key commitment in our strategic plan, Destination 2040, to make PhilaPort a multi-faceted port rather than one focused solely on cargo,” said Michael Pearson, Chairman of the PhilaPort Board of Directors. “This facility reflects the broader vision for both the city and the port, opening the door to a new chapter of tourism and leisure in Philadelphia.”

The establishment of the PhilaPort Cruise Terminal underscores the authority’s commitment to driving regional economic development and creating new opportunities for travelers. As the city prepares for America’s 250th anniversary, anticipation is building for a cruising experience that highlights Philadelphia’s maritime past and future. With unique facilities, convenient airport access, and an exciting lineup of destinations, the PhilaPort Cruise Terminal is positioned to become one of the East Coast’s most convenient and compelling places to begin a voyage. Passengers can expect more updates soon, along with an unforgettable new way to Cruise Philly First in 2026.

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This recognition reflects the dedication of everyone who keeps the port moving — from the men and women of the on the front lines at PhilaPort’s Packer Avenue Marine Terminal to our carriers, logistics teams, and partners across the region.

Thank you to our entire port community for helping Philadelphia lead the way once again.



PhilaPort

*According to the 2024 Container Port Performance Index (CPPI) released by the World Bank Group and S&P Global Market Intelligence.



Securing a legislative win for ports and industry

On June 12, 2025, Philadelphia City Councilmember Isaiah Thomas introduced a bill that was ostensibly meant to establish minimum requirements for the training of any security officer operating within the city limits of Philadelphia. Although the scope of the work of the Maritime Exchange most often takes place in contexts more likely to be affected by state and federal legislation than local, it was immediately clear that this bill, as presented, would create an environment that was unduly burdensome to many of its members.

As introduced, the bill would have imposed a one-size-fits-all approach to security guard training that would have created financial and time burdens for any business employing or contracting with security guards. The bill narrowed approved training sources significantly such that there would likely be only a few organizations capable of fulfilling all requirements, allowing those organizations to set prices and wait times without consideration of competition from similar sources of accreditation.

These potential burdens could have been amplified even more for our members, as many are already required to comply with federally mandated standards for security officer training. In the original version of the bill, no provisions were made to exempt security officers who already had training and therefore no protection was in place to prevent employers from being forced to pay in fees and time for what would ultimately be redundant training. The proposed restrictions would ultimately reduce the competitiveness of the Greater Philadelphia port community.

Led by the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, the Exchange met with business and political leaders within the city to voice its opposition to the bill. Its initial goal was to stop the bill as written altogether. As the bill progressed through committee, however, the Chamber and its coalition prioritized making the burden manageable for the business community and its interests. Ultimately, the bill was passed in December with significant amendments crafted specifically to lessen the potential toll on businesses and the economy of the Greater Philadelphia region.

The final, amended version of the bill will go into effect on March 1, 2026. The amendments feature major victories including a reduction in the number of required initial training hours from the proposed 40 to only 12. Additionally, a grandfather clause was added for security officers who already had equivalent training so that the beginning of the legislation would not result in a massive security lapse in the city. Companies could also provide their own training and not be required to rely on outside organizations for training assuming their training meets the requirements. The amendments also refine the applicability of the ordinance to ensure it only covers personnel performing true security functions and to avoid unintended impacts on other industries by exempting employers. The final bill and its history are public record available on the Philadelphia City Council website.

Japan & South Korea representatives visit Delaware River



In December, the Exchange welcomed a delegation of leaders from the Republic of Korea and Japan looking to discuss opportunities for trilateral cooperation to strengthen workforce development and maintain regional maritime security. Coordinated through the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia, the visitors participated in the U.S. Department of State-sponsored exchange called the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). Among other topics, the Exchange and the delegates discussed U.S. shipbuilding opportunities and challenges. Shown here are several members of the group that visited the Packer Avenue Marine terminal.

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Cyber Security in the Maritime Industry

By: Steve Harrison, Marine Transportation Security Specialist – Cyber
U.S. Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay

As the maritime industry becomes more reliant on digital systems for navigation, cargo handling, and port operations, cyber threats are evolving at an alarming pace. The Maritime Transportation System is critical to the nation, and disruptions can have cascading effects on supply chains, safety, and national security.

We have all seen or read about emerging cyber threats – Ransomware Attacks: targeting terminal operating systems and cargo platforms, halting operations and delaying shipments. GPS Spoofing: manipulating navigation systems, creating risks for vessel positioning and safe passage. Operational Technology (OT) Vulnerabilities: cranes, pumps, power systems, and cargo handling often run on legacy technology with limited security and no path forward to update. Supply Chain Exploitation: attackers infiltrate networks through third-party vendors and contractors. AI-Driven Attacks: automated

phishing and vulnerability exploitation make detection harder.

What can we do today to stop a Cyber Incident:

#1 Train our Personnel – People remain our weakest link. Adversaries cannot exploit our system weaknesses without a way into our system. As the attacks gain sophistication our people are our first line of defense.

#2 Conduct Cyber Risk Assessments for IT and OT systems. Work with federal, state, and local partner agencies today to ensure a closer working relationship when an incident occurs.

#3 Update Security Plans to include cyber measures. Most everyone has done this but when was the last time you reviewed your plan? The Code of Federal Regulations has been updated for facilities and vessels and outlines the requirements for your plan.

#4 Establish Incident Response Protocols and reporting channels. Again, most of the industry have these in place but do our people know how to recognize and report an incident.

#5 Segment your network and incorporate AI to protect your system. The speed at which AI identifies and blocks intrusions is astounding.

Ultimately, the shift from a reactive to a proactive cybersecurity posture is no longer an option but a mandate for survival in the modern maritime domain. Waiting for an incident to occur is a risk our nation cannot afford when supply chains and economic stability are on the line. By investing in our people, fortifying our digital and operational systems, and fostering strong response protocols, we move beyond simply reacting to threats and begin to anticipate neutralizing them. The security of our ports, the integrity of our cargo, and the safety of our marine transportation system depends on the decisive actions we take today.

