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**News Release**  
**July 16, 2008**

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## **VPA Strengthens its Environmental Commitment with ISO 14001:2004 Certification**

*First Major U.S. East Coast Port to Earn the Certification*

**NORFOLK, VA** – The Virginia Port Authority [VPA] has become first port owner and operator on the U.S. East Coast to have its environmental management system certified in accordance with ISO 14001:2004 standards, further strengthening the VPA’s commitment to environmental excellence.

“The VPA has always been committed to taking care of the area’s waterways and there is a long record of that work,” said Jerry A. Bridges, the VPA’s executive director. “This certification expands beyond the waterways our commitment to pollution prevention, compliance on various levels and continuous improvement of our environmental management system. Our effort is has been certified and is now recognized on a global level.”

The ISO 14001:2004 is a certification of an environmental management system, which requires an organization to manage, measure, improve and communicate its environmental

program in a systematic way. One of the primary requirements for certification is to have a comprehensive list of environmental aspects associated with terminal operations and identify those that can have the most significant effects on the environment. The key commitments of the terminal's environmental policy include stopping pollution, obeying environmental rules, improving performance and reducing waste.

Last year, Bridges directed Heather L. W. Mantz, the VPA's director of environmental affairs, to begin working on the ISO 14001:2004 certification. The process included identifying all of the environmental issues associated with the port operations; evaluating potential impacts; determining needs; and developing a continuous management plan that includes a training and awareness element.

"We took a detailed look at what happens on our terminals, and what could happen as it relates to the environment," Mantz said. "Based on that work there is now a detailed management plan in place to identify, address, comply, prevent and train. We have always maintained that we want to be a good neighbor and as gentle on our environment as possible and this certification will help strengthen that commitment."

In May, Bureau Veritas, an independent auditor for ISO [International Organization for Standards], began a detailed review of the VPA's environmental management plan. The audit included random site inspections and interviews with terminal personnel on the environmental processes and issues relating to their jobs.

The audit ended May 15 and the certification was issued June 19. The VPA hired a private consultant who guided the organization through several steps that prepared it for the certification audit. The ISO 14001:2004 certification is valid until June 18, 2011, at which time another audit will take place to recertify the VPA.

In order to monitor continued compliance with the ISO 14001:2004 certification, the VPA will have "surveillance audits" conducted annually by an external auditor until the recertification audit in 2011. In addition, internal audits will be conducted in between the surveillance audits.

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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 343,000 jobs, \$41 billion in total revenues throughout the Commonwealth.**

