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CBP proposes significant import reporting requirements

On September 2, 2026, U.S. Customs and Border Protection proposed dramatic additions and changes to import requirements, changes that could have significant operational and financial ramifications for importers and customs brokers, among others. The agency issued the "Heightened Import Disclosures for Supply Chain Visibility" advance notice of proposed rulemaking, or ANPR, to solicit comments on what CBP states would enhance visibility into the parties involved in the importation of goods, enhance supply chain tracing through technology, and provide the agency with enhanced intelligence through additional data collection mandates.

The agency claims the proposed changes are "…designed to improve visibility into the supply chains of goods imported into the United States. The proposed effort will help CBP more effectively detect, stop, and prevent illicit imports that evade U.S. customs and trade laws." To help it develop a future Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, CBP posed a series of 64 questions including queries about availability of information, potential challenges, anticipated additional costs, and current tools and processes in place.

The ANPR marks the second major initiative by CBP to meet President Trump's Executive Order to Strengthen Customs Enforcement. The president issued the order on June 3, 2026, calling on CBP to tighten enforcement of importer eligibility regulations and policies, establish heightened import disclosure and certification requirements, and strengthen the agency's enforcement and penalty posture. On September 18, CBP addressed one of the president's mandates by beginning enhanced enforcement procedures to verify the accuracy of import information provided by importers of record or customs house brokers.

Among the key provisions of the Heightened Import Disclosures rule, and of deep concern to Exchange members, is the requirement to obtain, vet, and submit foreign export documents filed with export country customs authorities. Under this universal submission mandate, importers and brokers might be required to supply foreign export declarations, commercial invoices, packing lists, certificates of origin, export licenses or permits, and other transport documents such as bills of lading. This information would be in addition to data already required of the import community.

Stakeholders identified several major hurdles with this potential requirement including foreign document language barriers, lack of information availability, rejection by foreign entities to supply the infor-

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Governor Shapiro announces $837 million investment in PhilaPort to support largest expansion in port's history

Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro and Department of Transportation Secretary Mike Carroll visited the Port of Philadelphia on October 13, 2026 with industry, labor, and elected leaders to announce a $371.5 million investment of capital funding from the Commonwealth in the Port—which will unlock $466 million in additional investment from the private sector and through federal grants to support the largest expansion in PhilaPort's history.



Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro announced an historic port investment at the Southport Auto Terminal in Philadelphia.

Since taking office, the Governor has been committed to ensuring PhilaPort's continued success, understanding its important role both on the Philadelphia waterfront and as a global center for trade. These investments will help create more than 6,000 new jobs and generate $45 million in state and local taxes as PhilaPort expands container capacity by 122 percent and auto capacity by 18 percent across the port's facilities.

"PhilaPort has a long and storied history that spans back over 300 years to the very founding of our Commonwealth," said Governor Shapiro. "It was here where goods produced in Philadelphia embarked for destinations around the globe, and today, the port remains a major player in global trade and a critical piece of our economy. My Administration is making a historic investment in PhilaPort to support the largest expansion in its history, allowing the port to significantly expand its capacity and create more than 6,000 jobs. This is a game changer for PhilaPort and it builds on our work to grow the economy and create real opportunity for Pennsylvanians."

For three straight years, PhilaPort was named the most productive container port in the country and in 2025, the port supported more than 8,000 jobs and contributed nearly $1.2 billion in economic output throughout Pennsylvania. To expand their operations, the port will use capital funding from the Shapiro Administration, which includes $31 million to support dredging at Southport Berth I; $145 million for reclamation work at Southport Berth II and the North Wharf; $109.4 million for land acquisition; and $58.1 million to support crane and equipment acquisition.

"PhilaPort is critical to Pennsylvania's transportation network, connecting global trade to local communities, strengthening supply chains

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Interview with

Richard Lazer

Executive Director and
Chief Executive Officer
Philaport



Richard Lazer was recently appointed as the new CEO of PhilaPort. Prior to that, Lazer served as Executive Director of the Philadelphia Parking Authority has earned a reputation as a respected public-sector leader with vast experience in labor relations, operations management, stakeholder engagement, and complex negotiations. Prior to leading the PPA, he held senior leadership positions in Philadelphia city government, most recently serving as Philadelphia's Deputy Mayor for Labor under former Mayor Jim Kenney. Lazer has also served as a member of the PhilaPort Board of Directors since 2019, giving him direct knowledge of the port's operations, strategic priorities, and long-term growth initiatives.

Q: The recent port investment by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is certainly welcome news for the region. Coupled with the fact that Philadelphia ports have once again been named the most productive container port in the United States, what is the secret of the port's success that has led to this distinction and the continuing investment by the Commonwealth?

A: PhilaPort has been named the most productive container port in the nation due to a combination of being uniquely situated along the east coast with easy access to a number of markets via rail and highway; a dynamic union labor force that unloads ships quicker than anywhere else; and partnerships among terminal operators working together to get things done.

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Accepting Change

"Old age and treachery beat youth and exuberance every time," is an expression from the past attributed to numerous writers and commentators, but closer to home, too frequently reminded to me by my father Captain and his Irish humor.

Artificial Intelligence, ChatGPT, one's favorite search engines, E-trade platforms, and the like versus the rapid creation of a Digital Divide, app-only processes, digital-by-default mandates, smart phone device required, all at the increasing exclusion of many. Where will the eventual balance land us and who or what, in current times can we trust with the future?

Taking a step backwards in time, a story of youthful exuberance. According to the memoirs of one Charles Kurz (1888 – 1985) written by his son, Dr. George H. Kurz, M.D., and published in 1987, we may not want to underestimate the imagination and energy of the generations coming up behind us, to the detriment of their future.

In 1903, while working as a 15-year-old office boy for S.G. Simpson & Co., a Customs Broker company at the Drexel Building on 5th and Chestnut, young Charles Kurz took it upon himself to visit the then head of the U.S. Customs in Washington DC and asked for a procedural change. Having been specifically hired for his excellent handwriting, Charles was assigned the task of completing the various entry and related custom forms on behalf of Simpson customers. In that era, U.S. Customs required that all forms be completed by hand in flowery Spencerian Script, the *de facto* standard handwriting style for all business correspondence at the time.

Eventually tiring of handwriting such documents and their multiple copies, Charles formulated a plan. Borrowing one of Philadelphia's first typewriters from his night schoolteacher, Pastor Russell Conwell, (of Grace Baptist Church, later founder of Temple College), he did his best to convince the leadership of Simpson & Co, and everyone else in the Drexel building who would listen, of the benefits of typing Customs documents with carbons (invented in 1907) over handwriting them. None were interested. He then asked permission to submit a set of documents typewritten. The local Customs official returned the set labeled, "All wrong." He then visited the office of the head of Philadelphia U.S. Customs, who after Charles's rehearsed speech and display, replied "you can't change regulations…but I like your idea." Hope was renewed!

With permission from Mr. Simpson, travel funds on loan from Pastor Conwell, the Remington (yes, same company) "Sholes and Glidden Type-Writer" in hand, 15-year-old Charles met with the Chief of U.S. Customs and several of his team in Washington D.C., typing and showing them samples of typed and carboned Customs forms and was told, "you will be hearing within a week that typed entries and carbon copies will be acceptable." Maybe U.S. Customs was already heading in that direction, but should you find this a tale not credible, read the biography itself for Charles's many other incredible accomplishments from a very young age and beyond to the benefit of Philadelphia and the Delaware River maritime world.

Back to the beginning question of this short logbook entry. Perhaps it remains best for all of us to "trust but verify" as we, the experienced, work together with those younger than us, to enable a better future for all.

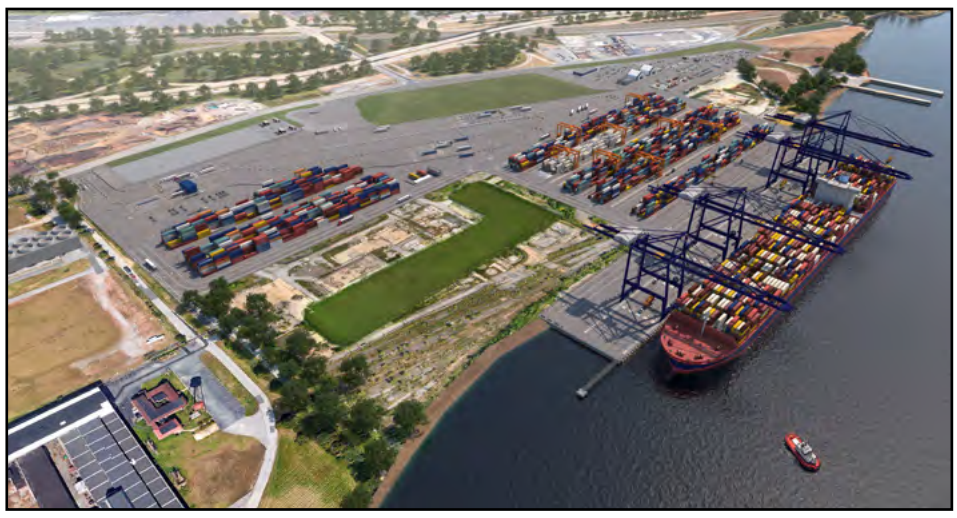
George E. McCarthy



Enstructure, DSPC, and stakeholders celebrate container terminal groundbreaking

Delaware Container Terminal to expand Delaware's container handling capacity and create thousands of local jobs

Enstructure, a privately-owned marine terminal and logistics infrastructure company, and the Diamond State Port Corporation (DSPC) celebrated the groundbreaking of the Delaware Container Terminal (DCT) on September 14, 2026, the upcoming state-of-the-art container marine terminal in Wilmington, Delaware. The milestone was celebrated alongside critical partners and collaborators including the State of Delaware, International Longshoremen's Association, Delaware Building and Construction Trades Council, community stakeholders, and Delaware's congressional delegation. Following a successful multi-year collaboration and planning phase, DCT is on track to open in early 2029.



Conceptual rendering of the Delaware Container Terminal situated at the Edgemoor waterfront. Image courtesy of Enstructure / Diamond State Port Corporation.

"Since my time as County Executive, I've supported the Port of Wilmington and the workers who make it run," said U.S. Senator Christopher Coons. "Our port is an economic engine for our state, and this expansion will allow us to remain competitive regionally, grow our economy, create good jobs, and strengthen the supply chains on which we all rely. I'm proud to have pushed for funding for this expansion throughout my time in the Senate and am excited to see it come to life."

"The expansion of the Delaware Container Terminal at the Port of Wilmington will create more jobs for Delawareans, bolster our supply chain, and strengthen our infrastructure," said U.S. Senator Lisa Blunt Rochester. "I'm especially proud that this expansion implements cleaner energy practices made possible by the Clean Port Program —which I championed alongside my predecessor, Senator Tom Carper."

"This groundbreaking marks an exciting next chapter for Port Wilmington and represents a major milestone that our congressional delegation has been collaborating on and working towards for years," said U.S. Representative Sarah McBride. "The Delaware Container Terminal will create thousands of union jobs, strengthen our state's commerce capacity, and help Delaware businesses compete and grow. This modernization of Port Wilmington is a smart investment in working families, skilled trades, our economy, and Delaware's continued capacity to lead."

"Today marks an exciting new chapter for Delaware. This groundbreaking is about more than building a container terminal—it's about building opportunity for Delaware workers and families," said Charuni Patibanda-Sanchez, Delaware Secretary of State and Diamond State Port Corporation Board Chair. "This project will expand the capacity of our port, create thousands of good paying jobs, boost Delaware's role in global trade, and generate opportunities well into the future."

"This groundbreaking represents the transition from vision to execution," said Matthew Satnick and Philippe De Montigny, Co-CEOs of Enstructure. "Together with the Diamond State Port Corporation, the International Longshoremen's Association, and the Dela-

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Welcome New Members

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Greater Paulsboro Energy Companies generate $814M in economic output, support 2,855 jobs

Rowan University study highlights GPEC as a major driver of the regional economy

The Greater Paulsboro Energy Companies (GPEC) generate nearly $814 million in total economic output and support 2,855 jobs, making it a major driver of economic activity in Gloucester County, according to a new study by the Steve Sweeney Center for Public Policy at Rowan University. GPEC unveiled the study at an event at the Paulsboro Refining Company in Paulsboro, New Jersey on October 7, 2026.