Delaware River traffic is looking good

continued from page 1

“Our 2026 projection remains modestly optimistic,” said Exchange Director of Operations, Paul Myhre. “We do expect a slight increase given Norwegian Cruise Lines beginning service in April to the new PhilaPort Cruise Terminal and the increase in Maersk traffic as the line replaced Baltimore with Philadelphia as part of its regular service from Southampton including stops in Rotterdam, Hamburg, Wilhelmshaven, Newark, Norfolk, Philadelphia, St. John, and back to Southampton.”

Unfortunately, it appears that market uncertainty will continue well into 2026. As of the date of this publication, the Supreme Court has yet to rule on the legality of the Administration’s sweeping tariffs, which the President has implemented as emergencies under the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act. The President has demonstrated no indication that he will discontinue his use of tariffs as a bargaining tool for economic and diplomatic gains.

In January, he issued a warning that any country trading with Iran would face a 25% penalty and was determined to thwart a trade deal between Canada and China threatening to impose a 100% tariff on all Canadian imports if it goes through. Because the South Korean legislature has delayed enacting a trade deal

with the U.S., President Trump threatened to impose an additional 25% on autos, lumber, and pharmaceuticals from that country. Although he seems to have reversed course, the President also threatened several European allies with a 100% tariff if they did not support the U.S. annexation of Greenland.

“Delaware River ports have demonstrated a resilience and commitment to success despite a tumultuous and uncertain world market last year,” said Exchange President, George E. McCarthy. “Regardless of the Supreme Court ruling on tariff legality or any new or modified fees imposed by the Administration or the U.S. Trade Representative this year, our ports will continue to grow and strive to bring new business to the region.”



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From the Archives

A port in a storm

As of writing, the Greater Philadelphia region and its Delaware River port community continue a days-long effort to recover following a weekend storm that deposited a foot of snow in late January. The “From the Archives” team investigated snowstorms of the past that disrupted or even incapacitated shipping in the region to see how far we’ve come. A few storms stood out.

From the Philadelphia Inquirer, January 25, 1905 – But few times in the history of the port has shipping of all kinds been so effectually tied up from any cause as it was yesterday from the blinding snow driven by a fierce northwest gale. Up to 6 o’clock last night the records at the Maritime Exchange, gathered from the reporting stations at Marcus Hook, Reedy Island and the Delaware Breakwater, showed that shipping of all kinds was completely paralyzed. Not a single vessel of any kind arrived at the port and none ventured to depart.

At 8 o’clock yesterday morning at the Delaware Breakwater the reporting agent stationed there found the wind blowing at a 53-mile-an-hour clip, while even the craft riding at anchor in the harbor could not be seen through the blinding snow. All day and far into the night the snow came down in blinding sheets while the wind increased in velocity to 55 miles an hour.

Experienced navigators who happened to be in port expressed the opinion that the gale which at times reached the proportions of a hurricane, would probably cause many disasters along the coast, but owing to the blinding

snow nothing may be known of strandings or possible wrecks until the weather clears. Masters of incoming craft would lay off shore as it would be considered hazardous, if not actually foolhardy for the most experienced captain to try to enter the Delaware Capes when neither the ranges could be seen by or the lights by night.

From the Evening Public Ledger, December 29, 1922 – The first real snow storm of the winter covered the ground today with a thick mantle of white after deluging the city with sleet that turned to ice inches deep in the suburban sections.

Shipping is tied up along the entire Atlantic coast, ten vessels being in the lower Delaware Bay.

Wires were heavily hung with ice, and the possibility of danger was increased by strong winds. In many parts of the city signs were blown down during the sleet storm.

Coal yards are being besieged by householders pleading for an immediate supply.

From the Philadelphia Inquirer, January 9, 1996 – Captain Richard Beebe of the Delaware River Bay & River Pilots Association characterized the storm as a once-a-decade event.

“It was pretty nasty here last night,” Beebe said yesterday. “We had wind of 60 to 70 miles per hour with gusts up to 84.”

Seas were 10 to 15 feet and delayed three ships reaching port. Conrail spokesman Bob Sullivan said most of southern New York and Pennsylvania and all of New Jersey, Maryland and Delaware had little or no freight-rail movement yesterday.

Export manifest mandate published

continued from page 1

to submit export manifests after vessel departure.

The initial data set must include bill of lading numbers, cargo quantities, weight, and descriptions, the complete name and address of the shipper and consignee, the estimated scheduled departure date and departure port, and the AES Internal Transaction Number or AES Exemption Statement. The proposed notice includes the full list of mandatory, conditional, and optional data elements that must be submitted prior to departure.

“The Exchange was an early adopter of the pilot program,” said Exchange Director of Operations Paul Myhre. “Despite the multiple extensions by CBP to allow the continued use of DIS over the past few years, we’ve always encouraged our TRACS customers to transition to the electronic format

knowing that eventually CBP would make its use mandatory.”

CBP has given the industry until April 13, 2026 to review the proposed rule and provide comments, after which time, it will review the comments, potentially amend the proposed rule, or issue a final rule to include a date at which time all electronic manifest filings would be mandatory.

“We’re just beginning to dig into the rule, and we have a lot of work ahead of us before the comment period ends,” continued Myhre. “There are bound to be some technical changes, but we are hopeful that we’ve already completed much of that work as a pilot participant. The biggest changes will most likely be operationally focused, and we will do what we can to help our TRACS participants through the transition.”


Members and TRACS participants required to file export manifests are encouraged to contact the Exchange at ops@mxops.org or 215-925-1524 to get onboard with the pilot program.

Port celebrates with Friend of Chile Award recipient




Colleagues of Sean Mahoney, Senior Director of Marketing at PhilaPort, joined him in November when the Chilean & American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Philadelphia honored him with the “Friend of Chile” Award. The Chamber recognizes individuals and organizations whose leadership, dedication, and vision have strengthened the vital trade, business, and cultural relationship between Chile and the Greater Philadelphia region.

Shown here are (l-r) John Ercolani, Chamber President and Vice President of Operations for 721 Logistics; Christina Lista, Chamber Director and International Business Development Manager of Western Fumigation; John Reynolds, Chairman of the Maritime Exchange; Sean Mahoney; Juan Gabriel Valdés, Ambassador of Chile to the United States; CAPT Kate Higgins-Bloom, Sector Commander, USCG Sector Delaware Bay; George McCarthy, President of the Maritime Exchange; Leo Holt, President of Holt Logistics Corp.; and Jeff Theobald, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director of PhilaPort.




