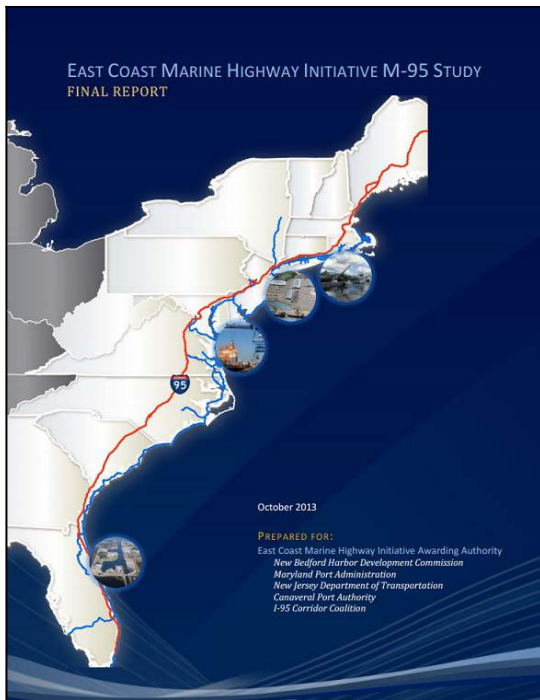


# Port of New Bedford Releases Study on East Coast Marine Highway Services



*Expanded Marine Freight Network Would Relieve Landside Congestion, Lower Carbon Emissions and Improve Roadway Safety Among Other Benefits*

The Port of New Bedford Harbor Development Commission, on behalf of the study's Management Committee, released the East Coast Marine Highway Initiative M-95 Study, a comprehensive look into the development of a business case for marine highway services on the East Coast. The study was led by a partnership among the Port of New Bedford, Massachusetts; the Port of Baltimore, Maryland; Port Canaveral, Florida; New Jersey Department of Transportation and the I-95 Corridor Coalition. In order to promote an increase in marine highway services along the U.S. East Coast, the U.S. Maritime

Administration provided financial assistance to determine market and operational feasibility for increased utilization of waterborne freight transportation along the M-95 Marine Highway Corridor.

The purpose of the combined East Coast Marine Highway Initiative was to study the potential for marine highway service(s) that could provide relief to congested Interstate-95. The study focused on those services identified in two Marine Highway Initiatives that were designated by the Secretary of Transportation in 2010. These were entitled: a) the AMH 1-95 Corridor Service Project (ports of New Bedford, Baltimore, and Canaveral) and b) New Jersey Marine Highway Platform as a Marine Highway Project.

While there have been many studies investigating general benefits provided by domestic coastal shipping services, the partnership decided to focus on specific costs, schedules and other requirements that would make a marine highway service viable. The study examined market forces and engaged the shipping industry to identify key impediments to the introduction of service(s) along the M-95 corridor.

Perhaps the most unique deliverable of the study was the operational development portion of the project. Vessel itineraries, service parameters, and potential terminal locations were developed for specific service routes. The study also referenced a previous U.S. Maritime Administration study to conceptualize vessel types that could be used for commercial service and provide resiliency to sealift capabilities during national emergencies. After identifying potential services, the study quantified the financial performance of those services with a business plan and viability analysis.

Acting Maritime Administrator Paul "Chip" Jaenichen described how this study will further the Maritime Administration's efforts toward a comprehensive marine highway system.

“Successful East Coast Marine Highway services, such as the 64 Express between Richmond and Norfolk, VA, provide public benefits by reducing traffic congestion, infrastructure maintenance costs, and transportation-related air emissions. This study helps to identify the institutional and operational challenges and opportunities for several potential East Coast services, helps stake holders to focus on business opportunities, and articulates where the tipping point for starting some of those services might lie. This is a helpful tool for anyone considering a new Marine Highway service along the Eastern Seaboard,” he said.

New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell added “This study clearly articulates the benefits of America’s Marine Highway and provides us with a roadmap for making improvements so that we maximize its potential. The Port of New Bedford, as the Commonwealth’s largest industrial port outside of Boston, is aggressively pursuing new opportunities to attract shipping, so the release of this study is timely. The Port will continue to work with the U.S. Department of Transportation and U.S. Maritime Administration to advance policies that spur coastal shipping and provide meaningful economic, environmental and national security benefits,” he said.

The New Bedford Harbor Development Commission acknowledges the importance of the America’s Marine Highways Program to expand our local and regional economies, mitigate congestion, reduce environmental impacts, improve safety, and reduce energy consumption within Southern Massachusetts as well as the U.S. East Coast. Furthermore, the program offers an opportunity to provide a substantial sustainable improvement in the overall capacity of the national freight transportation system.

In the coming months, the Port of New Bedford will continue to engage private industry regarding the development of a viable marine highway operation. The partnership will also use the findings to advocate for increased funding and policy changes that could spur this new industry.

The East Coast Marine Highway Initiative Study is available at: <http://www.portofnewbedford.org/hdc/studies/>.

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