"The GPEC companies are the economic anchor of Gloucester County's port economy, supporting high-paying, stable union jobs and contributing to local property taxes," said Gloucester County Administrator Steve Sweeney, who chairs the policy center. "In these days of international energy supply and price uncertainty, we need an 'all of the above' approach more than ever that supports refineries like these that are a critical component of our national economy and to sustain our modern way of life."

Stuti Jha, Ph.D., and Kul Kapri, Ph.D., Associate Professors of Economics, conducted the economic analysis, working with the GPEC member companies and the leaders of the Sweeney Center and the interdisciplinary Rowan Energy Collaborative on the data-driven study.

GPEC generates approximately $22.6 million in local tax revenue, helping fund public schools, emergency services and municipal infrastructure. GPEC also generated $265.9 million in labor income and contributed $437.8 million in value to New Jersey's economy, the economists found.

"The energy companies that make up the GPEC are a cornerstone of our local and national economy," said Rowan University President Ali A. Houshmand,



Federal, state, and local political representatives joined port business and labor leaders to unveil the Greater Paulsboro Energy economic impact study. Shown here at the event are (l-r) *Buildings and Construction Trades President, Bill Mullen, Paulsboro Refining Company General Manager, Michael Capone, Rowan University Economics Department and study author, Dr. Stuti Jha, U.S. Representative Donald Norcross, Paulsboro Refining Company Lead Community and Government Relations Advisor, Randi Licciardello, Rowan University Chancellor, Dr. Tony Lowman, PBF Energy President and CEO, Matthew Lucey, New Jersey State Senator John Burzichelli, Gloucester County Administrator, Steve Sweeney, and New Jersey Assemblyman, David Bailey, Jr.*

Ph.D. "We are pleased to play a role in sharing their story through this impact study and we are grateful for their leadership in advancing innovation and workforce development alongside organized labor."

Together, GPEC comprises the Paulsboro Refining Company, CPI Operations, PBF Logistics Products Terminal Paulsboro, ExxonMobil Lubes Plant, Repauno Port & Rail Terminal, Sunoco Property, and Energy Transfer Eagle Point Terminal. These facilities occupy a strategic location along the Delaware River spanning Paulsboro, Greenwich Township and West Deptford with access to railroads and the I-295 and I-95 corridors serving markets throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions.

GPEC provides significant tax revenue, wages and capital investment that reaches communities throughout South Jersey. The impact on jobs is sig-

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Exchange Chairman returns to sea



Maritime Exchange Chairman John Reynolds is no stranger to the sea. As a former U.S. Merchant Mariner, Fort Schuyler New York Maritime graduate, Commander in the U.S. Naval Reserve, and long-time maritime business entrepreneur, the sea periodically beckons him back. In October, he joined the crew of Independent Container Line's "Independent Future" to sail from PSA Penn Terminals in Chester, Pennsylvania to Wilmington North Carolina. Shown here are *(left)* Capt. Drew Hodgens, Pilots Association for the Bay and River Delaware, *(center)* John Reynolds, and members of the U.S. Coast Guard on the bridge of the "Independent Future" before she set sail.

Maritime On-Line® getting major upgrade

During the past year, Exchange staff were busy fixing known issues and making minor tweaks to various modules of Maritime On-Line®. This included updates to some of the reports in TRACS, screen changes on cargo entry and in-bond information, and providing warnings for unsaved data. During the second half of the year, staff kicked off a design project to identify a path forward to redesigning the entirety of MOL.

"In September we began work with our developer to complete design work and develop a specification to upgrade the back-end code and user interface of all of MOL," said Exchange Director of Operations, Paul Myhre. As part of this initial design work, the Exchange and our developer are conducting a comprehensive audit of the MOL application—its architecture, technology stack, database, background processing, reporting, and the security model to establish a clear modernization direction and identify additional efficiencies that could be added during the project.

When the design effort is completed, the Exchange will confirm funding and begin the multi-year effort to redo Maritime On-Line. "This work will enhance overall usability, system efficiency, and streamline code that has been updated throughout the years," Myhre said.

"The Exchange is dedicated to providing the best suite of applications we can for our users," said Captain George McCarthy, Maritime Exchange President. "We have obtained Port Security Grant Program funding to pay for a portion of the upcoming project and will work to identify other funding streams throughout the process."

In addition to core modernization, the work will include a list of feature enhancements, including additional printing options for manifests and stow plans, streamlining how entities are entered into a manifest, including shipper, consignee, and notify parties, and additional message board functionality.

The team will look at critical status email processing revisions, update the Vessel Traffic Report in Ship Reporting, and enhance critical information dissemination by switching to an application programming interface or API model to allow better communication and data exchange between MOL and other software applications.

The Maritime Exchange is proud to continue its long tradition of service, superior customer support, and innovative technology. As always, the Exchange welcomes suggestions from system participants about potential future enhancements.

Contact Paul Myhre at pmyhre@maritimedelriv.com to see what Maritime On-Line can do for you.

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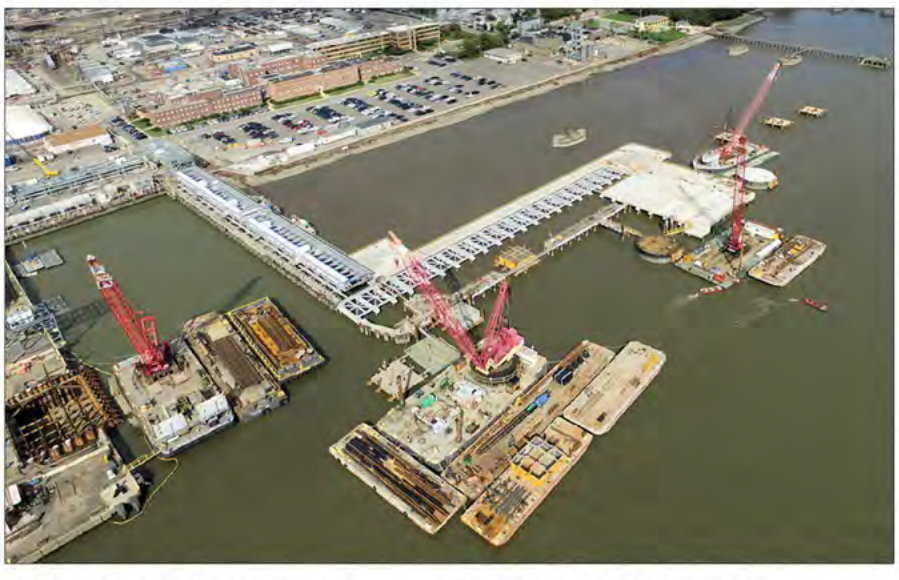


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Reeling in your data

Understanding phishing, spear phishing, and whaling

If there is one thing the tech sphere loves, it is coining innocent-sounding new terms for things that can sink your organization faster than you can say, "It wasn't me." You may have heard the terms "phishing," "spear phishing," and "whaling" before, but what do they really mean? Are they just a bunch of scuttlebutt, or are they critical holes in your organization's hull?

While all forms of phishing follow the same basic format of using a false identity to trick users into willingly disclosing sensitive information, each type is distinctly unique. Phishing, the broadest and most widely used term, typically occurs at the organizational level. The actor behind the phishing attempt will often send a generalized email message that applies to the entire organization, such as, "Your HR department needs you to confirm your banking details," or "Your IT department needs you to update your password."

Bad actors commonly pair these fraudulent requests with a narrow time constraint and a warning that the recipient will lose access, benefits, or compensation if the request is not fulfilled by the prescribed deadline. This sense of urgency can pressure recipients into acting quickly without stopping to ask the appropriate questions.

In addition to traditional phishing, there is also spear phishing, a highly targeted form of attack in which the individual behind the scheme researches their target, gathering information such as job title, responsibilities, current projects, colleagues, and more. They then use this information to craft a convincing, personalized email tailored to that specific individual. The personal details incorporated into these messages can make them seem legitimate, leading the recipient to believe the message came from someone they know and trust.

Now you may be asking yourself, "How do attackers gain the detailed information necessary to launch a spear phishing attack?" Believe it or not, seemingly innocent information posted by a target on websites such as Facebook or LinkedIn can be exactly what the creator of the scam needs. Attackers often begin with an organization's website, combing through pages such as "Meet Our Staff" before researching individual team members to identify a suitable target. A convincing spear phishing email does not require inside access or secret information when everything needed is already publicly available.

As if the waters were not already murky enough, there is also "whaling," a type of spear phishing specifically aimed at high-profile individuals known as the "big phish." These targets are commonly high-level organizational leaders such as presidents, CEOs, and CFOs. Executives must take extra precautions to avoid becoming victims of these attacks, as they are prime targets due to their public visibility, ease of research, and ability to cause significant damage if they take the bait.

While the methods, targets, and bait may change, one thing is certain: you do not want to be on the hook when a phishing line is cast into your organization. The best defense is a healthy dose of skepticism and a willingness to verify suspicious requests before acting. After all, it only takes one team member taking the bait to turn a minor phishing attempt into a full-scale organizational shipwreck.







It's time to renew your Maritime Exchange membership!

There has never been a better time to be a member of the Maritime Exchange. Uncertainty in trade, geopolitics, and regulatory oversight all affect maritime trade more strongly than most industries. The key to navigating that uncertainty is communication, and the key to communication in our local industry is your membership with the Maritime Exchange.

Becoming an Exchange member means collaborating with a respected and successful business team leading member-driven initiatives to make a significant and positive difference on issues that matter to our port. Members turn to the Exchange to meet so many of their information needs—every day, every week, every month, and all year long.

In the coming weeks, members will receive an email detailing how to renew their membership quickly and easily through our membership portal. If you do not receive such an email or do not know the status of your membership, reach out to Yair Farkas at yfarkas@maritimedelriv.com.

If you are interested in a discounted membership rate for the coming year, you can do so by helping to spread the word about the benefits of a membership with the Exchange. Any existing corporate Exchange member who successfully refers a new corporate member applicant receives a $75 rebate on the current year's dues.



Meet Joseph "Joey" Miller Operations Specialist

Joey Miller joined the Maritime Exchange in July as an Operations Specialist, fresh out of college at the University of Delaware.

As part of the operations staff, Joey serves Exchange members and customers, updating vessel schedules and disseminating vessel movement information to the community. In addition to coordinating vessel schedule information, he supports Maritime On-Line® users navigating the TRACS® cargo manifesting portal.

Joey also shares vital transit information between vessels underway and local port partners utilizing the Exchange's VHF communications network.

A Delaware native, he watched the ships transit the C&D Canal and the Delaware Bay. He grew up in Middletown, biking and hiking along the canal, and spent many days at the beach and went to the University of Delaware School of Marine Science, graduating with a bachelor's degree in marine science.



As part of the operations team, Joey works at the Ship Reporting Tower in Lewes, Delaware. "Working at the Exchange has been great and really opened my eyes to the world of shipping cargo," he said.

When not at work, Joey enjoys hiking, skateboarding, and exploring the world around him. He often travels to New England to visit friends. In addition to working for the Exchange, Joey operates an oyster farm out of Rehoboth Bay, so if you have a question about bivalves, be sure to ask him.

Welcome aboard, Joey!





USACE Philadelphia District honors historic dredge “McFarland”

By: Marielle Payton, Public Affairs Specialist
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

On October 23, 2026 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Philadelphia District honored the dredge “McFarland” during a farewell ceremony along the Fort Mifflin pier. The ceremony marked the completion of the vessel’s final operational mission and recognized nearly six decades of service supporting navigation, emergency response, and national defense missions.

Current and former crew members, members of the “McFarland” family, maritime partners and stakeholders gathered for the farewell celebration to honor the vessel and the people who kept it working on the Delaware River and waterways across the nation.

“For generations, “McFarland” has been more than a place to work,” said Captain Mike Hass. “She has been a home away from home.”