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PhilaPort CEO Jeff Theobald announces retirement after a decade of transformative leadership



PhilaPort announced the retirement of Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director Jeff Theobald, marking the conclusion of a transformative era for the Port of Philadelphia. Mr. Theobald will officially retire on June 30, 2026.

Since joining PhilaPort in 2016, Theobald has led the organization through unprecedented growth and modernization. Under his leadership, the Port of Philadelphia more than doubled its cargo volumes, secured over 180 acres of new land for expansion, and implemented strategic initiatives that positioned the port as one of the fastest-growing gateways on the U.S. East Coast.

“Jeff’s leadership has been instrumental in shaping the port’s success over the past decade,” said Mike Pearson, Chairman of the Philadelphia Regional Port Authority Board of Directors. “His vision and ability to execute complex projects have transformed PhilaPort into a world-class gateway. We thank Jeff for his dedication and wish him the very best as he begins this next chapter.”

During Theobald’s tenure, PhilaPort completed the Delaware River Deepening Project, enabling larger vessels to call Philadelphia. The port expanded terminal capacity and invested heavily in infrastructure improvements, driving efficiency and competitiveness. Cargo

volumes reached record-breaking levels thanks to new shipping services and global partnerships, while sustainability initiatives advanced environmental stewardship for the future.

In addition to these accomplishments, Theobald guided PhilaPort to become financially self-sustaining, eliminating its reliance on a state operating subsidy for the first time in its history. He also oversaw nearly \$1 billion in capital projects, modernizing facilities and constructing nearly 500,000 sq. ft. of new warehouse space.

Reflecting on his tenure, Theobald stated:

“It has been an honor to lead PhilaPort during such an exciting period of growth and transformation. When I arrived in 2016, we set ambitious goals to modernize our facilities, deepen the channel, and attract new global partners and together, we achieved them. I am proud that we not only expanded our footprint and doubled cargo volumes, but also became financially self-sustaining, ensuring a strong foundation for the future. These accomplishments were possible because of the incredible team at PhilaPort, our Board, and our partners throughout the maritime community. I am confident the Port is well-positioned for continued success and look forward to watching its next chapter unfold.”

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Coast Guard welcomes new Commandant

Admiral Kevin E. Lunday assumed the duties as the Coast Guard’s 28th Commandant on January 15, 2026. In his duties, he directs operations to control, secure, and defend the U.S. border and maritime approaches, facilitate commerce vital to U.S. economic prosperity and strategic mobility, and respond to crises or contingencies that may come without warning. He leads 57,000 Coast Guard military (Active and Reserve) and civilian personnel, supported by 21,000 Auxiliary volunteers.

Admiral Lunday served as the Acting Commandant from January 2025 until assuming his current duties, directing the initial implementation of Force Design 2028 to transform the Coast Guard into

a more agile, capable, and responsive fighting force.

He previously served as the 34th Vice Commandant from June 2024 to January 2025, Commander, Atlantic Area From July 2022 to June 2024.

Previously, Admiral Lunday served as Commander of the Fourteenth Coast Guard District in the Pacific, leading operations throughout Oceania, including Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, as well as activities in Japan and Singapore. As Commander of U.S. Coast Guard Cyber Command, he directed the operation and defense of the Coast Guard Enterprise Mission Platform as part of Department of De-

fense networks. He also led remote and deployable cyberspace operations to protect U.S. maritime critical infrastructure from cyberattack. At U.S. Cyber Command, he served as the Director of Exercises and Training (J7), responsible for training and certification of the DoD Cyber Mission Force—the joint U.S. warfighting force in cyberspace.

A career national security attorney and judge advocate, Admiral Lunday is a Distinguished Graduate of the National War College with a Master of Science in National Security Strategy. He graduated with distinction from the Naval War College, holds a Juris Doctor with high honors from George Washington University



Law School, and earned a Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering with honors from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. He has received multiple personal, team, and campaign awards over his nearly 39 years of service.

Exchange committees provide networking opportunities

continued from page 4

Government Affairs Committee

The Government Affairs committee, comprised of a broad range of member companies, gives members an opportunity to share information and collaborate on current legislative and regulatory initiatives that affect the Delaware River and Bay maritime industry. Colleagues learn about and discuss new legislation, regulations, and policies, help to develop the Exchange’s legislative agenda, and work together to effect positive change. The committee meets quarterly and on an ad hoc basis to review time-sensitive issues as they arise.

Private Berth Dredge Committee

The Private Dredge Committee is a prime example of what like-minded individuals with a goal to improve the overall competitiveness of the port can accomplish. Formed in 2018, committee members tackled the challenge to streamline the permitting process for waterfront construction and dredging projects. Its brainchild, the Delaware River and Estuary Ecosystem Data Gathering Initiative program, or DGI for short, came to fruition in July 2025. The system was designed by members as a centralized repository containing vetted scientific, environmental, and industry data that can

reduce the level of effort required to apply for and approve development projects on the river.

The Private Berth Dredge committee was instrumental in the entire process to develop the project scope, identify funding, guide project development, and test the system that led to the final deployment last year.

Cold Storage Facility Task Force

The Cold Storage Facility Task Force include terminal operators, inland cold warehouse operators, fumigators, importers, and overseas exporters who work with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to improve worker safety. The task force has developed a regional Best Management Practices plan, which Delaware River facilities have voluntarily implemented, and conducts an independent audit each year to monitor compliance. These activities are designed to minimize the likelihood of new, intrusive, EPA regulations.

Other ad hoc groups have been formed over the years to address specific issues, meet a particular challenge, or provide guidance to the Exchange staff on specific undertakings. All Exchange members are welcome to participate in any of the committee meetings – or simply be added to the distribution list to receive updates throughout the year. Contact Yair Farkas at yfarkas@maritimedelriv.com or call 215-925-2615 to get involved and take advantage of our active and impactful groups.



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South Jersey Ports posts highest cargo total Since 2021, expands covered capacity to support growing steel imports

In 2025, South Jersey Ports achieved its strongest cargo performance since 2021 and advanced a key infrastructure initiative by repurposing waterfront warehouses to handle growing steel volumes. Together, these milestones highlight a port system aligning operational capacity with market demand.

