

# Joint Massport, Corps ceremony celebrates the Boston Harbor Navigation Improvement Project

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To kick off the beginning of the Boston Harbor Navigation Improvement Project, Col. William Conde, New England District Commander, and members of his staff gathered with Congressionals and members of state and local agencies, Sept. 15, for a ceremonial event in Charlestown, Massachusetts. Navigation improvements from this project will increase the efficiency for harbor operations and reduce tidal delays for larger vessels.

The event began with a tour of a dredging vessel. Col. Conde and his staff briefed Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker and a small group of other participants on the dredging project and observed dredge operations in action. When the group returned from the tour, Col. Conde, elected officials and key port stakeholders signed a propeller to celebrate the start of the project.

A speaking program followed the propeller signing. After an introduction by Massport Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Thomas Glynn, Col. Conde explained the project to event participants. "About 11.6 million cubic yards of silt, sand and clay and 400,000 cubic yards of rock will need to be removed to deepen the channels," he said. "We anticipate the deepening work will start in the spring of 2018 and be completed late in 2022."

Other speakers at the event supporting the project were Senator Elizabeth Warren, Senator Edward Markey, Congressman Stephen Lynch, Governor Baker, Massport CEO Thomas Glynn and head of the Kraft Group International Forest Products, Daniel Kraft.

Boston Harbor is New England's largest port, serving as the principal distribution point for the export and import of commerce for Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont. The project will deepen the Broad South North Entrance Channel to 51 feet; the President's Roads, the outer Main Ship and the Lower Reserved Channels to 47 feet; the Main Ship Channel between the Reserved Channel and Massport Marine terminal to 45 feet and the Chelsea River and a small portion of the Mystic River Channels to 40 feet. The project will help the larger vessels navigate in and out of the harbor. "The recommended plan involves placement of all dredged material and rock at the Massachusetts Bay Disposal Site," said Project Manager Matt Tessier. "However, it is the policy of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to use dredged material, where practicable, for beneficial use."

According to Tessier, the District will investigate uses of rock for offshore reef creation and shore protection. The dredged material may have beneficial use as well. "Use of the dredge material to cap the former Industrial Waste Site in Massachusetts Bay also will be investigated in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and others."

Tessier said that none of the possible beneficial uses should increase the project costs.

Col. Conde said that the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 authorized the Improvement deepening of Boston Harbor for construction. The authorization includes deepening and widening of existing channels throughout the harbor from Broad Sound North Channel to Conley Terminal as well as potential future improvements to the upstream Mystic and Chelsea River channels. According to Col. Conde, this project will contribute significantly to the economic efficiency of commercial navigation in the New England Region. "This project has been a long time in the making, and I'm thrilled that we can all be here to celebrate that we're going to deepen Boston Harbor so it can remain competitive and be a vital hub for ocean freight for all of New England," he said. "This project would not have been possible without the combined efforts of all the partners involved, especially Massport and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts."

The non-federal sponsors, Massport and MassDOT will contribute \$120 million, while the federal government will pay \$210 million to complete the project. Col. Conde said that industrial, commercial fishing, and recreational vessels all use the harbor. This project will go a long way toward supporting the needs of the city of Boston, the region and the state in meeting the growing navigation requirements to remain competitive within the navigation industry.

“This improvement deepening will make Boston Harbor more competitive in the navigation business, allowing larger container ships to dock at Boston facilities,” said Col. Conde. “This will be a major boost for Boston, the Commonwealth and the region.”