During the program, the watch was secured, and the USACE distinguishing flag was lowered and presented to family members of the vessel’s namesake, Arthur McFarland. Later in the ceremony, crew members were rung ashore, and a final whistle sounded in tribute to the vessel’s service.

“We honor the ship today. We honor the skill that kept her ready, the families who stood behind her crew, and the generations of mariners who gave her name its meaning,” said Senior Official Performing the Duties of Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Mr. D. Lee Forsgren.

Though the “McFarland’s” operational time on the water has come to an end, she will remain in pierside standby status at Fort Mifflin while the Army Corps’ next medium-class hopper dredge, the “Donnelly,” is under construction.



At the final mission ceremony, the Corps conducted roll call, ringing the crew ashore accompanied by a final whistle.

For the “McFarland” family, the farewell ceremony brought the vessel’s story full circle. The dredge was named for Arthur McFarland, a respected U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredging authority who rose from engineman to dredge master and later became one of the Corps’ foremost leaders in the field.

Over the course of a 40-year career, McFarland oversaw the design, construction and maintenance of dredging plants in the New Orleans and Galveston districts before joining the Office of the Chief of Engineers in Washington, D.C. There, his expertise helped shape the Corps’ approach to maintaining the nation’s waterways.

When the Corps selected his name for its new hopper dredge, it honored both his technical expertise and his lifelong contributions to advancing the Army Corps’ dredging mission.

At the dredge’s 1967 christening, Alice McFarland Wilson, Arthur McFarland’s daughter, served as the ship’s sponsor. Her daughter, Sandra Wilson, attended the event, while Mrs. Arthur McFarland served as matron of honor.

Nearly 60 years later, Sandra Wilson returned to Fort Mifflin. She was joined by her sister, Margo London; Phil London and Laura London, Arthur McFarland’s great-grandchildren; and James McFarland, his great-nephew.

“It was a wonderful event,” said Margo London. “We’re so glad we could be here. It was very touching.”

Long before the “McFarland” became a familiar presence on the Delaware River, the vessel began its service under the jurisdiction of the USACE Galveston District, where it was intended to help maintain navigation channels along the Texas coast.

Its early assignments included Gulf Coast channel work, while its broader mission called for both planned navigation maintenance and rapid response to urgent dredging requirements.

That versatility was built into the vessel’s design. The “McFarland” could discharge dredged material through bottom doors, use a sidecasting boom to place material outside a navigation channel, or pump material through a pipeline to a disposal area.

The ability to shift among those methods allowed the “McFarland” to adapt to the needs of each waterway and mission, from routine channel maintenance to emergency response.

By 1982, the vessel’s course had shifted north. When the newer dredge “Essayons,” originally intended for the Philadelphia District, was assigned to Portland District instead, the “McFarland” was reassigned from the Jacksonville District to Philadelphia District to serve as the Corps’ hopper dredge for the East Coast.

The “McFarland’s” arrival in Philadelphia gave the District a reliable new vessel for the work of keeping the Delaware River open to commerce. Based at Fort Mifflin, she became a familiar part of the waterfront and the ongoing effort to maintain safe, reliable navigation.

The work was exacting. Before dredging could begin, Corps survey crews measured channel depths, identified shoals, and gathered information on the material to be removed. The “McFarland” then used its dragarms to collect sediment from the channel bottom, store it in the vessel’s hopper and discharge it using the method best suited to the mission. Material was typically pumped to disposal sites via a mooring barge. Follow-on surveys helped confirm whether the channel had been restored to its required depth.

The “McFarland’s” work was centered in the Delaware River and Bay, but its readiness extended well beyond the region. In 1996, following Hurricane Fran, the vessel deployed to North Carolina’s Cape Fear River to remove material clogging the channel entrance. The “McFarland” also supported emergency work throughout the Atlantic and Gulf coasts and deployed to the Southwest Pass of the Mississippi River as part of its Ready Reserve role.

In addition to dredging more than 100 million cubic yards of material, the “McFarland” also completed 11 Ready Reserve missions after entering the fleet in 2010.

Behind those figures were the civilian mariners whose skill and experience kept the “McFarland” operating through long deployments, demanding conditions and changing missions. Carrying out that mission meant standing watch around the clock, working two-week plus shifts, navigating busy waterways and responding to unexpected calls.

Sometimes, their responsibilities extended beyond dredging. In 2001, the “McFarland” responded to a distress call from the *CIC Vision* in the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet. Many crew members were trained firefighters and helped extinguish the vessel fire during an eight-hour response.

The crew also demonstrated that same readiness in lifesaving situations. In 2012, while working near Morehead City, North Carolina, “McFarland’s” crew stopped dredging after spotting a boater in distress. The crew alerted the Coast Guard, launched a small boat, recovered the hypothermic man and transported him to Coast Guard Station Fort Macon.

“Ask someone who served here what they remember, and you may hear about a difficult assignment or an emergency response,” said Hass. “But you will also hear about the people.”

The farewell gave current crew members a chance to honor those who came before them and welcomed former crew members back to a workplace that had long felt like home.

As the “McFarland” enters standby status, the Army Corps will preserve its legacy through documentation, videography, artifact curation, and public interpretation. These efforts will help ensure that the vessel and the people who kept her operating are remembered by future generations.



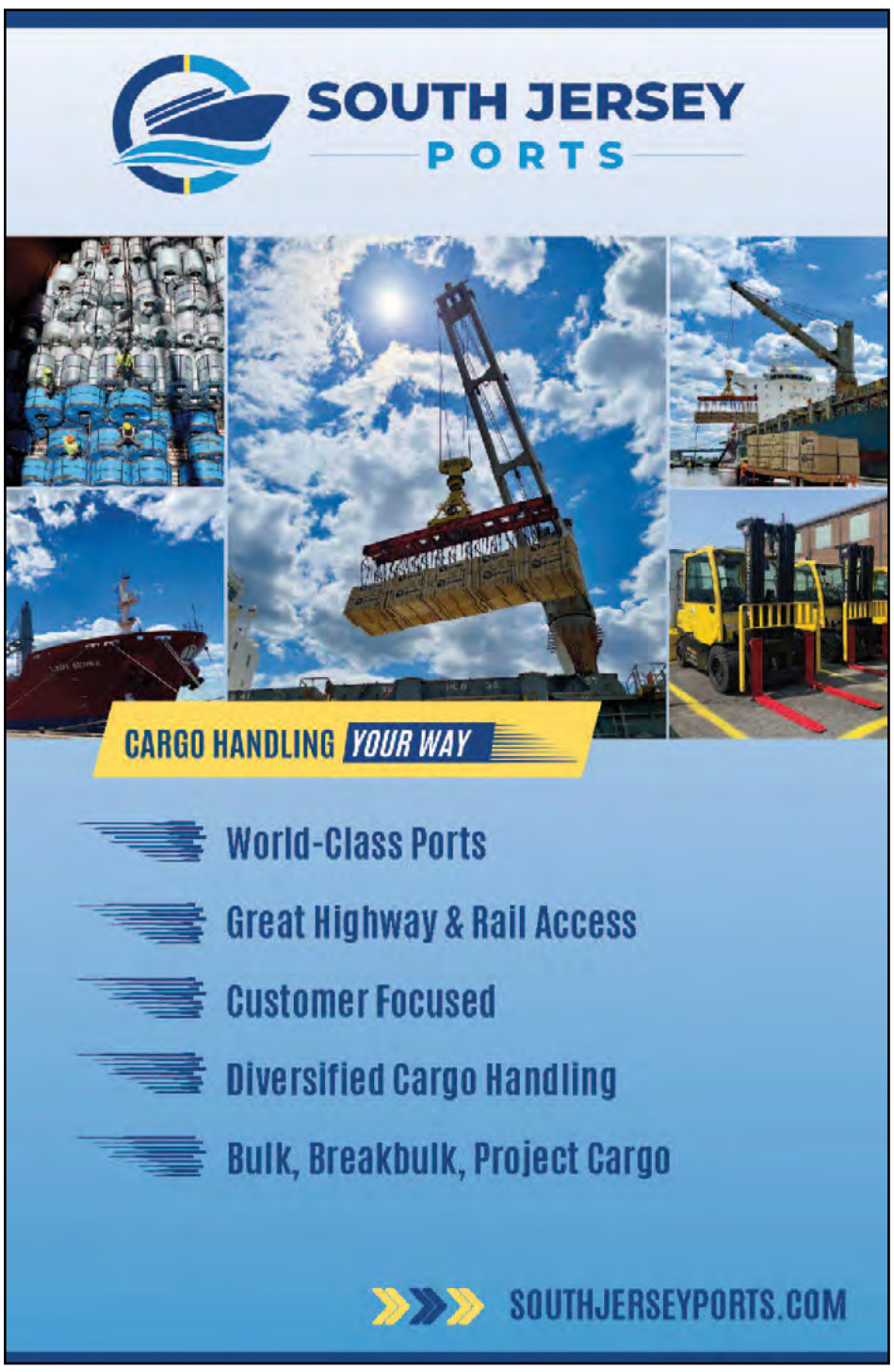
PSA Penn Terminals to expand refrigerated capacity



The Maritime Administration awarded the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Delaware and PSA Penn Terminals, jointly a public-private partnership, $11,250,000 in discretionary Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) port grant funding. PSA Penn Terminals matched $21 million in committed private investment to advance a $32 million project that will significantly expand refrigerated cargo capacity at the port.

The initiative will purchase 840 Build America, Buy America Act-compliant reefer plugs and 24 reefer racks, together with associated electrical and civil infrastructure upgrades, enabling the terminal to handle an additional 100,000+ Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit (TEU) reefer containers per year via grid sourced electricity. Combined with PSA Penn Terminals' recent transition to 100% renewable electricity supplied via PECO Energy Company, the partnership will reduce the port's environmental footprint, improve operational access to staged refrigerated cargo, and strengthen regional logistics capacity through coordinated public and private investment.

PIDP is a competitive, discretionary grant program that funds both planning and capital projects. The program aims to modernize port and freight infrastructure, ensuring it can meet anticipated growth in freight volumes while improving the safety, efficiency, and reliability of goods moving through our nation's supply chains.





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Delaware River does well in Preparedness Grant Programs awards

Congratulations to Delaware River applicants who received Fiscal Year 2026 Preparedness Grant Programs allocations for the Port Security Grant Program and Transit Security Grant Program. The region did extremely well receiving over $4.4 million in funding out of a total of $183.35 million awarded. The Port Security Grant Program provided $95 million and the Transit Security Grant Program provided $88.35 million to support transportation infrastructure security activities.

Among others in the region, the Maritime Exchange, PhilaPort, South Jersey Port Corporation, Enstructure, Delaware City Refining Company, Gloucester Terminals, Monroe Energy, and Paulsboro Refining Company received awards.

FEMA is holding a series of training sessions for grant recipients focused on federal procurement rules. The sessions will run through March 2027, and grant recipients are encouraged to register for training via the FEMA web site.

PPMS celebrates Crab Feast at historic Ft. Mifflin



Port community members once again gathered at the historic Ft. Mifflin to enjoy the Ports of Philadelphia Maritime Society's Annual Crab Feast. Now in its 57th year, over 400 people gathered along the riverfront for another perfect day of sunshine, camaraderie, and good food. The Crab Feast followed the Society's Russ Larsen Memorial Golf Outing at the Springfield Country Club, during which participants also enjoyed the perfect weather.

Amid the festivities, everyone was mindful of the significance of the day—September 11—and took time out to remember and honor the innocent people and selfless responders that lost their lives 25 years ago. The Society's busy Board of Directors mustered for a quick photo with a banner commemorating the 9/11 heroes.

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Marcus Hook and the Birth of Inert Gas Systems

By: Chief Petty Officer William Bleyer
U.S. Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay

On the night of February 4, 1932, the Sun Oil Company motor tanker "M/S Bidwell" was moored alongside the Sinclair Refinery dock at Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania. Having discharged a cargo of Texas crude, her crew was cleaning her tanks in preparation to onload gasoline. At around 12:20 a.m. a massive explosion ripped through the vessel. Three more detonations followed within twenty-five minutes, so loud they were heard miles up and down the Delaware River and generated "a pillar of flame which rose at least two hundred feet in the air," according to the *New York Times*. Seventeen mariners perished, including the Captain, Joseph Rivers. His wife Viola was also onboard and ended up in the icy river but was rescued.

