



# PRESS RELEASE

July 26, 2023  
For Immediate Release

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## **Construction Underway on New Bridge Collision Protection System** *\$93 Million Project Enhances Protection of Delaware Memorial Bridge Tower Structures*

**NEW CASTLE, Del.** – Today, Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA) officials announced that construction work on the new Delaware Memorial Bridge Protection System is underway and is expected to be completed in September 2025. The cost of the project is nearly \$93 million, which is partially funded by a \$22.25 million U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Better Utilizing Investment to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant.

“The Delaware Memorial Bridge is a vital transportation link in the I-95 north-south corridor and millions of people rely on it to move products, visit family or commute to work on a daily basis,” said Thomas J. Cook, Executive Director of the DRBA. “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. Our goal is to take preemptive measures to prevent a commercial vessel from striking one of the bridge towers, which could cause significant damage to the bridge infrastructure and disruptions to interstate travel.”

The new bridge ship collision protection system project consists of the installation of eight (8) stone filled “dolphin” cylinders, 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.

Earlier this month, the contractor began to construct a 360’ temporary trestle from the Delaware shoreline south of New Jersey bound bridge to transport materials and personnel to barges. Large barges with cranes will mobilize to the site near the Delaware Tower Structures and set up to install long wick drains into the river bottom, which will act like straws, enabling water to travel to the surface as the 80’ diameter cells are filled with sand and stone. As the soft material compresses from the weight, the water contained within the framework is squeezed out and up.

A barge loaded with 115’ long sheet piling will arrive from Louisiana for installation at the site. The process takes approximately three months for each cell to be completed. This process will be repeated seven times to construct each of the solid-fill dolphin cells.

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.

In late 2022, R.E. Pierson Construction Company of Pilesgrove Township, New Jersey was awarded the construction contract to build the new Delaware Memorial Bridge (DMB) Ship Collision Protection System.

**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](http://www.drba.net).