

Governor Christie Announces Early Completion Of Job-Creating Bayonne Bridge Clearance Project

Thursday, June 8, 2017 Tags: [Transportation](#)



Greater Navigational Clearance Brings World's Largest Vessels, Regional Economic Growth

Trenton, NJ - Governor Chris Christie announced today the early completion of a job-creating Bayonne Bridge navigational clearance project that will grow the regional economy by attracting some of the world's largest, environmentally friendly cargo vessels to terminals in Elizabeth, Newark and Staten Island.

The U.S. Coast Guard certified the bridge's new navigational clearance at 215 feet – equivalent to the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge – allowing vessels up to 18,000 TEUs to travel underneath it to port terminals. The Bayonne Bridge's lower roadway removal was completed seven months ahead of a revised year-end schedule to increase clearance capacity from 151 feet and the maximum vessel size from 9,800 TEUs.

"This historic project will create all kinds of jobs and billions of dollars in activity to New Jersey and this region," Governor Christie said. "All major shipping lines will now access our port, generating greater opportunities and economic growth for New Jersey residents, businesses and consumers. They will transport everything from clothing and furniture to beverages on larger, greener vessels, at a much lower cost, which is a win for everyone. Cementing our port as the most attractive East Coast option has been a top priority since day one, and in a matter of weeks people will benefit from the results, as the world's cargo passes through the Garden State."

"The Port Authority has a long, storied history of building great projects, and the Bayonne Bridge ranks among the agency's most innovative undertakings in nearly 100 years," said Port Authority Chairman John Degnan. "Today's announcement sends a clear message to the shipping community that our port is open for business and ready to compete with our neighboring port facilities on the East Coast for global cargo."

Vessels in excess of 9,800 TEUs will begin to call on port terminals in New Jersey, taking advantage of the new bridge clearance, in the coming weeks. By the fall, some of the largest vessels now calling on United States ports, between 13,000 and 14,000 TEUs, will be serving the Port of New York and New Jersey, the busiest on the East Coast that supports 336,000 jobs and counting.

Construction on the Bayonne Bridge project began in 2013, after the project received fast-track environmental review status and a federal permit from the U.S. Coast Guard. An elevated roadway through the existing arch bridge and over the existing roadway was completed in February 2017, allowing the old roadway to be removed. The bridge will be built to its full width by 2019, providing motorists with a safer, wider roadway featuring four, 12-foot-wide lanes in each direction, shoulders and a shared use pedestrian-bicycle path.

This raising of the Bayonne Bridge – along with last year's completion of a \$2.1 billion, 50-foot navigation channel deepening project, \$600 million of Port Authority investments in on-dock rail projects and billions of dollars in investments by private-sector terminal operators – will allow the port to continue to attract more cargo on fewer ships.

The Port of New York and New Jersey is the busiest port on the East Coast and the third busiest in the country after Los Angeles and Long Beach.

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