The "Bidwell" disaster was one of many tanker explosions of the period, most occurring during tank cleaning when air mixed with residual hydrocarbon vapors. What distinguished it was the owner's response. In 1933, Sun Oil designed and installed the first commercial inert gas systems on its tanker fleet. Boiler flue gas was passed through a scrubber to remove soot and sulfur, then pumped into the cargo tanks, reducing oxygen content below five percent. Combustion cannot be supported below roughly ten to eleven percent oxygen, regardless of vapor concentration. The same principle, whether using flue gas, nitrogen generators, or dedicated inert-gas plants, protects tankers today.

Sun Oil's inerted tankers proved remarkably resilient during World War II, many were torpedoed (including the repaired "Bidwell"), and some sank, but none catastrophically exploded. The rest of the industry, however, moved slowly; 21 years later the lesson had still not been learned on the Delaware. On the night of June 5, 1953, the "SS Phoenix," having just discharged crude at Sinclair Refinery, was outbound. Upbound, and loaded with gasoline, was "SS Pan Massachusetts." At 11:16 p.m. they collided on the Reedy Island Range off Elsinboro Point, New Jersey. Residual crude vapors in Phoenix's empty and partly ballasted tanks detonated; she sank and four of her crew died. "Pan Massachusetts" burned for days and was declared a constructive total loss. While inert gas would not have prevented the collision, it would have denied those empty tanks the oxygen that turned a hull breach into an inferno. The wreck of the "Phoenix" remained visible off Elsinboro Point for decades, the author remembers walking on it as a young child, a grim unintended monument to another Delaware River marine mishap.



Explosions aboard the "M/S Bidwell tragically took the lives of 17 mariners in 1932.

Only after a series of disastrous explosions on very large crude carriers in the late 1960s, "Marpessa," "Mactra," "Kong Haakon VII" and others, did regulators act. In 1971 the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (now IMO) issued the first formal recommendations for inert gas systems. The 1974 Safety of Life at Sea Convention, its 1978 Protocol on Tanker Safety and Pollution Prevention, and the 1981 amendments, made inert gas mandatory for new crude-oil tankers of 20,000 deadweight tons and above, with subsequent requirements for existing vessels and product carriers. By the Iran-Iraq Tanker War of the 1980s, inerting was widespread. In contrast with World War II, battle-damaged tankers with functioning inert-gas systems suffered far less internal explosion and structural collapse, even when struck by missiles.

U.S. Coast Guard Marine Inspectors assigned to Sector Delaware Bay assess these inert gas systems during Port State Control Certificate of Compliance examinations and Certificate of Inspection visits on both US and foreign-flag vessels calling at Delaware River terminals, including Marcus Hook. They enforce 46 CFR 32.53 and SOLAS Chapter II-2, Regulation 4.5.5. Inspectors verify oxygen analyzers, high-oxygen alarms, deck water seals, blowers, piping integrity, and operational procedures. Their work protects mariners, waterfront communities, and the environmentally sensitive Delaware River and Bay, one of the nation's busiest petroleum corridors.

The explosion that rocked the "Bidwell" at Marcus Hook ninety-four years ago claimed seventeen lives and ignited the safety revolution that made modern tanker operations, regulations, examinations, and inspections possible.





From the Archives

A Binnacle's Journey

The "SS Mayaguez," the Vietnam Wall, and a quiet transit through the C&D Canal

For some mariners along the Delaware River and Bay, the name "SS Mayaguez" may evoke a dramatic turning point in modern maritime and military history. In May 1975, just days after the fall of Saigon, Cambodian Khmer Rouge forces seized the American-flagged container ship in the Gulf of Thailand. The high-stakes military rescue that followed marked the final official battle of the Vietnam War era.

While the ship and all forty merchant mariners were safely recovered, the mission proved costly, claiming the lives of forty-one American servicemen. Their sacrifice forms an indelible, sacred bookend in our nation's memory: the casualties of the "Mayaguez" operation are the final names engraved on the black granite of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. In particular, the very last three names inscribed on the Wall—Lance Corporal Joseph N. Hargrove, Private First Class Gary L. Hall, and Private Danny G. Marshall, an M60 machine gun team left behind on the beaches of Koh Tang during the chaotic final extraction—stand as an enduring testament to the heavy toll of that fateful encounter.

Yet four decades after that harrowing conflict, the spirit of the "Mayaguez" found a peaceful, poignant connection to our own local waters.

At the center of this story is a singular artifact: the flying bridge binnacle of the "SS Mayaguez." Housing the magnetic compass that once steered the ship through contested waters, this brass stand was a silent witness to commercial voyages and enemy fire alike.

For forty years, the binnacle was carefully curated at the American Merchant Marine Museum at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, New York.

"The binnacle honors the unsung devotion of civilian mariners in times of war, commemorating the fact that merchant mariners were deeply involved in the Vietnam conflict, delivering the goods to the best of their abilities despite sniper and rocket fire, limpet mines, and the ever-present danger of capture," said Dr. Joshua Smith, Museum Director, USMMA.

In the autumn of 2015, the Department of Defense requested the binnacle for an exhibit at the Pentagon commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Vietnam War. Rather than moving this revered relic by ordinary truck freight, the maritime community honored it with a ceremonial passage by water.

On November 1, 2015, the USMMA training vessel "T/V Kings Pointer" departed New York carrying twenty-seven midshipmen, academy officers, and the securely crated binnacle lashed to her deck. Bound for Baltimore before the cargo's final leg to the Pentagon, the vessel's passage charted directly through our region's commercial artery: up Delaware Bay and across the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal.

Navigating the narrow reaches of the C&D Canal demanded regional expertise. Taking the conn upon arrival was Delaware River Pilot Joseph Morrissey. A dedicated member of the Pilots' Association for the Bay and River Delaware and a proud 1991 Kings Point graduate, Pilot Morrissey brought deep local mastery and personal reverence to the bridge.

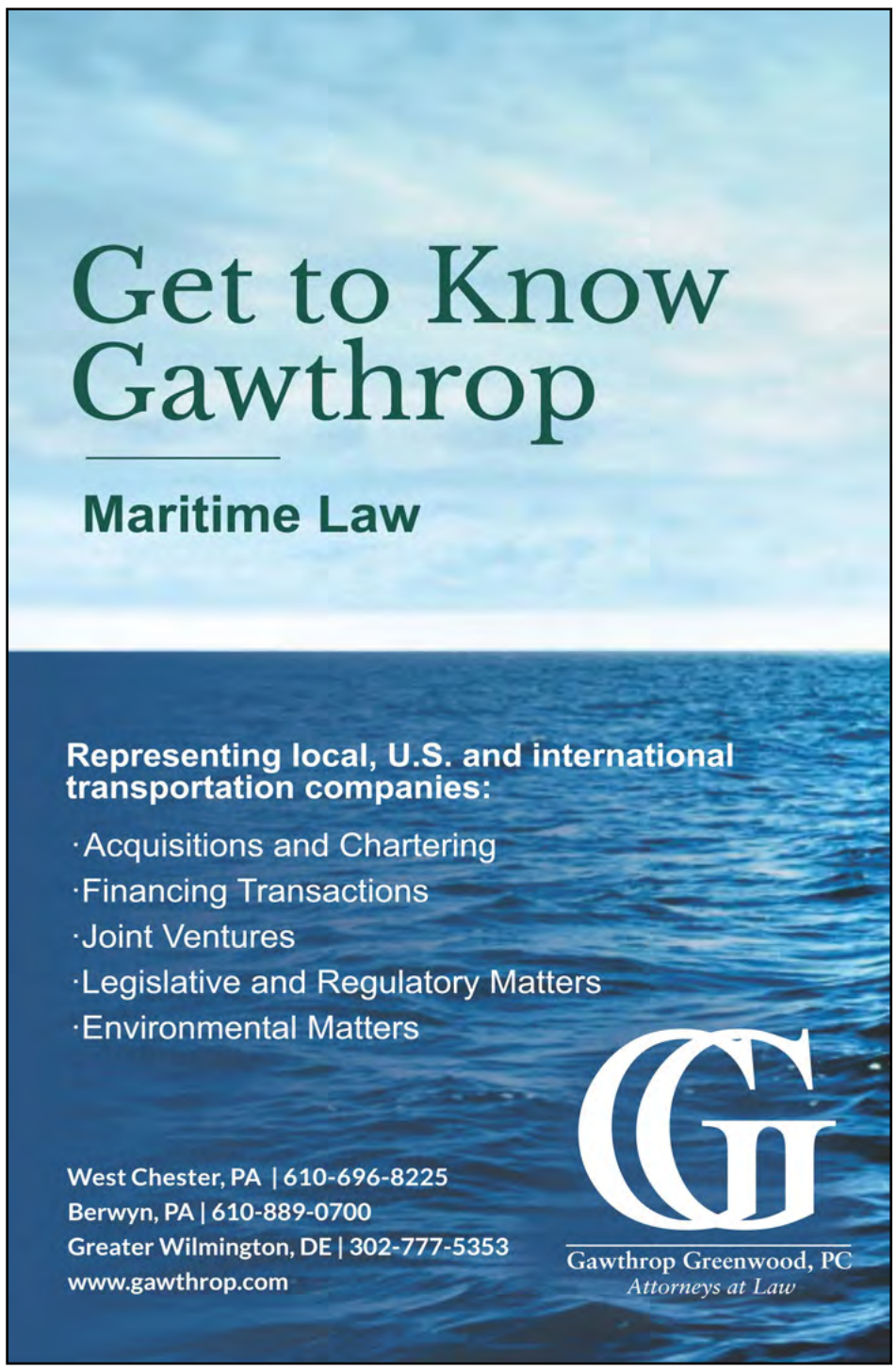
Under Morrissey's steady hand, the "Kings Pointer" glided through the waters of the canal. The calm banks of Delaware and Maryland offered a stark, moving contrast to the stormy battle off Koh Tang forty years earlier. For the midshipmen aboard, standing watch alongside Pilot Morrissey provided not only practical lessons in pilotage and canal transit, but also an unforgettable encounter with living history.



The flying bridge binnacle of the "SS Mayaguez." Photo courtesy of U.S. Merchant Marine Academy / American Merchant Marine Museum.

After safely clearing the canal, the vessel berthed in Baltimore, where the binnacle was transferred under military escort to its place of honor in the Pentagon.

From the gun positions of Koh Tang to the final panel of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and finally through the tranquil cut of the C&D Canal, the journey of the "Mayaguez" binnacle ties global history directly to our local maritime fraternity. Guided through our waters by a Delaware River pilot, the binnacle's voyage serves as a lasting tribute to the mariners and servicemen whose courage charted the course of history.





MISNA goes to the Big Apple



Maritime exchange representatives from around the country gathered in Staten Island and New York City in October for the annual meeting of the Maritime Information Systems of North America. MISNA is a non-profit coalition established in 1995 that acts as a central data aggregator and communications bridge for commercial ship tracking and regional maritime exchanges across North American waterways.

MISNA membership includes Baltimore Maritime Exchange, Chamber of Shipping, British Columbia, Greater Houston Port Bureau, Louisiana Maritime Association, Marine Exchange of Alaska, Marine Exchange of Puget Sound, Marine Exchange of San Francisco Bay Region, Marine Exchange of Southern California, Maritime Association of the Port of New York & New Jersey, Maritime Exchange for the Delaware River and Bay, Merchants Exchange, Columbia River District, New Orleans Board of Trade, and Virginia Maritime Association.

MISNA representatives, including Exchange President Capt. George McCarthy and CAO Michael Fink, met to discuss mutual challenges facing the organizations and opportunities to expand and enhance services. The group took advantage of the free Staten Island Ferry service to meet in Manhattan where they were briefed on maritime insurance challenges by The American Club.



Gov. Shapiro announces investment in PhilaPort

continued from page 1

and supporting economic growth," said PennDOT Secretary Carroll. "Under Governor Shapiro's leadership, PennDOT is proud of our partnership with PhilaPort, and proud to support its mission to keep our economy moving."

