



The Maryland Port Administration

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 23, 2019

CONTACT: Richard Scher (rscher@marylandports.com)
Charles Schelle (cschelle@marylandports.com)
MDOT MPA
410-385-4483

CHESAPEAKE BAY ISLANDS TO BE RESTORED WITH SEDIMENT FROM PORT SHIPPING CHANNEL

*While Port Benefits from Channel Dredging,
Project will Curb Island Erosion, Add Wetlands and Habitat*

(BALTIMORE, MD) – Two islands in the Chesapeake Bay that have long suffered erosion, James and Barren islands off the coast of Dorchester County, will be restored with clean sediment through a joint effort between the Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Port Administration (MDOT MPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District. James Island will accept dredged sediment from Chesapeake Bay channels leading to the Helen Delich Bentley Port of Baltimore, while Barren Island will accept sediment from nearby shallow-draft channels.

“In order to support the economic giant that is the Port of Baltimore, we need to continually dredge our shipping channels to accommodate the massive ships that are carrying more cargo than ever before,” said Governor Larry Hogan. “This important dredging project will also help us stem the tide of erosion to preserve James and Barren Islands and protect Dorchester County residents from additional shoreline erosion.”

A total of 2,144 acres of remote island habitat will be restored as part of the Mid-Chesapeake Bay Island Ecosystem Restoration Project. The larger project of the two, James Island, involves 2,072 acres at full restoration, with 55 percent of those acres preserved as wetlands habitat and 45 percent as upland habitat. At Barren Island, 72 acres will be restored as wetlands.

“This agreement between Maryland and the Corps of Engineers shows how we can work together effectively to benefit the economy and communities and preserve our bay,” Governor Hogan said. “I want to thank the Corps of Engineers, stakeholders, citizens, and everyone who played a role in making this possible.”

A four-year, \$9 million engineering and design phase of the project will begin this year, utilizing 65 percent federal funding and 35 percent state funding. Pending permits, restoration at Barren Island could begin in 2022, with James Island following in 2024. The Army Corps of Engineers will turn the project over to the state when the habitat development is complete. James Island will be able to accommodate an estimated 90 million to 95 million cubic yards of dredged sediment, providing at least 30 years of capacity. For more information about the project, go to: www.nab.usace.army.mil/Mid-Bay.

This new effort is similar to the successful Paul S. Sarbanes Ecosystem Restoration Project at Poplar Island, which has rebuilt a long-eroded island using dredged sediment from Port of Baltimore shipping channels. Today Poplar Island is home to numerous species of wildlife and waterfowl. An expansion of Poplar Island is ongoing and will be completed next year, adding capacity for 28 million cubic yards of dredged sediment. Poplar will be able to continue receiving dredged sediment until 2032.

- more -

Governor Larry Hogan MDOT Secretary Pete K. Rahn MPA Executive Director James J. White

The Port of Baltimore is one of a few U.S. East Coast ports with the necessary water depth and infrastructure to accommodate some of the world's largest container ships. Earlier this year, the Port of Baltimore welcomed the largest container ship to ever visit Maryland, the *Evergreen Triton*.

Ports America Chesapeake, which operates the Port's Seagirt Marine Terminal, is developing a second 50-foot deep container berth at the Port. Construction will begin later this year and is expected to be operational in 2021. A second-deep berth will allow the Port to handle two supersized ships simultaneously.

The Port continues to experience record cargo growth. In 2018, a record 43 million tons of international cargo crossed the combined state-owned public and private marine terminals. Last year the public terminals alone handled a record 10.9 million tons of general cargo and more than a million 20-foot equivalent containers, the first year ever exceeding the million mark. The Port also handled a record 850,147 cars and light trucks in 2018, the most in the U.S. for the eighth consecutive year. Through the first half of 2019, the Port is tracking ahead of each of those record marks.

Recently, it was announced that Maryland would receive \$125 million in federal grant funds toward the reconstruction of the 125-year old Howard Street Tunnel. The project will project will allow for double-stacked container trains heading to and from the Port. Double-stacked trains will grow the Port's container business by approximately 100,000 containers annually and generate 6,800 tunnel construction jobs and another 7,400 jobs as a result of the Port's increased container business.

The Port ranks 11th among major U.S. ports for cargo handled, and ninth nationally for total cargo value. Among the nation's ports, the Port of Baltimore ranks first for autos and light trucks, roll on/roll off heavy farm and construction machinery, imported sugar and imported gypsum.

The Port of Baltimore [generates about 15,330 direct jobs](#), with more than 139,180 jobs overall linked to Port activities. The average salary for people with direct jobs at the Port is 9.5 percent higher than the average annual wage in Maryland. The Port is responsible for nearly \$3.3 billion in personal wages and salaries, \$2.6 billion in business revenues and \$395 million in state and local tax revenues.

###