



US Army Corps of Engineers

Institute for Water Resources

BUILDING STRONG®

Port Capacity Analysis (as part of follow-up Panama Canal studies) (2010)

Status: Completed

Purpose: The recent approval to expand the Panama Canal will have tremendous implications on the US port system, namely the size and frequency of Post-Panamax vessel calls to the East and Gulf Coasts. One of the main recommendations in last year's white paper called for an unbiased assessment of the ports ability to handle the increased vessel sizes and volume of traffic. In doing so, we hope to establish standards/thresholds for field planners working on deep draft navigation projects and prevent districts from over-claiming transportation benefits.

Objective: For this study, the contractor would compile data on bathymetric conditions such as present harbor depth (as well as projected depth for proposed improvements), tide window(s); traffic information such as vessel calls, tonnage, operating vs. design drafts and service area; and most importantly, infrastructure information such as intermodal access, dock and storage areas, number of cranes (existing and proposed), and lift capacity. Some of the data is readily available through the Corps' Navigation Data Center while additional data would need to be collected via port interviews or by examining the expansion plans for each respective port. The greatest challenge is sorting through the data and making a judgment as to which ports are most likely to meet its expectations.

Benefits: This product will help HQUSACE and the field establish the bounds of claimable benefits as well as a realistic forecast of vessel calls and sizes for each respective port on the East and Gulf Coasts. If given enough time and funding, we will eventually amend the contract to include West Coast ports.

Progress: We are merely in the process of drafting up the SOW for a contractor to perform the assessment. We hope to award the contract by 15 August and begin working on this immediately.

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