With today's investment, over $200 million in private-sector investment and $266 million from the federal government will become available to support PhilaPort's growth plan valued at more than $837 million.

"The combination of public and private investment being directed to South Philly is a promising sign for economic development across our region and demonstrates a strong vote of confidence in our industrial future and our workforce," said Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon (D-PA). "It's clear this part of the city is experiencing a renaissance as all levels of government—public, private, manufacturing, and of course the very strong union base—work tirelessly to ensure continued success for our region. I'm so grateful to have a role in continuing to invest in our future."

As part of the project, PhilaPort will use capital funding to leverage two U.S. Department of Transportation federal grants and construct a new 2,000 linear foot berth for the first time in 50 years at Southport Marine Terminal. The new berth will accompany the purchase of the 152-acre Mustin Yard parcel to create significant expansion opportunities for auto and container cargo.

"Governor Shapiro's continued investment in PhilaPort will help us expand operations, attract new business, and increase market share—while creating thousands of family sustaining jobs over the long haul," said Rich Lazer, CEO & Executive Director, PhilaPort. "With this historical investment in our infrastructure, combined with our skilled union workforce, and room to expand, our future has never been brighter."

The investment will also allow PhilaPort to acquire and develop additional properties in the Southern Port District to enhance container capacity and support future growth and access initiatives.

"The Governor's investments will help PhilaPort implement our Destination 2040 Strategic Plan—with strong capital investments for new port infrastructure," said Mike Pearson, Board Chair, PhilaPort. "Today, Governor Shapiro is making that happen."

"As the world's largest ocean carrier of finished vehicles, we needed to match with best-in-class terminal capacity, and most importantly, we needed to match the customer demand," said Scott Cornell, CEO, GLOVIS America. "Today's announcement shows what we believe PhilaPort can become, and what we can achieve together as we build it into a premier ocean terminal. This is a significant milestone, and the trust, honest conversation, close communication, and steady commitment to moving forward together have made this even more remarkable."

"This is a job multiplier that will go on for the better part of a decade and the machines, roadways, and buildings that will be assembled will last for generations," said Leo Holt, President, Holt Logistics. "And it isn't magic, it's people coming together to get the job done—quickly, efficiently, safely, and ready to go for the next generation."

In addition to developing the Southport berth, PhilaPort will invest in improvements at the Tioga Marine Terminal berth to better handle liquid bulk barges and breakbulk vessels, and support cargo handling capabilities.

"The unions in this town don't fight against each other, we fight for each other," said Bill Hamilton, Eastern Region Vice President, International Brotherhood of Teamsters. "This important investment is going to bring thousands of jobs across the area and it's a dream come true for some people without a college degree."

"As someone who has worked on this waterfront, I know firsthand what these investments mean to the men and women who make their living here," said Dan Duffy, Member, International Longshoremen's Association Local 1291. "This waterfront has supported generations of Philadelphia families and this investment and continued support will help make sure it continues to provide those same opportunities to our children and grandchildren. We're proud of what we do and we're ready for what's next."

"I want to thank Governor Shapiro for recognizing the importance of investing in PhilaPort and the workers and businesses that depend on it," said Senator Tina Tartaglione, Pennsylvania's 2nd Senate District. "This investment will help support good-paying jobs, create opportunities for local businesses and strengthen our regional economy. By maintaining and expanding critical infrastructure, we are investing in the future of our port and the communities it serves."

Alongside the Shapiro Administration's investments, the Governor has worked to understand the needs of the port and its workers. In May 2025, Governor Shapiro visited PhilaPort to hear directly from port leaders, businesses, and workers about how federal tariffs that the Trump Administration implemented were injecting chaos and uncertainty into their work while raising costs for consumers across the Commonwealth.

Philly Shipyard to construct MARAD Missile Range Instrumentation Vessels

TOTE Services, LLC, a U.S. maritime services company specializing in vessel construction management and ship management, signed a contract with the U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration to serve as vessel construction manager (VCM) for the Missile Range Instrumentation Vessel (MRIV) program. The MRIV will support the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) in advancing national security.

Immediately following this award, TOTE Services also executed a shipyard subcontract with Hanwha Philly Shipyard to construct the first MRIV. This ship will be the first in a planned series of vessels for MDA.

The MRIV program was announced this summer by U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy and Director of the Office of Management and Budget Russ Vought. Since then, TOTE Services has been working as VCM to negotiate and finalize contract terms, advance the vessel design and secure firm fixed pricing. In traditional government shipbuilding, this process could extend to a year or more. Because MARAD has elected to build these ships using the VCM model, TOTE Services can accelerate the design and negotiation timeline and complete these tasks in less than three months.

The MRIV design is based on the National Security Multi-Mission Vessels (NSMV), which have been built at HPSI under TOTE Services' management. The MRIV has the same hull design and an overall 70% commonality with the proven NSMV design, reducing construction risk to enable a faster, more reliable construction process.

The VCM approach offers advantages over traditional government acquisition strategies, reducing acquisition costs by at least 50%. By defining requirements upfront and approving change orders quickly, the model improves schedule certainty and ensures vessels are mission-ready when they are delivered.

HPSI will build the MRIV using the active production line, existing supply chain, and workforce already in place from the NSMV program.

As the current ship manager and operator of the existing MARAD and MDA vessels, "Pacific Tracker" and "Pacific Collector," TOTE Services brings operational and technical expertise to the MRIV program. The MRIV vessels will replace the "Pacific Tracker" and "Pacific Collector," built in 1965 and 1970, which currently support missile range instrumentation missions. The program is an interagency collaboration between the Department of Transportation, the Department of War, and MDA, under the existing VCM contract vehicle between the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) and TOTE Services. The first MRIV is scheduled for delivery in 2030.

Exchange tours DCCC Campus



In October, Exchange President Capt. George E. McCarthy USN (Ret.) and Chief Administrative Office Michael Fink visited the Delaware County Community College campus in Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania. DCCC Vice President Dr. Karen Kozachyn *(left)* and President Dr. Marta Cronin *(right)* gave George *(center)* a tour of the campus, which opened in January 2026, highlighting the many trade programs that can lead to rewarding maritime careers. DCCC works alongside employers throughout the Delaware River region, including the Philly Shipyard and labor unions, to prepare workers for careers in manufacturing, transportation, logistics, and the maritime industry. The Maritime Administration designated DCCC as a Center of Excellence for Domestic Maritime Workforce Training and Education.





Thomas Holt, Jr. honored with CACC's prestigious "Friend of Chile" award

David Kleinguenther of the USDA to receive the "Lifetime Achievement" Award

To be presented at the November 18 awards luncheon, the Chilean and American Chamber of Commerce will honor Thomas Holt, Jr. with its "Friend of Chile" award, celebrating individuals who have strengthened the longstanding commercial and trade relationship between the Greater Philadelphia region and the Republic of Chile.

With more than 30 years of experience in transportation and logistics, Mr. Holt has built an impressive career spanning U.S. domestic and marine logistics, Jones Act marine transportation, stevedoring, marine terminal operations, distribution center logistics, and domestic trucking. His leadership and expertise have helped shape the maritime and logistics industries while reinforcing Philadelphia's role as a vital center for international commerce.

Mr. Holt currently serves as Chairman of Holt Logistics Corp. and President and CEO of Astro Holdings, Inc., a port-related real estate holding company. Throughout his career, he has held leadership positions as Chairman, President, and CEO of numerous maritime transportation and logistics businesses. He also served as President and CEO of NPR, Inc., a major Jones Act marine carrier operating five container vessels transporting cargo to and from Puerto Rico.

Beyond his corporate leadership, Mr. Holt remains actively engaged in the region's maritime and business communities. He is a member of the Philadelphia Maritime Society and the World Trade Association of Philadelphia, previously served on the CEO Council for Growth, and is an active member of the Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia.

The Dennis Rochford "Friend of Chile" Award, named for the late president of the Maritime Exchange, recognizes not only Mr. Holt's extensive contributions to the maritime industry, but also the importance of fostering strong international trade partnerships that benefit businesses and communities on both sides of the relationship.

2026 Albert S. Marulli "Lifetime Achievement" Award

Also being honored at the event is David Kleinguenther, Plant Health Safeguarding Specialist, U.S. Department of Agriculture who will receive Albert S. Marulli "Lifetime Achievement" Award. Mr. Kleinguenther has served the United States Department of Agriculture for more than 30 years, contributing to the agency's mission of protecting American agriculture from biological threats and invasive pests.

He began his USDA career in 1996 as a Plant Protection and Quarantine Officer at John F. Kennedy International Airport in Jamaica, New York. Over the years, he held several roles of increasing responsibility, including Compliance Officer, where he enforced regulatory standards that protect domestic agricultural resources; Supervisor, where he led and mentored front-line personnel; and National Operations Manager, where he directed strategic initiatives with agency-wide reach.

Congratulations to both on the well-deserved awards.



Thomas Holt, Jr.

CBP changes for export reporting

continued from page 1

mation, diverse document and data formats across the internal landscape, and the cost incurred to obtain, vet, and store the information.

CBP is also concerned about more accurately identifying and expanding visibility into the entire supply chain. Currently, importers provide a manufacturer or shipper identification code, known as the MID, at the time of filing entry summary, and it represents the name and address of the manufacturer or shipper. In the ANPR, CBP outlined challenges with MID including inconsistent use, lack of uniqueness, and potential to change. It posed several ideas including expanding data collection to the producer rather than the manufacturer of goods, tracking the ultimate consignee, and requiring full name and address information rather than the MID.

CBP also discussed the potential use of Global Business Identifiers, or GBIs, as an alternative to the MID. In 2002, CBP established a voluntary National Customs Automation Program test of the GBI through which importers or brokers transmit GBIs identifying the manufacturer, shipper, or seller. The agency queried the business community on the feasibility of the use of the GBI or other potential foreign identifiers in use.

But additional data wasn't the only focus in the ANPR.

Preventing illegal transshipment remains a high priority for the agency, and CBP posed several questions to the import community surrounding the use of technology, systems, and artificial intelligence to combat this practice. Among other questions, CBP wants to know which systems are in place right now, how is AI being leveraged, and what technology is available to verify the origin of raw materials and bridge the 'visibility gap' between suppliers and raw material sources.

CBP posed similar questions to Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism, or CTPAT, participants and appears to be looking to expand membership in the program and its scope. CTPAT members work with CBP in a voluntary program to protect the supply chain, identify security gaps, and implement specific security measures and best practices, thereby gaining low risk status with the agency and enjoy fewer cargo examinations and prioritized inspections.

In particular, CBP questioned CTPAT members on their use of supply chain traceability solutions, their availability to the agency, and potential mandates regarding their use. It also proposed potentially limiting the use of foreign-controlled supply chain systems such as LOGINK, a state-owned Chinese digital logistics management platform.

The Exchange met with member stakeholders to discuss the rule and its implications.

"Some of the proposed changes in the ANPR, if adopted, would have significant operational and financial impact on our members," said Exchange Chief Administrative Officer Michael Fink. "We're talking about data and information that may be out of the importer's control and in the possession of parties to which the importer has no relationship. Not only could obtaining foreign export documentation be operationally challenging and costly, but requiring an importer of record or broker to certify the validity of foreign export data to a foreign government may not be feasible."

The proposed rule was no surprise to Ed Moriarty who recently attended the 2026 CBP Trade and Cargo Security Summit. This year's Summit centered on the theme, "Knowing Your Supply Chain to Remain Compliant and Mitigate Risk." One message was clear according to Mr. Moriarty: CBP increasingly expects greater supply chain visibility, stronger controls over information provided to the government, and evidence that compliance and security procedures are actually being implemented.

"I see this ANPRM as an important opportunity for the trade community to help shape practical, effective supply-chain requirements. Our comments can explain what information businesses can reliably provide, the potential costs of additional requirements, and how technology and cooperation can improve supply-chain visibility," said Moriarty. "Thoughtful participation can help develop a framework that supports effective enforcement and the efficient movement of legitimate trade. By getting involved now, we can help drive the conversation, shape the path forward, and be an active part of developing practical solutions for the trade community."

