

# **Baker-Polito Administration Announces \$24 Million in Funding to Dredge New Bedford Inner Harbor**

Governor Charlie Baker, Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito, Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Mike Kennealy and Secretary of Administration and Finance Michael Heffernan joined Mayor Jon Mitchell and other state and local officials at the New Bedford Whaling Museum to announce the administration's commitment of \$24 million in funding to dredge New Bedford-Fairhaven Harbor.

This funding commitment will enable the dredging of approximately 430,000 cubic yards of sediment from the harbor, deepening berths and access channels at more than 40 commercial marinas and waterfront properties. The grant also funds the fifth and final phase of the Commonwealth's efforts to enhance cleanup of the harbor, one of the EPA's largest Superfund sites. The City of New Bedford will construct a confined aquatic disposal cell to sequester any dredged contaminated sediment, resulting in more than one million cubic yards of contamination removed by the Commonwealth over the last 18 years.

"Supporting the vitality of maritime industry is critical to the strength of both coastal communities and the entire Commonwealth," said Governor Charlie Baker. "We will continue to fund initiatives such as the Massachusetts Dredging Program that help communities maximize their coastal resources, and look forward to the positive impact this funding will have on New Bedford and the region."

"As Chair of the Seaport Economic Council, I have seen

firsthand the transformative impact that dredging can have on maritime industry and the coastal communities that depend on it,” said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito. “We are pleased that successful collaboration between the municipality, our Administration, and the federal government yielded this \$24 million commitment that will unlock thousands of jobs and spur millions of dollars in economic activity.”

Home to the most valuable fishing port in the United States, New Bedford-Fairhaven Harbor processes more than 1 million pounds of seafood each day and is a major engine for economic activity in Massachusetts. Last year, the port generated more than \$11 billion in economic value while providing more than 14,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs.

The additional dredging made possible by today’s funding announcement will increase capacity and remove contaminated sediment, clearing the way for investments in the expansion and upgrading of critical port infrastructure. The funding is expected to lead to the creation of approximately 700 new jobs in and around New Bedford, while generating \$232 million more in business revenue.

The \$24 million in funds leverages more than \$4 million in private monies from commercial property owners, along with a \$15 million Federal BUILD Grant to construct 800 feet of additional bulkhead at New Bedford’s North Terminal. Reusing about 100,000 cubic yards of the dredged sediment as clean fill for construction, the new bulkhead will increase dockage capacity, expand direct access to the port’s offloading and seafood processing facilities, and provide additional capacity for offshore wind opportunities.

In March, the Baker-Polito Administration announced its first standalone grant program offering up to \$4 million in focused funding for saltwater dredging on a competitive, annual basis. Dredging assistance is essential to assist coastal communities in the maintenance and improvement of their navigational

waterways and support the long-term growth and sustainability of the state's maritime economy.

"Our administration recognizes both the importance and expense of large-scale infrastructure projects like dredging to communities across the Commonwealth," said Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Mike Kennealy. "We will continue to leverage tools like the MassWorks and Massachusetts Dredging Programs to address local priorities and catalyze growth."

"With this commitment of capital funds we are proud to continue partnering with New Bedford, an important and historic port city and a strong economic engine for the South Coast region," said Secretary of Administration and Finance Michael J. Heffernan. "When our administration invests capital dollars in major infrastructure projects, we prioritize those that leverage support from other public and private sources and promise to strengthen the economy and create jobs. This dredging project is a terrific example of that approach."

"For three centuries, the Port of New Bedford has been the foundation of Greater New Bedford's economy, so harbor dredging is a strategic investment that bolsters the competitive advantages of our maritime industries, especially commercial fishing and offshore wind energy," said New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell. "Increasing the industrial capacity of the Port through key investments like berth dredging has long been my priority and I know that Governor Baker and his administration see it the same way. Today is a day to celebrate the fruits of sustained collaboration among the Baker-Polito Administration, the City, the Port, and local commercial interests who have committed their own funding to make the dredging project possible."

"This project will provide Fairhaven and New Bedford with significant economic benefits for years to come, while cleaning up the remaining levels of contamination that the EPA

isn't able to clean up," said Fairhaven Town Administrator Mark Rees.

"We are grateful to the Baker-Polito Administration and to our delegation for recognizing the importance of this project and investing in the future of the Port of New Bedford," said Executive Director of the Port of New Bedford Edward Anthes-Washburn. "This project will ensure our marine economy, as well as the Commonwealth, will continue to benefit from this great natural resource for decades to come."

"Not only is this dredging critical for the harbor to continue to thrive and support the activities that are currently taking place, but I'm excited to see the economic development that this project is going to enable. The fishing, commercial, tourism, and recreational potential of New Bedford cannot be realized without a fully-functioning harbor," said Senator Mark Montigny. "Other investments that I've championed around the harbor, such as my legislation and capital funding to transform the state pier, would be squandered if we fail to make basic maintenance such as dredging a priority."

"We've long touted the prospective economic benefits of dredging the New Bedford Harbor and I am thrilled to see this critical project officially underway. These additional economic opportunities need to be capitalized on sooner rather than later," said Representative Antonio F. D. Cabral. "It's taken a great deal of collective effort to get this project prioritized and I am confident that this \$24 million investment will pay off for New Bedford, the South Coast region and the entire Commonwealth."

"This investment reflects our port's role as one of the primary economic drivers along the South Coast and the state," said Representative Bill Straus. "I have been a determined advocate for this targeted dredging within the harbor to enhance its use. I thank the Governor for his timely help on this project."

“The Baker Polito Administration has been a remarkable partner with the City of New Bedford in improving our most important asset, the state’s second busiest seaport,” said Representative Paul Schmid.

“New Bedford, as one of the most active ports in the country, is critical to sustaining and expanding employment opportunities both in the region and throughout the Commonwealth. The completion of the dredging project was essential to the health of our port economy and to our waterways,” said Representative Christopher Hendricks. “Thank you to the Baker-Polito Administration for their partnership with New Bedford to strengthen the South Coast region and local maritime economy.”

“Once again the Baker-Polito Administration has come through for the South Coast,” said Representative Christopher Markey. “This money is essential to provide further economic growth for our incredible waterfront. This investment acknowledges that even when you are the best there is always room for improvement.”

The Massachusetts Dredging Program was authorized in the 2018 Economic Development Bill, which was signed by Governor Baker on August 9, 2018. The program builds on the success of the 2018 Navigational Dredging Pilot Program, which awarded \$3.6 million to 10 projects, tapping into \$3.9 million in local funding.

Applications are evaluated by the program administrator, the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED), in consultation with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs’ Office of Coastal Zone Management.