In 2025, South Jersey Ports moved 3,418,418 short tons, a 13.9% increase over 2024, marking the system’s strongest year in four years and underscoring the region’s growing role as a resilient Mid-Atlantic/Northeast United States trade gateway.

A major driver of this growth is steel, which has become one of the most consistent and critical commodities in the port system’s business mix. Steel cargo tonnage rose 13.3% to 727,835 short tons compared with 2024, supporting construction, energy, and manufacturing supply chains across the North American Heartland.

To keep pace with this demand, South Jersey Ports has refurbished and repurposed two exist-

ing warehouse buildings, adding 60,000 square feet of new covered capacity specifically configured for breakbulk steel handling, staging, and short-term storage. Rather than waiting on lengthy new construction timelines, the port optimized underutilized structures—upgrading interiors, floor loading, and material handling layouts—so cargo can move efficiently from vessel to warehouse to truck or rail.

This adaptive reuse strategy is a near-term, operational solution that directly supports steel cargo such as coils and plates, which require covered storage, high ground-bearing capacity, and clear, dedicated equipment lanes. The added space allows South Jersey Ports to accept more steel volume without displacing other commodities, improving vessel productivity, customer scheduling reliability, and flexibility during demand surges.

Paulsboro Marine Terminal handled 873,593 short tons of steel, equipment, and containers in 2025—a 57% increase over 2024. Salem Termi-

nal added 111,900 short tons of export sand and aggregate, contributing to a diversified and resilient cargo base. Total vessel calls reached 279, reaffirming South Jersey Ports as a key Mid-Atlantic cargo hub.

Steel imports are now increasingly year-round at South Jersey Ports, reflecting changes in supply chain strategies and importer preference for reliable regional alternatives. Strong rail performance, efficient highway access, and ongoing equipment and terminal improvements continue to enhance throughput across the system.

“By pairing adaptive reuse with continued investment in terminal performance, we’re sending a clear message to steel shippers: South Jersey Ports has the capacity, the capability, and the commitment to keep cargo moving,” said Brendan Dugan, Acting Executive Director & CEO, South Jersey Ports. “We’re ready to support steel customers all year long.”

Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd shift vessel traffic to Delaware River

As reported in a recent customer advisory issued by Maersk, coinciding with a statement on Holt Logistics Corporation’s LinkedIn page, the line announced a switch to its TA3 service, eliminating Baltimore


from the schedule and replacing it with the Delaware River.

Holt issued a similar statement on its LinkedIn page, indicating A.P. Moller-Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd AG are eliminating calls at the port of Baltimore, among several changes to their Gemini cooperation’s North Europe-North America services.

The Maersk route will depart from Southampton and traverse to Rotterdam, Hamburg, Wilhelmshaven, Newark, Norfolk, Philadelphia, St. John, and then back to Southampton with the Maersk Fredericia having departed Southampton on January 4, 2026. At the same time, the Hapag-Lloyd change adds Germany to a growing

list of countries with direct service to Philadelphia.

“A rising tide lifts all boats,” said Leo Holt, President of Holt Logistics. “This transition not only benefits waterfront labor but also supports various ancillary services involved in freight handling and storage.” The change marks the dedication to the region and the Delaware River maritime community. “It’s a big win for Philadelphia, and a harbinger of good things to come,” Holt continued.



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NAMMA will hold “Conference 2026” in Philadelphia

The North American Maritime Ministry Association will hold its 2026 Conference in Philadelphia from August 4-6, 2026 at the Philadelphia Marriott Old City. Seafarers’ welfare organizations have historically displayed remarkable adaptability in addressing ever-evolving challenges, and NAMMA aims to empower these organizations in their mission to serve effectively. Over 125 delegates are expected from both local and international seafarers’ welfare groups, and partners within the broader maritime community are welcome to attend.

The local sponsor for this event is the Seamen’s Church Institute of Philadelphia & South Jersey, a trusted presence in Greater

Philadelphia since 1843. With deep historic roots serving seafarers in the region, SCI has evolved over time to meet the changing needs of maritime workers—transitioning from a floating chapel on the Delaware River to a full-service facility in Center City and now operating out of the Philadelphia Navy Yard. Today, SCI continues its mission through mobile shipboard services, offering hospitality, advocacy, and support to seafarers arriving in the Port of Philadelphia and wider region.

Registration for the event is coming soon which will be posted to the Maritime Exchange community calendar. For more information, please contact executivedirector@namma.org.

PhilaPort closes 2025 with record container volume, leading U.S. East Coast growth

PhilaPort capped off a milestone year in 2025, posting record container throughput and outperforming national and regional trade trends to remain a leader among U.S. East Coast container ports. It handled a record 889,268 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) in 2025, representing a 6% year-over-year increase in container volume. This result exceeded overall U.S. trade growth projections of approximately 3%, underscoring Philadelphia's continued strength in the container market. Since 2020, PhilaPort's container volumes have increased by 39%, reflecting sustained, long-term growth.

Through November 2025, PhilaPort also outpaced other North Atlantic container ports, which collectively reported more modest growth, compared to PhilaPort's 7% increase over the same period.

A key driver of this performance remains its specialization in temperature-controlled cargo. In 2025, 64% of PhilaPort's containerized

imports were refrigerated, reinforcing the port's role as a premier East Coast hub for perishable goods and cold-chain cargo.

"Over the past several years, we have built an operating environment that competes and wins," said Jeff Theobald, Executive Director and CEO of PhilaPort. "These results show that Philadelphia is not just keeping pace, but pulling ahead, and the foundation is firmly in place for continued success."

PhilaPort's container productivity was further underscored by its recognition as the most productive port in North America in the World Bank and S&P Global Market Intelligence Container Port Performance Index, which evaluates ports based on vessel turnaround times and operational efficiency.

With record container volumes and sustained growth, PhilaPort enters 2026 positioned to build on its momentum and remain a top-performing container port on the U.S. East Coast.

Marine exchanges highlight security role at ports



Exchange Chief Administrator & Director of IT Michael Fink joined other marine exchange colleagues on February 5 to present at MarSec East 2026 in Arlington, Virginia. The maritime security conference brings together among others, port security, marine law enforcement officials, and federal partners to discuss security trends and challenges facing the maritime industry. Curtis Cannizzaro, Executive Director of the Merchants Exchange of Portland, Scott Humphrey, Executive Director of the Marine Exchange of San Francisco, and Fink briefed participants on marine exchange operations and their security role in the port.