Although the Heightened Import Disclosures proposal is in its earliest stages, it reflects the Administration and CBP's much stronger enforcement posture, one that will drive industry to tighten its own controls and gain further visibility into the entire supply chain.

Comments on the Heightened Import Disclosures for Supply Chain Visibility ANPR are due by December 1, 2026.



Investing in the vessels of tomorrow, supporting the crews of today

The human component in an era of maritime transformation

By: Kathryn Bradley, Executive Director
The Seamen's Center of Wilmington

The global maritime industry is undergoing an extraordinary transformation. Across the world, billions of dollars are being invested in new vessels, port infrastructure, automation, and alternative fuels designed to make shipping more efficient, sustainable, and competitive.

Yet amid this progress, a fundamental question deserves greater attention from the tri-state port community: Who will crew the ships of the future?

For an industry responsible for transporting approximately 90% of global trade, the answer should concern every maritime professional along the Delaware River and beyond.

Recent workforce data highlights a stark and growing challenge. According to the June 2026 *Seafarer Workforce Report*, jointly published by BIMCO and the International Chamber of Shipping, the global merchant fleet relies on approximately 2.57 million seafarers operating 85,148 vessels. Yet demand for qualified personnel continues to outpace supply in critical areas. The report estimates a current shortfall of 39,100 STCW-certified officers and projects that the industry will need an additional 113,735 officers by 2030 to meet future demand.

These figures are troubling, but they tell only part of the story.

At a recent North American Maritime Ministry Association (NAMMA) conference, recruitment and retention were recurring topics of discussion. Across the maritime welfare community, there is growing recognition that attracting younger generations to careers at sea presents an increasingly difficult challenge.

Perhaps even more revealing are the conversations we have with seafarers themselves.

Several experienced crew members, some in their fifties and sixties, have told me they continue working at sea to provide financial security and educational opportunities for their families. Yet when I ask whether they would encourage their children to follow in their footsteps, their responses are surprisingly consistent: They hope their children will choose a different path.

These are seasoned professionals who have dedicated decades to their careers, understand the maritime industry intimately, and take immense pride in their work. Yet they know firsthand the personal sacrifices that accompany life at sea.

Long separations from family, missed milestones, fatigue, isolation, and demanding shipboard conditions have always been part of seafaring. However, expectations are changing, particularly among younger generations who place greater importance on work-life balance, personal wellbeing, and regular communication with family and friends.

The pandemic brought these realities into sharp focus when hundreds of thousands of seafarers were stranded aboard vessels beyond their contracted service periods. Although that particular crisis has passed, it exposed just how vulnerable seafarers can become when international systems fail to recognize and accommodate their essential role.

Technology may transform how vessels operate, but it cannot eliminate the fundamental human need for connection, dignity, and rest.

If our industry hopes to attract and retain the next generation of maritime professionals, competitive salaries and excellent training opportunities alone will not suffice. Reliable internet connectivity, adequate rest, access to shore leave, mental health support, and meaningful career development must become integral parts of maritime employment.

Seafarer welfare is not solely the responsibility of shipowners and operators. It also requires the active participation of ports, government agencies, maritime organizations, and local communities.

At the Seamen's Center of Wilmington, we witness the human side of this challenge every day. Our volunteers provide visiting crews with essential shoreside transportation, opportunities to shop, access to communication facilities, and a welcoming place where they can step away from the vessel and relax.

For someone who has spent weeks at sea, an ordinary trip to a supermarket, a friendly conversation, or a few hours away from the ship can make a remarkable difference.

As we approach the winter holiday season, that human connection becomes particularly meaningful.

We have already begun collecting donations for our annual **Christmas at Sea program**, through which our volunteers prepare and distribute hundreds of Christmas ditty boxes to seafarers visiting Delaware's ports from the middle of November through the second week of January.

Year after year, crews tell us how much they look forward to receiving these gifts. The contents may be simple—warm clothing, toiletries, snacks, and small comforts—but their significance extends far beyond their monetary value.

They remind someone spending the holidays thousands of miles from home that they are remembered, appreciated, and valued.

We recognize that household budgets are stretched and corporate charitable resources are limited. Nevertheless, we invite our fellow Maritime Exchange members and tri-state port partners to help us bring a little Christmas cheer to the men and women who keep our global supply chains moving.

Anyone wishing to contribute can donate items from our Christmas wish list https://www.scwde.org/christmas-at-sea.html#/ or purchase gifts directly through the Seamen's Center of Wilmington Amazon Gift Registry:

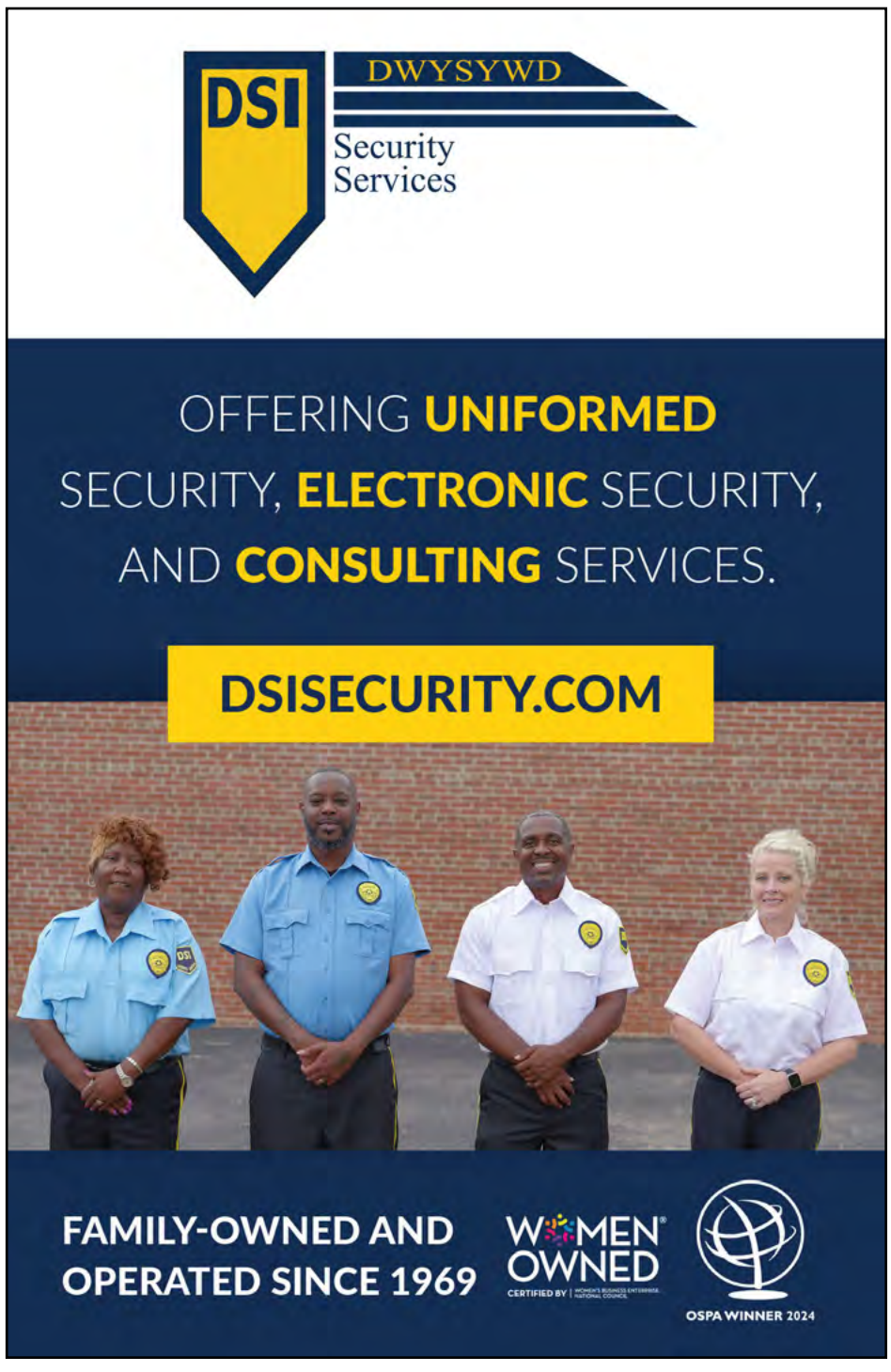
https://www.amazon.com/registries/gl/guest-view/3EP1VUER8ZLB5

Every contribution, however small, helps remind a visiting seafarer that someone in our community is thinking of them.

The maritime industry is rightly investing in the vessels and infrastructure of tomorrow. But if we are serious about securing the future of global commerce, we must invest just as thoughtfully in the people who crew those ships.

Before we can inspire the next generation to go to sea, we must demonstrate that we truly value the mariners who are already there.

To learn more about local seafarer support services, Christmas at Sea, or volunteer opportunities to support visiting crews, visit the Seamen's Center of Wilmington at www.scwde.org.



PhilaPort and Norwegian Cruise Line celebrate opening of new Cruise Terminal

PhilaPort and Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings Ltd. (NCLH), parent company of Norwegian Cruise Line®, celebrated the official opening of the new PhilaPort Cruise Terminal with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on August 27, 2026. The milestone establishes a permanent home for cruise operations in Philadelphia and reflects the long-term partnership between PhilaPort, NCLH, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The completion of the new terminal follows the launch of Norwegian Cruise Line sailings from Philadelphia earlier this year—the first cruises to depart from the city in more than 15 years. The dedicated facility strengthens Philadelphia's position as a growing cruise destination while creating new opportunities for tourism and economic development throughout the region.

The ceremony brought together state and local leaders, community partners and business stakeholders to celebrate the completion of the facility, which was designed to provide guests with a seamless embarkation and disembarkation experience.

"PhilaPort's new cruise terminal is a critical component of our broader economic development strategy—creating good jobs, generating new economic activity and strengthening the economies of Philadelphia and the entire region," said PhilaPort executive director and CEO Rich Lazer. "Our partnership with Norwegian Cruise Line will establish Philadelphia as a welcoming and accommodating destination for the cruise industry, attracting more visitors to our region and creating new opportunities for residents and businesses across Southeastern Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey."



The Cruise Terminal ribbon cutting marked the opening of Philadelphia's permanent Cruise Terminal as Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings announces $50,000 in contributions to local communities.

As part of the celebration, NCLH announced $50,000 in contributions to support communities across Greater Philadelphia. The contributions are part of the company's global Sail & Sustain® program and it's Strengthening Our Communities pillar, reflecting NCLH's commitment to supporting and investing in the communities where it lives, works, visits, and operates. Of the $50,000 contribution, $20,000 will support Tinicum Township's local fire department, and the remaining $30,000 will benefit three local Boys & Girls Clubs, helping to support programs and resources for children and families across the region.

"Today, we celebrate becoming part of this community," said Daniel Farkas, executive vice president, general counsel and chief development officer at NCLH. "Through our global Sail & Sustain program, we believe in investing in and strengthening the communities we serve. As we establish a long-term presence in Greater Philadelphia, we're proud to support the first responders, young people and families who call this region home while creating new opportunities for tourism and economic growth."

The new cruise terminal supports PhilaPort's seven-year agreement with Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings Ltd. through March 31, 2033, reinforcing the company's long-term presence in the market. Cruise operations at the terminal are projected to generate approximately 2,185 direct and indirect jobs and nearly $300 million in annual economic output throughout Pennsylvania, supporting tourism, hospitality, transportation and other businesses across the region.

"Norwegian Jewel" is currently sailing from Philadelphia through Sept. 26, 2026. "Norwegian Pearl" will arrive in the city in November 2026, offering voyages ranging from 5 to 14 days to Bermuda, the Caribbean, the Bahamas, and Canada and New England through April 2028.

Norwegian Cruise Line also recently unveiled new seven-day Bermuda and Atlantic Coast voyages from Philadelphia aboard Norwegian Gem beginning in summer 2028—giving travelers throughout the Mid-Atlantic even more opportunities to vacation from their own backyard. For more information about Norwegian Cruise Line's sailings from Philadelphia, visit www.ncl.com.

