



PRESS RELEASE

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DRBA Proceeds with New Bridge Ship Collision Protection System Project Partially Funded with \$22.3 Million USDOT BUILD Grant

NEW CASTLE, Del. - Today, Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA) officials announced that R.E. Pierson Construction Company of Pilesgrove Township, New Jersey has been awarded the construction contract to build the new Delaware Memorial Bridge (DMB) Ship Collision Protection System. The cost of the project is nearly \$93 million, and is partially funded by a \$22.25 million U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Better Utilizing Investment to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant.

“The current bridge tower pier protection systems are original to each span and today’s tankers and ships are bigger and faster than those of the 1950s and 1960s,” said Thomas J. Cook, Executive Director of the bi-state agency. “Millions of people rely on the Delaware Memorial Bridge to move products, visit family or commute to work on a daily basis. It’s our responsibility to make sure that this essential I-95 transportation link is properly maintained and enhanced for the benefit of future generations.”

The new bridge ship collision protection system project consists of the installation of eight (8) solid-fill dolphin cells, each measuring eighty (80) feet in diameter. Four cells will be installed at the piers supporting both eastern and western towers and be located a minimum of 443 feet from the edge of the Delaware River’s 800’ wide channel.

Due to a fishery restriction which prohibits driving piles into the Delaware River from March 1 thru June 30, on-site construction work is scheduled to begin on July 1, 2023. The project work is expected to be completed in September 2025.

How likely is a ship to collide with the Delaware Memorial Bridge? Well, it has already occurred. The tanker “Regent Liverpool” struck the fender system protecting the Delaware tower piers in July 1969, causing a million dollars in damage (\$7 million in today’s dollars). “While we all hope this situation doesn’t happen again, we must take preemptive measures that will help prevent any type of reoccurrence and damage to our bridge infrastructure,” Cook added.

If the Delaware Memorial Bridge was being constructed today, the installation of a similar bridge protection system would be a requirement for the project to proceed. This innovative Ship Collision Protection System at the bases of the Delaware Memorial Bridge tower structures will better protect the structural integrity of the bridges in the event of a ship collision.

About the Delaware River and Bay Authority

The DRBA, a bi-state governmental agency created by Compact in 1962, owns and operates the Delaware Memorial Bridge, the Cape May- Lewes Ferry, and the Forts Ferry Crossing. The DRBA also manages corporate and aviation properties through its economic development powers - two airports in New Jersey (Millville Airport and Cape May Airport) and three in Delaware (New Castle Airport, Civil Air Terminal and Delaware Airpark). All DRBA operating revenues are generated through the bridge, ferry and airport facilities. For more information, visit www.drba.net.