

# Deepening Bayonne's Kill van Kull to 50 feet is a mission accomplished; part of larger plan to support shipping industry's continued access to New Jersey's ports

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By **Charles Hack/The Jersey Journal**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently completed a three-year contract to dredge Bayonne's Kill van Kull to a depth of 50 feet.

The current contract to dredge the 4-mile Kill van Kull waterway, between Bayonne and Staten Island, commenced in 2008 and was completed on Sept. 24, officials said.

Deepening the shipping channels to 50-foot depth will ensure the latest container ships can navigate the port without grounding on the riverbed, Army officials said.

Commercial shipping companies are now buying up these larger ships in time for completion of the expansion of the Panama Canal, scheduled for 2014.

The Panama Canal project will allow the new ships to cross the isthmus of Panama before heading up the East Coast.

The Kill van Kull is crucial to the Port of New York and New Jersey because the channel provides a passage from New York Bay where ships arrive from under the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge from the Atlantic Ocean to marine terminals in Staten Island, Port Newark and Elizabeth.

Officials say keeping the largest port on the East Coast which supports 270,000 full-time jobs and \$11.2 billion in personal income is vital to the regional economy.

"Deepening the harbor channels is a critical part of our strategy to grow the port business," Port Authority Port commerce director Richard Larrabee said in statement.

To stay competitive, the strategy includes building a new rail system and new road network, Larrabee said.

The \$115 million contract to dredge the Kill van Kull is part of a larger \$1.6 billion navigation project slated for completion in 2013 to dredge nearly 38 miles of shipping channels between New York and New Jersey.

Dredgers are now deepening the Arthur Kill area north of Shooters Island in New Jersey waters. Further dredging is needed in the Ambrose and Bay Ridge channels, officials said.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey officials also plan to raise the roadbed of the Bayonne Bridge by 2016 to accommodate the larger ships.