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Q&A with Rich Lazer

continued from page 1

Q: The Commonwealth's investment announcement mentioned several projects being undertaken by PhilaPort. What project or projects do you think will have the most impact on the Delaware River?

A: The Commonwealth project being undertaken by PhilaPort that will have the most impact on the Delaware River is the new SouthPort berth which will bring 6,000 new family sustaining jobs, an 122% increase in container capacity, and a 18% increase in car capacity. The proposed 2,000 foot berth will bring $778M in economic output and is the biggest expansion in PhilaPort history, setting the tone for the coming decades of expansion along the Delaware River.

Q: The Delaware River port community was excited to see cruise business return to the region, and the development of the Cruise Terminal was an enormous accomplishment in a short period of time. What hurdles or challenges did PhilaPort need to overcome to ensure the cruise business would be successful?

A: PhilaPort was able to transform an unutilized oil pier into a world-class hospitality destination in record time. There were several major hurdles including a very tight 4 month deadline during one of the harshest winters in recent memory with constant sub-freezing temperatures -- along with strict FAA regulations. PhilaPort's team and our partners in organized labor and Norwegian Cruise Lines wll worked together to open on time and are delivering memorable experience for our customers.

GPEC releases financial impact study

continued from page 3

nificant, as statistics from the Paulsboro Refining Company demonstrate.

"This refinery has anchored the local economy for more than a century," said Michael Capone, General Manager of Paulsboro Refining Company. "Today, we have 295 full-time employees and 290 contractors working on site daily. Most of our employees are unionized and a majority of contractors are trade union members. These highly paid, skilled workers are committed to safe, reliable, and environmentally responsible operations for our refinery, rail and truck yards, and marine terminal, that supply fuels and products that help provide our modern standards of living and mobility."

"These are the types of skilled union jobs New Jersey is working to attract. We offer more than jobs—we offer family-supporting careers with excellent pay, some of the best benefits available, and the opportunity to build a secure future," said William T. Mullen, President of the New Jersey Building and Construction Trades.

GPEC accounts for nearly one-third (30.7%) of the combined economy of Paulsboro, Greenwich and West Deptford and supports roughly one in six jobs (16.5%) across the three municipalities.

"The GPEC companies are the backbone of the local economy in their region and generate significant tax revenue to Gloucester County, South Jersey and the entire state," said Assemblyman David Bailey, whose legislative district includes the GPEC facilities.

Total tax revenue generated by GPEC was $107.1 million, including $22.6 million in direct local taxes to the three municipalities in which they are located, making up 17.5 percent of local property taxes.

More than $53.8 million has been invested in capital investments, including the redevelopment of the Repauno site, storage cavern expansions and terminal improvements.

"ExxonMobil is proud to be integral to New Jersey's economy for more than a century. Our Paulsboro advanced manufacturing facility produces essential consumer and industrial lubricants to keep the region moving," said Raul Sanchez, ExxonMobil Paulsboro Lubricant Plant Manager.

Dr. Jha, the lead researcher on the study, summed up her findings.

"Using the IMPLAN input-output framework to evaluate 2023 data from GPEC companies, the Center found that GPEC facilities generated $813.7 million in total economic output and value added of $437.8 million to New Jersey's economy," she said. The study used 2023 data because that was the most recent year for which a complete set of all relevant economic data was available.

In Memoriam

Harvey Weiner



It is with profound sadness that we share the news of the passing of Harvey Weiner, a respected leader, beloved personality, and valued member of the Philadelphia port community.

A towering figure in the cocoa industry, Harvey was affectionately known throughout the maritime community as the "Cocoa King." Over nearly six decades with his family's business, Dependable Distribution Services, Harvey served as president and helped transform the company into the largest cocoa bean storage company in North America. His vision, determination, and unwavering commitment to the industry helped establish Philadelphia as a premier port of choice for cocoa, including his pivotal role in bringing cocoa cargo back to the Port of Philadelphia in the early 1990s.

Harvey's impact extended far beyond the cocoa industry. His larger-than-life personality, entrepreneurial spirit, and dedication to the Philadelphia port community left an enduring legacy. His contributions helped shape the port's history and strengthen its position in the global maritime industry.

The Maritime Exchange extend its condolences to Harvey's family, friends, and colleagues.

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PhilaPort Welcomes Metsä Back to Philadelphia



PhilaPort celebrated Metsä's return on October 7 with a presentation recognizing the renewed partnership. Wagenborg Shipping provides the service, with sailings every three weeks.

Metsä is back in Philadelphia, bringing significant cargo volume and steady business to the city's waterfront. The major Finnish paper company's return is expected to bring approximately 260,000 metric tons of cargo annually through Penn Warehousing at PhilaPort's Forest Products Center, supporting work for dockworkers, warehouse employees, truck drivers and related businesses throughout the region.

"Forest products are one of PhilaPort's core strengths, and we're excited to welcome a major company like Metsä back to Philadelphia," said PhilaPort CEO Rich Lazer. "We look forward to working with our partners at Metsä and Penn Warehousing to make this service a success for both the Port and the region."

The service is projected to support 560 jobs, $34.7 million in labor income and $54.6 million in economic output across direct, indirect, and induced effects. It is also expected to generate $9.6 million in tax revenue, including approximately $2.7 million in local and state taxes.

The service also strengthens Philadelphia's role as a gateway for forest products, supplying manufacturers throughout the Northeast and Midwest.

Port of Wilmington breaks ground

continued from page 3

ware Building Trades, we are delivering transformative infrastructure that will strengthen supply chains, expand capacity, and create new opportunities for customers across North America."

New Terminal Capacity

Located at the former Edgemoor industrial site, DCT is expected to significantly expand Delaware's container handling capacity and could nearly double capacity along the Delaware River port complex. It is accessible by Class I rail service and major highways, including I-495, I-95, I-295, New Jersey Turnpike, and Pennsylvania Turnpike.

At full-scale, the terminal development will increase the physical capacity of the facility to accommodate larger vessels with a quay length of 2,700 feet and a depth of 45 feet. DCT is designed to accommodate container vessels with capacities of up to 16,000 TEUs, allowing 1.2 million TEUs to move through the terminal each year. The terminal will have seven electric ship-to-shore gantry cranes and 24 electric rubber-tired gantry cranes to move container cargo, strengthening the region's broader transportation network and improving access to goods.

Green Port Facility

DCT will incorporate state-of-the-art technology and lower-emission operating practices. The terminal will have electric cargo-handling equipment and supporting charging infrastructure, which will eliminate diesel exhaust, greenhouse-gas emissions and operating noise compared with conventional diesel-powered equipment.

The project will maintain an emissions inventory and comply with applicable air, water, waste-management and environmental-monitoring requirements. Clean Ports funding will also support performance monitoring and the collection and analysis of operational data to measure results and refine implementation over time. These investments are designed to reduce emissions in and around the port, improve air quality for port workers and neighboring communities, and support public engagement, workforce training, and operational safety. Enstructure also participates in Green Marine, the maritime industry's leading voluntary environmental-certification program which requires annual environmental performance assessment, independent verification, published results, and continual improvement on issues including air, water and soil quality, biodiversity protection, and community relations.

Public-Private Partnership

DCT is a public-private partnership between Enstructure and the state of Delaware through DSPC. DSPC owns the site, while Enstructure is responsible for the project's development and will operate the facility under a long-term concession agreement upon expected completion in 2029.

The project represents a total investment of $669 million, including $225 million invested by Enstructure and $325 million invested from the State of Delaware, plus $119 million in federal grants via Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency, which was awarded to the State of Delaware to deploy zero-emission port equipment at DCT through the EPA's Clean Ports Grant Program. The grant also includes investment in preparing and maintaining an emissions inventory, in addition to community engagement and workforce development.

"Today is a proud day for Port Wilmington and for the generations of ILA members who have worked here over the years. For many families, the port has been more than just a place to work—it has provided a good living, put children through school, and created opportunities passed from one generation to the next," said William Ashe Jr., President of the International Longshoremen's Association 1694. "We're proud of the partnership we've built with Enstructure and the commitment we share to the future of this port. DCT gives us the chance to continue that tradition by creating new jobs and new opportunities for the next generation of workers. I think the men and women who worked these docks before us would be proud to see where Port Wilmington is headed."





William Robinson retires from PBF Energy



The U.S. Coast Guard recognized William "Bill" Robinson at the October 21, 2026, Area Committee meeting. The Captain of the Port, Captain Roberto Rivera (left) *presented William Robingson* (right) *with a Certificate of Merit for his steadfast professionalism, collaborative spirit, and unwavering devotion to duty.*

The Delaware River port community extends its congratulations and sincere thanks to William "Bill" Robinson, former Director of Security at PBF Energy, who retired in August of 2026. Prior to overseeing security at all of PBF's refineries, he served as security manager for the company's Paulsboro, N.J., and Delaware City, Del., refineries for over 20 years. Prior to working for PBF, Bill served as Chief of Police in Chester, Pen.

Bill was recently honored by the U.S. Coast Guard with a Certificate of Merit for meritorious service as a distinguished member of the U.S. Coast Guard Delaware Bay Area Committee and the Area Maritime Security Committee from October 2008 to August 2026. As a trusted refinery advisor to eight successive Federal On-Scene Coordinators, Bill delivered critical, high-level briefings on refinery operations, local port dynamics, and global supply chain vulnerabilities.

His strategic foresight enables leaders to proactively mitigate emerging maritime risks, safeguarding critical regional energy infrastructure and ensuring the uninterrupted flow of commerce through the nation's fifth-largest port complex.

Bill has always been willing to help the community, whether it was sharing intelligence on suspicious activity in the region, hosting exercises, or even a meeting space. He served on the Managing Board of the Area Maritime Security Committee for numerous years and served as the committee chair from 2018 to 2020.

Thank you for your professionalism, collaborative spirit, and unwavering devotion to duty, Bill. We wish you many happy, well-deserved years in your retirement!

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Editorial

It's time to end weaponized tariffs & taxes

In 1776, John Adam's "Plan of Treaties" was created in part to replace Britain's "English Navigation Acts" of 1651 and 1660. Adam's plan sought "free markets for American vessels and U.S. Goods around the world" rather than accepting a "managed trade" with Britain.

Britain's exclusion of the Colonies from their trades (ex: the West Indies) and the lack of centralized trade authority within the U.S. Confederation (America's first national government), were significant driving forces towards the adoption of a U.S. Constitution.

The first U.S. Congress in 1789 immediately set to work to adopt "discriminatory import duties and tonnage taxes on vessels" to force open markets, fund the new government and to "acquire" an American owned merchant fleet. The tonnage tax payable by foreign vessels calling the U.S. was then set at eight times as high as the tax on American owned vessels. Early U.S. acts also saw the first reservation of domestic trade to American owned vessels; "ownership" being defined then as being owned by American citizens, regardless of where built, registered, or crewed. Due to continuing Britain actions (resulting in the War of 1812) the apparent goal of the first Congress was to acquire a fleet (foreign-built or otherwise), expand trade through that fleet, and in parallel, expand a national shipbuilding capability.

Thus far today, the United States remains the largest consumer market in the world at roughly 29% of global consumption despite comprising only 4% of the world's population. In parallel, however, consumerism in Asia, India, and Africa are each growing at an increasingly rapid rate. We are not the only humans who link the access to and affordability of nice things to a sense of personal freedom.

Our current punitive global tariffs and expected tonnage taxes on U.S. imports and/or foreign ships delivering quickly encouraged the rest of the world to move increasingly away from shipping to the U.S. to the growing consumer markets in other areas. Ironically, in some cases, those new markets and/or nations are subsidized in various ways by the same nation providing the shipping (ex: China). Such seismic shifts in global trade tend to not reverse themselves easily, and trade wars historically take a long time to be forgotten by those left on the defensive.

A zero or near-zero deficit in global trade remains an unreasonable goal for a nation as high-consuming as ours. Accept that you cannot be the most efficient manufacturer of everything and instead buy from the most efficient producers while selling that which you are the most efficient at producing. Such a simple goal addresses basic economic needs, abides by basic economic principles, and is achievable while keeping national security a priority.