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Modernizing Constrained Legacy Terminals

By: Peter Brennan, PE, LEED AP.
Vice President, Ports and Waterways Practice Leader
Urban Engineers, Inc.

Ports across the country are at a crossroads. With increased focus on global trade and economic growth, port terminals are under greater pressure to keep cargo moving and supply chains competitive. In a recent article, the Digital Freight Alliance examines emerging port developments in the U.S. shipping network and notes the rising need for smart, strategic port upgrades.

To stay current amid a changing landscape, terminals need to enhance competitiveness through greater efficiency in equipment, storage, and labor. But decades-old infrastructure and limited capacity make this challenge into a gauntlet. Simple investment is not enough. To remain viable in this changing landscape, terminals are increasingly pursuing infrastructure-focused solutions that improve operational efficiency, reduce physical constraints, and support energy transition goals.

One example of these infrastructure-focused efforts is the historic PSA Penn Terminals in Eddystone, Pennsylvania. The terminal is located between the ports of Wilmington, Delaware, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Camden, New Jersey along the Delaware River. This competitive landscape places increased emphasis on maintaining efficient and reliable terminal infrastructure.

The Eddystone Borough notes that Penn Terminals’ site dates back to the early-1900s, when it served as a major shipyard, where the Sun Oil Company launched its first vessel in 1917. Since 1986, it has operated as a privately owned, multipurpose marine terminal.

Tackling Aging-Infrastructure

In 2019, PSA International acquired the terminal and initiated several capital improvement projects, including a Wharf Rehabilitation and Container Terminal Expansion. Urban Engineers was engaged to support the assessment, design, and construction management of the wharf rehabilitation. PSA Penn Terminals elected to reface the entire wharf from the mudline to the deck with a new wall.

The terminal regularly serviced five vessels per week. At the same time, the rehabilitation was under a tight timeline, requiring completion within four months, before vessel traffic increased for the seasonal imports of fruits and vegetables. Compounding the challenge, were environmental restrictions on in-

water construction, which reduced the available window for bulkhead work to just three months.

Urban designed a combination of drilled steel pipe king piles connected by wide bays of flat steel sheet piles. This integrated system served as permanent formwork, allowing concrete placement between the existing bulkhead and the new wharf face, creating a continuous sealed structure. The pipe piles were drilled into solid rock to provide lateral resistance needed to resist the hydraulic pressures of the new concrete, and new sheeting was installed between the king piles to complete the formwork for new concrete between the old bulkhead face and the new face. Through this innovative solution, the existing wharf was sealed seamlessly and integrated with the existing structure, providing a durable seal and long-term stability.

To limit the stress on the piles from the liquid pressure of the fresh tremie-poured concrete, the entire formwork system was designed with limited pour heights. Many different mix designs, aggregate types, and air contents were explored and tested to develop an appropriate lightweight concrete mix that would not separate or release air when poured at depth. With the formwork and mix designs determined, the construction drawings were phased to keep one berth open



PSA Penn Terminals. Photo courtesy of PSA International

for vessel traffic, allowing even the longest vessels to use the open berth throughout construction.

The rehabilitation was completed on schedule, and within budget, while maintaining terminal operations.

Container Terminal Expansion

PSA Penn Terminals is implementing a multi-phase container terminal expansion that includes infrastructure upgrades, capacity-related improvements, and operational enhancements.

Phase One, which was completed in 2025, focused on transitioning the terminal from a reach-stacker model to an Electric Rubber Tyred Gantry (eRTG) system and installing a reefer container racking system with a 7-deep by 5-high configuration across 10 bays, accommodating 350 refrigerated containers.

Urban conducted a Master Plan Feasibility Study and performed site/civil and structural engineering services for Phase One, which included:

- Redesign of terminal geometry, including yard truck circulation, equipment access routes, and planning for redesigned main and outbound gates.
- Comprehensive pavement and grading assessment, identifying rehabilitation needs to support higher stacking heights and heavier load cycles. Field investigations were supported by low-altitude, high-resolution drone videography, providing precise spatial documentation and visualization.
- Stormwater management evaluation, analyzing existing infrastructure and developing new layouts for conveyance systems.
- Vehicle movement and conflict analysis, modeling multiple vehicle types (trucks, cranes, reach stackers) to ensure efficient and safe operations under the new layout.

Of course, the terminal needed



site information while minimizing fieldwork, reducing the need for personnel on the ground, which improved safety and reduced the risk to port operations. Using this detailed data, engineers updated pavement and drainage designs to meet modern standards and the demands of a busy container terminal. The collected data guided the planning of pavement repairs and the installation of new stormwater systems, providing longer-lasting pavement, alignment with environmental goals, and uninterrupted terminal operations.

Existing subsurface conditions also presented constraints. A pre-existing linear concrete foundation from the terminal’s history as a shipyard, known as the “shipway beam,” had to be thoroughly investigated and incorporated into the design of the new container beam foundations. This required careful integration of new and existing structures to ensure safety and operational efficiency.

The terminal is one of the first mid-sized U.S. terminals to adopt full eRTG electrification, transitioning from a diesel-powered reach-stacker model. This marks a significant shift in yard operations, from individual diesel-fueled equipment to an integrated, electric-powered crane system capable of higher stacking and faster throughput.

The rehabilitation and expansion projects at PSA Penn Terminals addressed specific infrastructure constraints while allowing terminal operations to continue during construction. The work focused on extending the service life of existing facilities and supporting current operational requirements within a constrained site.

References

- Digital Freight Alliance. (2025, August 21). Emerging Hubs Transforming U.S. Trade. <https://www.df-alliance.com/blog/emerging-ports-in-the-united-states>
- Eddystone Borough. (2025, December 29). History. <https://eddystoneborough.org/history/>

to remain fully active throughout the project, presenting a challenge to the design team. Containers were continuously offloaded and moved around the site, affecting topographic surveys, geotechnical investigations, and construction activities. Work had to be carefully coordinated around these ongoing operations.

