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## Virginia Opens Wider Channel; Now Supports Two-Way Ultra-Large Container Vessel Movement

*Large Container Vessels Spend Less Time on Berth and Drive Efficiency as a Result*

**NORFOLK, VA** — The Port of Virginia's® wider shipping channel is now open for two-way passage of ultra-large container vessels (ULCV), reducing the amount of time one of the large vessels spends on berth by up to 15 percent.

Widening the channel is part of the port's \$1.4 billion strategic infrastructure investment package that focuses on creating efficiency, supporting larger cargo volumes and increasing the speed of cargo moving through the gateway.

In parallel to widening the channel, the port is also dredging it and the Norfolk Harbor to 55 feet deep and the ocean approach to 59 feet deep. Upon completion of the \$450 million dredging project in fall 2025, The Port of Virginia will have the deepest, widest channels on the US East Coast.

"This is a true advantage for anyone delivering to or from America," said Stephen A. Edwards, CEO and executive director of the Virginia Port Authority. "Our wider channel sets The Port of Virginia apart by allowing for consistent vessel flow, increasing berth and container yard efficiencies, and further improving harbor safety.

"Ocean carriers are putting larger vessels into their East Coast port rotations with additional ULCVs on order, and our partners know their vessels will not outgrow our capabilities. In Virginia, there is no concern for channel width, overhead draft restrictions, capacity or cargo handling infrastructure."

"The completion of this project is a testament to the collaboration of all port stakeholders in Virginia," said Capt. Whiting Chisman, president of the Virginia Pilot Association. "It is a momentous

achievement. The focus of the project more than a decade ago was on creating a channel wide enough and deep enough to safely accommodate a class of container vessels that were not expected to call the US East Coast for years to come. This port is ready for the future.”

Today, US Coast Guard Sector Virginia issued its business rules memo for the wider channel.

“The region has reached another major milestone in the *Wider, Deeper, Safer* project,” said Capt. Jenn Stockwell, commander US Coast Guard Sector Virginia. “Today I’m thrilled to release *Business Rules for Ultra Large Container Vessels - Change 2*, removing the one-way restrictions in Thimble Shoal Channel West Reach (TSC-WR)... This modification removes one-way channel restrictions for ULCVs transiting TSC-WR.”

The dredging work began in December 2019, and has been completed with collaboration and support from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Norfolk District Office and state, local and community elected officials.

For more information, visit [www.portofvirginia.com/two-way-traffic/](http://www.portofvirginia.com/two-way-traffic/).

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*The Virginia Port Authority (VPA) is a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The VPA owns and through its private operating subsidiary, Virginia International Terminals, LLC (VIT), operates four general cargo facilities Norfolk International Terminals, Portsmouth Marine Terminal, Newport News Marine Terminal and the Virginia Inland Port in Warren County. The VPA leases Virginia International Gateway and Richmond Marine Terminal. A recent economic impact study from The College of William and Mary shows that The Port of Virginia helps to create more than 437,000 jobs and generated \$1 billion in total economic impact throughout the Commonwealth on an annual basis.*