Prior to the current U.S.-created global trade war, seeking a more equitable trade balance with each of our partners has been an ongoing effort on a nation-to-nation and/or geographic trade agreement basis by our nation's highly capable trade experts, both private and public, working within national and international laws and frameworks. This on a win/win basis, not an old school win/lose one. Our past approach of "speaking softly yet carrying a big stick" has become one of shouting into the global market while waving the stick, only to then back off to a "much better level" of trade balance while in the process destroying the hard-earned trust of our allies and partners.

The posturing of the U.S. as the only country worthy of the best quality and prices—as a bully in the global play yard, slapping our global partners in the process—seems naïve at best especially as much of it is the result of our own continuing legislative shortcomings since 1789.

Perhaps the better way to restart what we began in 1789 would be to start with a federal advertising campaign which explains to the average American (i.e. The People), how global trade works, how we are now too near 100% dependent on commercial foreign shipping "aid" (calling it what it is, a subsidy in its own form), and why this not where we should be as a global power and maritime nation either in peace time or in national emergencies. This author would also ask such ads include that, while we are able to continue to be the world's most powerful naval force (Go Navy!), can rescue anyone if they fall overboard in our waters (Go Coast Guard!), we remain unable to "afford" a core U.S. merchant fleet to support any of our National needs.

When a Queen departs…

When an elder Queen departs, so with her goes a time, an age and way of life too quickly forgotten in today's information overload days. Few will even notice her final bow as hers is a time long gone by.

I can remember seeing my parents their happiest when onboard the S.S. United States (the "Big U"). Kids away in their cabin beds, one of the staff checking in on them and our parents becoming kids themselves, treated like a royalty by U.S. Lines staff, dancing the night away knowing the ship was a safe haven from life itself. Grace inside and out.

An Atlantic crossing on a passenger vessel was a time to relax, breath in the fresh ocean breezes, let one's hair down…perhaps even to experience a summer crossing romance. They even read paper books in those days.

And so, as the Big U heads downwards to her fate, this sailor's short editorial asks only a moment's pause in remembrance and respect for a departing queen and, perhaps, a simple thought on our collective futures.

This nation was built on the dreams of dreamers who boldly turned their crazy visions into realities, regardless of the obstacles or the naysayers. William Francis Gibbs, the designer of the Big U, was one such bold man and the ship remains a testimony to what can be accomplished when one is always pushing the boundaries of the possible.

Today, manufacturing vessels overseas may be cheaper in the short run… but too often the long-term losses are not understood until it is too late. Towns are left empty, families torn apart and worse, skills and lessons learned through trial and tribulation are lost until they are called upon to be relearned all over again, usually under the harshest of conditions and often at tremendous cost.

When the SS United States takes her final bow, she will take with her yet another small portion of the "yes we can" boldness upon which this nation was built. We have stopped being large and thinking boldly against the tide and to the benefit of the generations ahead.

And that, I fear, is a price we can no longer afford to continue to merely "let sail into the night", never to return. As each generation fades into the next, we must savor and take with us that which has allowed us to reach and achieve today and into the future.

The Big U never left anyone stranded at sea, never failed to meet her dates, and, being the lady she remains to this day, never revealed her all. To all those other ships she left wondering in her wake, her capabilities must well have been awe-sinspiring. To those of us who sailed on her, she was comfort and security in an amazing package. The real deal.

Yes, she shows her age, and her makeup has clearly faded, but even now, her lines and posture continue to reveal a combination of beauty and grace still very much willing to race the seas again. She has always had the savoir faire of an older woman who remains attractive to all who encounter her, regardless of their age.

Goodbye, great lady, may we never lose our awe of you and may our memories of you never fade. And may this nation someday soon once more build something as amazing as you, not just as a graphic reproduction for the movie of the week but made from and for all we can achieve that makes this nation great.



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 inquiriesregarding

the contents of this newsletter to:

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Maritime Exchange, Attn: Beacon Editor
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Hiring motor carriers to move your cargo?

Legal Ease

By: Lisa Reeves, Esq.
Reeves McEwing LLP

Supreme court ruling highlights the need to properly vet your carriers

Cargo doesn't magically appear at the port, ready to be loaded, or to the consignee after discharge. Under a "door" bill of lading, the ocean carrier's responsibility begins at the shipper's loading dock, and ends when the cargo is delivered to the consignee. The alternative is known as "merchant haulage," and the shipper is responsible for the inland portion of the transport under a "port to port" bill of lading. In either case, the cargo travels by rail, or more often by truck, to and from the port.

Shippers, ocean carriers, brokers, forwarders and other logistics providers hire motor carriers to perform the over-the-road portion of the transport. In legal parlance, the motor carrier is an independent contractor, and under the common law of most states, the party who tenders the load has a duty to use reasonable care to select a competent and careful contractor.

Motor carriers are only required to have $750,000 in liability insurance; most trucking companies have no more than $1 million. In the event of an accident, this coverage is woefully inadequate to respond to the claims of injured motorists or their estates. A truck weighs up to 80,000 lbs.; the average passenger vehicle weighs 2000 lbs. and is no match for a truck.

Trucking accidents occur every day. Often the weather is clear, the truck driver is not speeding, is not inebriated, nor is on his or her phone. In our experience, these accidents happen when the traffic on the highway slows or comes to a stop, and the trucker fails to react in time. The truck rear-ends, or literally runs over, the car or cars in front of it, and a chain reaction collision follows. Even at relatively low speeds, fatalities and severe injuries result.

In addition to suing the trucking company, plaintiffs' lawyers also join the broker, steamship line, or shipper alleging, among other theories, that the defendant negligently hired the motor carrier.

Prior to May 2026, a freight broker had a straight forward defense to a negligent hiring claim—such state-law claims were preempted by federal law. The statute (Federal Aviation Administration Authorization Act or FAAAA) provides that " a State… may not enact or enforce any law… related to a price, route, or service of any motor carrier… broker or freight forwarder with respect to the transportation of property" 49 U.S.C. §14501(c)(1). Several state courts, and a number of federal appellate courts, agreed that a negligent hiring claim against a broker was indeed preempted, and dismissed that cause of action. Several others agreed that they were preempted in the first instance, but held that such claims fell within the safety exception of the statute. Although the issue was undecided in many jurisdictions, that uncertainty gave defendants a strong bargaining chip in settlement negotiations.

That bargaining chip, like the preemption defense itself, is now off the table. Due to what lawyers call "a conflict between the circuits" (federal appellate courts), the Supreme Court agreed to consider the question, and decided against preemption. In *Montgomery v. Caribe Transport II, LLC*, 146 S. Ct. 1199 (2026), the Supreme Court found that negligent hiring claims against brokers fall within the safety exception, and thus are not preempted by FAAAA.

The exception applies to a state's authority to regulate safety "with respect to motor vehicles" 49 U.S.C. §14501(a)(2). Giving that phrase its ordinary meaning, the Court found that state common law claims for the negligent selection of a motor carrier clearly concerned the motor vehicles (trucks) that would transport the goods.

The preemption defense was only available to freight brokers and forwarders; however, shippers or steamship lines would also do well to heed this passage from the concurring opinion:

"It is true, as the brokers emphasize, that trucking companies are in the best position to monitor their own trucks and drivers. By contrast, brokers may not always (or even often) be in a position to objectively assess the relative safety of different trucking companies… That said, brokers may sometimes become aware that a particular carrier operates unsafe trucks or hires unfit drivers. And if brokers can be 'held liable for disregarding poor safety records, they have a strong incentive to do business only with safe and reliable motor carriers.' Importantly, the Court's decision today should not be read to mean that brokers will routinely be subject to state tort liability in the wake of truck accidents. As even plaintiff's counsel stressed, brokers should not be able to successfully defend against state tort suits if the brokers have acted reasonably and arranged transportation with reputable trucking companies. In plaintiff's counsel's words, the brokers 'just have to hire carriers that actually have a reasonable policy,' and 'the broker is not going to have a problem if it's asking the hard questions of the carrier.'"

At a minimum, you must verify that the carrier's motor carrier authority and insurance is current. Next, check the company's safety rating on the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration website. The FMCSA's rating (from best to worst) is Satisfactory, Unrated, Conditional, and Unsatisfactory. It's easy, but not practical, to recommend hiring only Satisfactory carriers, because over 95% of motor carriers are not rated. Ratings are based on a carrier's contacts with law enforcement and FMCSA audits, and most companies do not have sufficient contacts to warrant a rating. Never hire an Unsatisfactory carrier, and avoid Conditional carriers if possible.

When using Unrated motor carriers, it is prudent to dig deeper into the information about a carrier which is provided on the FMCSA website, which compares the number of violations against a particular carrier with the average of all carriers in various categories, such as crash history and drivers who violate the allowable hours of service. Once you have vetted and selected a carrier, you must continue to monitor their FMCSA data, which can be done automatically through platforms like Carrier 411, SaferWatch, and Highway. We also recommend that you obtain Contingent Auto insurance for added peace of mind.



Lisa Reeves, Esq.

Failure to exercise due diligence can lead to large judgments, and even "nuclear" verdicts in the event of an accident caused by your selected trucking company.

This article is not intended as legal advice, or as a comprehensive guide to vetting motor carriers. Consult a transportation lawyer or safety expert to advise you on best practices.



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Calendar of Events

11/12	**Maritime Exchange Board Meeting**, 11:30 a.m.
11/18	Philaport Board Meeting, 9:00 a.m.
	Chilean & American Chamber of Commerce 27th Annual Friend of Chile Awards Luncheon, 11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. The Bellevue Hotel, 200 South Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102 Contact: Christina Lista Register
12/02	Ports of Philadelphia Maritime Society Quarterly Board Meeting Corinthian Yacht Club, Essington, PA Contact: PPMS
12/09	**Maritime Exchange Government Affairs Committee Meeting** 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Contact: Yair Farkas
	Maritime Exchange Executive Committee Meeting, 11:00 a.m.
12/10	Mariners' Advisory Committee Meeting,10:30 a.m. Popi's Italian Restaurant, 3120 S. 20th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19145
	Ports of Philadelphia Maritime Society and World Trade Association of Philadelphia Joint Holiday Dinner, Ballroom at the Ben 834 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107 Contact: PPMS Register
12/16	Philaport Board Meeting, 9:00 a.m.
	2027
01/13	**Maritime Exchange Board Meeting**, 11:30 a.m.
02/10	**Maritime Exchange Executive Committee Meeting**, 11:00 a.m.
03/10	**Maritime Exchange Board of Directors/Annual Meeting**, 11:30
	Maritime Exchange Annual Election, noon – 2:00 p.m.
04/05-07	Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies, MITAGS Mariners for America Conference Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies 692 Maritime Boulevard Baltimore, MD 21090 Register

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

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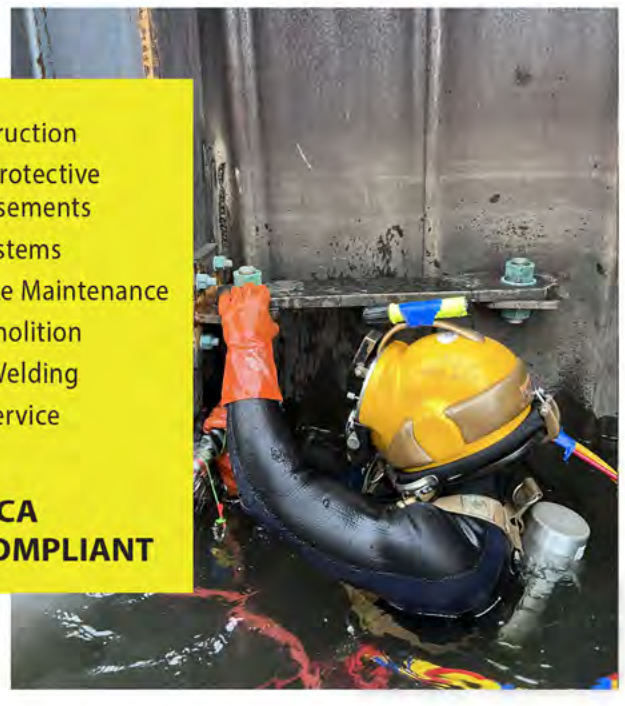
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