Digital design tools were used to tackle this challenge, with high-resolution drone videos and digital site models used to accurately assess grading and pavement conditions. These tools provided reliable

SCI to Honor Pa. State Senator Tartaglione

The Seamen’s Church Institute of Philadelphia and South Jersey will honor Pennsylvania State Senator Christine “Tina” Tartaglione as its 2026 recipient for the Spirit of the Port Award. The award is given annually to an individual, selected by leaders in the maritime community, who epitomizes the spirit and humanity of our Ports of Philadelphia and South Jersey.

A lifelong Philadelphia resident, she became only the fifth woman in state history to join the State Senate when she was first elected in 1994. She has since made history as the first woman elected to Senate Democratic Leadership and now serves as Democratic Whip.

For years, Senator Tartaglione chaired the Senate Labor and Industry Committee, where she led efforts to raise wages, strengthen worker protections, and modernize Pennsylvania’s unemployment system. She authored Pennsylvania’s landmark minimum wage increase in 2006, fought to end mandatory overtime for health-care workers, and helped create the Pennsylvania Center for Health Careers to address workforce shortages. She has also been a champion for voting rights, disability advocacy, and public safety and serves on multiple key committees, including Intergovernmental Operations, Legislative Budget & Finance, Consumer Protection & Professional Licensure, Labor & Industry, Law & Justice, Rules & Executive Nominations, and Ethics.

“Senator Tartaglione embodies the true Spirit of the Port through her unwavering commitment to working families, community strength, and public service,” said



Captain David Cuff, President of the Pilots Association for the Bay & River Delaware. “Her leadership reflects the values that keep our Port and the people behind it moving forward.”

Her work has earned her numerous awards, including the John F. Kennedy Memorial Award for mental health advocacy and the Firefighters Friend Award from Philadelphia’s first responders.

“Senator Christine Tartaglione’s immense personal integrity is matched by her boundless determination to help working families,” said Robert Palaima, Exchange director and former President, Delaware River Stevedores. “As a result of these traits, she sees the port as an engine generating quality jobs and a vehicle taking Philadelphia to the highest rank among truly global cities.”

The Spirit of the Port Award luncheon will be held on March 5, 2026 at The Felt Factory, 1523 East Wingohocking Street, Philadelphia, PA 19124. To reserve tickets, please contact Rebecca Pierson at 215-940-9900.

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers publishes 2026 nationwide permits

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers published the 2026 nationwide permits in the Federal Register on January 8, 2026. The 56 reissued and one new nationwide permit in the final ruling are necessary for work in streams, wetlands, and other waters of the U.S. under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899.

“Under President Trump’s leadership, the Army Corps of Engineers has taken decisive action to cut bureaucratic red tape and refocus our mission on American prosperity,” said Adam Telle, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. “Ensuring that American citizens and businesses can chase their dreams and build our economy without needless delays is a clear victory for our ability to compete on a global stage during the 21st Century.”

The nationwide permits, which take effect March 15, 2026, have no major changes from 2021, the last time the permits were issued.

“The nationwide permit program offers the regulated public a streamlined path to obtain timely authorization of activities that cause no more than minimal adverse impacts to the aquatic environment,” said Maj. Gen. Jason E. Kelly, USACE deputy commanding general for Civil and Emergency Operations. “These nationwide permits issued today authorize activities associated with a broad range of project types, while encouraging project proponents to avoid and minimize impacts to the nation’s aquatic resources.”

This nationwide permit authorizes the discharges of dredged or fill material and structures and work in regulated waters associated with improving the passage of fish and other aquatic organisms. Modest changes have been made to some of the existing permits to clarify what types of regulated activities may be authorized with modifications informed by feedback from the public and other stakeholders.

USACE division commanders may add, after public review and consultation, regional conditions to nationwide permits to protect local jurisdictional aquatic ecosystems, or to minimize adverse effects on fish or shellfish spawning, wildlife nesting, or other ecologically critical areas.

Nationwide permit 56 authorizing activities associated with finfish mariculture was not reissued in this final action. Additionally, nationwide permit 26 has not been issued since 2000 and nationwide permit 47 has not been assigned since 2012.

Additional information about the USACE Regulatory Program can be found on the Corps website.

The one new nationwide permit in 2026, is nationwide permit 60.




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Dr. Swenson to lead World Trade Center Delaware



Exchange President George E. McCarthy had the opportunity to connect with Mary Swenson, Ph.D., the new Executive Director of the World Trade Center Delaware, at the organization's meet and greet event in February at the University and Whist Club in Wilmington, Delaware.

The Board of Directors for the World Trade Center Delaware appointed Mary Swenson, Ph.D., as the new executive director of the organization.

Dr. Swenson is the founder and CEO of My Med Choices Inc. and My Smile Choices Inc., global organizations specializing in medical, dental, and wellness tourism. She also served as the founding CEO of GUAVA Healthcare, successfully leading the company to an initial public offering in under seven years.

Prior to and alongside her leadership at WTC Delaware, Dr. Swenson has built a distinguished career in C-suite leadership, global entrepreneurship, and venture engagement, working closely with entrepreneurial funders and venture capital partners to scale innovation-driven organizations.

Dr. Swenson is a published author on Women Economic Empowerment & Success and Medical, Dental, and Wellness Tourism in

the Post-Pandemic Era and is an internationally recognized keynote speaker. She has been featured in Entrepreneur Magazine, U.S. News & World Report, INC Magazine, and The Women's Journal.

Her honors include the 2021 Enterprising Women of the Year Award, the 2022 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Office of the President of the United States and AmeriCorps for volunteer service, the 2023 100 Most Influential Women recognition by KNOW and JPMorgan Chase, and the 2023 Women Elevating Women Courage Award. She also serves on the Harvard University Women's Leadership Board.

She succeeds Carla Stone, who has led the organization since 2016. Building on that strong foundation, Dr. Swenson is committed to expanding WTC Delaware's reach, deepening member value, and driving economic growth for businesses across the state.

Congratulations, Dr. Swenson!

DGI internationally recognized

continued from page 1

Understanding the many regulations and how they apply to establishing or enhancing capital assets on the Delaware River was key to the DGI.

