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NEWS RELEASE

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VPA Begins Work on Berth Expansion Project at Norfolk International Terminals

Norfolk, VA – Workers on Friday began driving test pilings at Norfolk International Terminals (NIT) north berth and in doing so marked the start of a project that will further expand the port's cargo handling capacity.

“We don't believe test test-pile driving will take too long,” said Jeff Florin, the Virginia Port Authority's (VPA) chief engineer. “The work determines how deep we need to go with the pilings that will support the main structure. I think we will begin driving those primary support piles by sometime next month.”

On Friday, the first test-pile was driven 83 feet deep into the riverbed.

At completion, the project will have expanded the existing north berth by 900 linear feet and made way for three new Suez-class cranes. In addition the dockside depth is being dredged to 50 feet and 19 acres of backlands/container yard is being reconfigured for straddle carrier operations. The dredging is underway and the backlands work is 98 percent complete.

Following five years of construction, NIT North was opened in 1998. The components of that project were a new wharf, dredging, three new cranes, the introduction of straddle carriers and a reconfiguration of the container yard.

“We have known, since before completion of the first project on the north side, that we were going to add berth space and crane capacity there,” said J. Robert Bray, the VPA’s executive director. “These kinds of expansions and upgrades are necessary and continual because facilities and equipment simply wear out from use, there is an ongoing effort of maximize space and keeping our terminals modern keeps us efficient. Modern facilities, efficiency and deep water are what the ship lines want and we’ve got it all.”

The cost breakdown for the project is as follows: \$32 million for the wharf expansion; \$11.2 million for reconfiguring the backlands; \$8.7 million for dredging; and an *estimated* \$24 million for new cranes.

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The Virginia Port Authority (VPA) is an agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia, reporting to the state Secretary of Transportation. The VPA owns and operates four general cargo facilities on behalf of the state: Norfolk International Terminals, Portsmouth Marine Terminal, Newport News Marine Terminal and the Virginia Inland Port in Warren County. The terminals are operated by Virginia International Terminals, Inc. (VIT) the non-stock, non-profit operating company. The VPA, through terminal earnings generated by VIT, is operationally self-sufficient. The VPA and correlating maritime industry is responsible for 165,000 jobs, \$762 million in business revenues and \$61 million in state and local taxes throughout the Commonwealth.