The project digs deeply into physical and biological research, regulations that apply, decision documents developed by agencies, GIS coverages, and a wealth of information available digitally but often known only by regulatory agencies. Because the Delaware River and Bay has been designated as a Critical Habitat under the federal Endangered Species Act, documentation of conditions, impacts and mitiga-

tion are essential to obtaining authorization for permits. In addition to streamlining the permitting process and reducing costs for stakeholders, the DGI supports the effort of documenting ecological conditions essential for understanding how to avoid impacting important habitats.

The Exchange's Private Berth Dredging Committee initiated the idea to establish this type of knowledge source and make it available to the entire maritime community. Their foresight has been acknowledged by EBI through this prestigious award. Stakeholders look forward to more ways to maintain and enhance this powerful tool and provide knowledge important to the community, while continuing to minimize environmental impacts and address regulatory concerns.



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Editorial

America First vs. renewing a work Visa

The nation is experiencing a historic gap in U.S. Diplomatic Leadership. We currently have 102 embassies without a Senate-confirmed Ambassador or, to put it another way, 52% of our Ambassador posts remain vacant. In the years since the American Foreign Service Association (www.afsa.org) have tracked U.S. ambassadorial appointments, they have never seen vacancies on this scale. This is a self-inflicted wound. Stalled appointments and the recall of nearly 30 ambassadors are hobbling U.S. global leadership.

Unfortunately, this is not a temporary situation. AFSA warns that “America’s diplomatic capacity is being decimated from within” as seasoned diplomats are laid off or choose to leave government. The foreign service association estimates that about a quarter of America’s active foreign service officers left government service in 2025. While the diversity of the good work undertaken by our foreign service folks is often unknown to many Americans, it is of paramount importance to global trade.

Specific to our region, these and other cuts to the U.S. Foreign Service, are having an increasing effect on our importers. Renewing temporary visitor (B1) and work (H-1B) visas for our trade partners now requires a renewal interview and the interview backlog is increasing exponentially.

One such case, specific to H-1B and similar work visas, is the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) updating the governing policies to prioritize higher-skilled and higher-paid applicants, with increased screening and significant delays for H-1B stamping, with some required interviews now being pushed into 2027.

Beyond work, tourist, and study visas (termed “non-immigrant” visas), the U.S. Department of State has also indefinitely paused the issuance of any immigrant visas, known as green cards, for applicants from 75 specific countries effective January 21, 2026. This pause is based in the “public charge” concern (requiring a broader, stricter, and more rigorous review of immigration policies), and it too is bogging down an already backlogged system. Further compounding the situation is the giant increase in screening for the revocation of existing visas, an increase of 150%, primarily for overstays and other security-related concerns. All of the above are putting an incredible strain on an already bureaucratic system, now with decreased leadership and staff.

One of the most basic economic principles for any nation is that of “comparative advantage,” which states that a person, company, or nation, should focus on producing goods or services for which they have a lower opportunity cost. These can then be supplemented by importing from global partners that hold the comparative advantage in other products and services. This is literally the most basic component of global trade. Exploit your strengths and work with others to supplement those products and services where you do not hold a manufacturing advantage.

Our apparent current effort to impede the importing of a more efficient product or service in the hopes of (re)creating them domestically from scratch, and solely on our own, is a fool’s errand. “America First” is beginning to edge too close to “America Alone.”

President Kennedy said it succinctly, “Diplomacy and defense are not substitutes for one another. Either alone will fail.” To this we should now add that diplomacy and economic trade are not substitutes for one another. Trade, without diplomacy, will fail.

Waiting for Spring



On January 25, the tristate region and much of the country experienced a significant snow and ice event as a major storm ripped across the country. While the port worked to resume operations and faced the bitter cold during the following week, photos emerged showing the beauty of nature in the face of the storm. This photo, courtesy of Kenneth Goldberg, PE, PMP, Chief-Technical Support Branch, Operations Division at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers shows the hopper dredge “McFarland” post storm patiently waiting for spring.



Photos Welcome

The Maritime Exchange encourages cub photographers in the port to send us their pictures. The Exchange maintains a large library of port photos and welcomes contributions from you, our readers, to expand our collection. Who knows, it might just make the next issue of *The Beacon*.

The Beacon is the official newsletter of the Maritime Exchange for the Delaware River and Bay. The Exchange encourages its readers to submit letters to the editor at any time in response to articles that appear in *The Beacon* or to address other topics of interest to the port community.

Please direct any correspondence, comments, or inquiries regarding the contents of this newsletter to:

exchange@maritimedelriv.com

Maritime Exchange, Attn: Beacon Editor
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From the Delaware River to the Supreme Court



Legal Ease

By: Daniel Wooster
Partner, Palmer Biezup & Henderson LLP

In a past edition of *The Beacon* (Spring 2021), we looked at some notable U.S. Supreme Court decisions precipitated by events on the Delaware River. This column is a follow-up, highlighting some other casualties on the Delaware that have contributed to the development of the Nation's admiralty law.

The "Abbotsford" (1878)

In this case the Court applied a collision-avoidance rule that endures to this day: a vessel overtaking another vessel must take early and substantial action to keep clear of the vessel being overtaken.

The case arose as follows: Two schooners, the "Rosanna Rose" and the "Governor Burton," were downbound on the Delaware, in the vicinity of Fort Mercer. They were sailing against the wind, on starboard tacks, nearing the New Jersey side of the river, with the "Rose" closest to the shore and the "Burton" to her west. It was mid-morning, and visibility was good. Astern of them was the steamer "Abbotsford," also downbound and planning to overtake them by going between them (although there was plenty of water to the west of both schooners). Then, as the "Rose" approached Red Bank Shoal, she came about on her port tack to avoid the shoal, crossing the "Abbotsford's" bow. Meanwhile, the "Burton" was still on a starboard tack and thus had the right of way. To keep clear of the "Burton," the "Rose" tacked again. As she was coming about, the "Abbotsford" ran into her.

The lower court found the "Abbotsford" solely at fault. In an opinion by Chief Justice Waite, the Supreme Court agreed:

There was plenty of room for the steamer to pass to the westward of both the vessels, and if she had [altered course to starboard] a point or half-point at any time within two miles, a collision would have been impossible. As it was, she undertook to pass between the schooners without any necessity for so doing, when it must have been apparent to any skillful navigator that the 'Rose' was nearing the shoal, and would be compelled to come about and cross the bow of the steamer before she could get by on the course she was steering. In addition to this, there was the complication growing out of the proximity of the 'Burton,' entitled to keep on her starboard tack after the 'Rose' must come about. Notwithstanding all these circumstances, the steamer held her course and speed until she had approached so close to the vessel that there was neither room nor time to [take evasive action]. A prudent navigator would have avoided this danger by a change of course or a slackening of speed long before.

These principles have since been codified in the Navigation Rules in force today, namely Rule 18 ("any vessel overtaking any other shall

keep out of the way of the vessel being overtaken") and Rule 16 ("Every vessel which is directed to keep out of the way of another vessel shall, so far as possible, take early and substantial action to keep well clear.")

The "Raithmoor" (1916)

In the summer of 1909, the British steamer "Raithmoor" struck a cluster of freshly constructed concrete pilings that were to serve as a platform for a new navigation beacon in the river. The construction project had been mostly completed, except for capping the pilings, depositing riprap, and installing the actual beacon on the structure. The question for the Supreme Court was whether the incident was subject to admiralty jurisdiction. If it were, the claim against the "Raithmoor" for destroying the pilings could be heard by a judge sitting in admiralty, applying maritime law. If it was not, then the claim could be heard only in a law court, applying common law.

The law was well-established that an allision with an active navigation beacon was indeed subject to admiralty jurisdiction. But allisions with land-based structures like bridges, docks, and piers were at the time not subject to admiralty jurisdiction, and so the owner of such a structure damaged by an allision could not seek recourse in the admiralty court and had to instead sue in the law court.

The Supreme Court took a practical view in deciding that the claim against the "Raithmoor" could be heard in admiralty:

We think that a distinction based solely on the fact that the beacon was not fully completed would be needless refinement,—a nicety in analysis not required by reason or precedent. We regard the location and purpose of the structure as controlling from the time the structure was begun. It was not being built on shore and awaiting the assumption of a maritime relation. It was in course of construction in navigable waters, that is, at a place where the jurisdiction of admiralty in cases of tort normally attached,—at least in all cases where the wrong was of a maritime character . . . This is not the case of a structure which at any time was identified with the shore, but, from the beginning of construction, locality and design gave it a distinctively maritime relation. When completed and in use, its injury by a colliding ship would interfere, or tend to interfere, with its service to navigation; and, while still incomplete, such an injury would tend to postpone that service. We know of no substantial reason the jurisdiction of the admiralty should be sustained in one case and denied in the other.

Congress would later eliminate the distinction between allisions with aids to navigation and allisions with land-based structures. Under



the Admiralty Extension Act, admiralty jurisdiction now "extends to and includes cases of injury or damage, to person or property, caused by a vessel on navigable waters, even though the injury or damage is done or consummated on land."

The "Bohemian Club" (1943)

A federal statute makes it unlawful "to tie up or anchor vessels or other craft in navigable channels in such a manner as to prevent or obstruct the passage of other vessels or craft." This case arose when an upbound tanker, the "Bohemian Club," anchored in the channel due to heavy fog. Over an hour later, while keeping a lookout and sounding a proper fog signal, she was struck by a downbound freighter, the "Laura Maersk."

Since the "Laura Maersk's" speed was excessive and she had plenty of room to pass safely to the west of the "Bohemian Club," the lower courts held the "Laura Maersk" at fault. But the intermediate appellate court ruled that the "Bohemian Club" was also at fault because she violated the statute that forbids anchoring in a navigable channel in a manner that prevents or obstructs the passage of other vessels.

The Supreme Court disagreed. The prohibition against anchoring in a channel is not absolute, the Court explained. Special circumstances may justify a departure from the statute "where literal compliance with its terms would create a danger to navigation which could be avoided or reduced by violation of its terms." "The Bohemian Club" had selected the safer option by anchoring with the onset of the heavy fog, while still leaving room for a downbound vessel to pass to the west. Accordingly, even if there was a technical violation of the statute, this was not a sufficient reason to hold the "Bohemian Club" at fault.

The "special circumstances" rule of course remains in effect to this day. See Inland Rule 2(b) ("In construing and complying with these Rules due regard shall be had to all dangers of navigation and collision and to any special circumstances, including the limitations of the vessels involved, which may make a departure from these Rules necessary to avoid immediate danger.")).

Notes & News

Maritime Exchange member **Gawthrop Greenwood, PC**, a regional law firm with offices in West Chester and Greater Wilmington, has promoted commercial real estate and business attorney **Gordon W. Prince** to partner.

Prince joined Gawthrop Greenwood in 2019 shortly after graduating from Widener University Delaware Law School and was quickly called upon to guide businesses large and small through COVID-19 federal and state business support programs. He was named Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch 2024, 2025 and 2026, after undergoing rigorous review and confidential evaluations by top attorneys in his field. He has also been named Super Lawyers Rising Stars.

Prince is a member of the Chester County Bar Association and Pennsylvania Bar Association, as well as the **Maritime Law Association of the United States**. He serves on the Board of Directors for the Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce.



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Calendar of Events


02/20	USCG Area Maritime Security Committee General Meeting 9:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m., USCG Sector Delaware Bay 1 Washington Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19147 Contact: Glena Tredinnick
03/05	SCI Spirit of the Port Award Luncheon 11:30 a.m., The Felt Factory, 1523 East Wingohocking Street, Philadelphia, PA 19124 Contact: Rebecca Pierson
03/11	Maritime Exchange Board & Annual Meetings 11:30 a.m. Maritime Exchange Annual Election Noon – 2:00 p.m.
04/08	Maritime Exchange Executive, Committee Meeting 11:00 a.m.
04/09	Maritime Exchange Government Affairs Committee Meeting 10:00 a.m.
04/15	Area Maritime Security Committee General Meeting, 9:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m., USCG Sector Delaware Bay 1 Washington Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19147 Contact: Glena Tredinnick
04/23	Water Resources Association 2026 Awards Gala 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Fairmount Water Works, 40 Waterworks Drive Philadelphia, PA 19130 Contact: Skelly Holmbeck Register Online
05/13	Maritime Exchange Board & Organizational Meetings 11:30 a.m.
06/10	Maritime Exchange Executive Committee Meeting 11:00 a.m.
07/08	Maritime Exchange Board Meeting 11:30 a.m.

For a complete schedule and event details, visit www.maritimedelriv.com.

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