



# Dredging for Safe Passage

IN THE CHESAPEAKE BAY & BALTIMORE HARBOR

## Quick Facts

- Major shipping channels in the Chesapeake Bay and Baltimore Harbor are maintained at a 50-foot depth; other channels are maintained at a 35-foot depth
- Approximately 4.7 million cubic yards of sediment are dredged annually throughout the Bay, an amount that would fill the Ravens' stadium at least twice
- Laws govern the safe placement and use of dredged material
- Successful dredging and dredged material management result from collaboration among agencies, citizens, and other stakeholders

Every year, cargo vessels and cruise ships travel to and from the Port of Baltimore. Many of the water routes they travel require frequent dredging to maintain the 50-foot depth required by many of today's ships. On average, 4.7 million cubic yards of sediment is removed from shipping channels in the Chesapeake Bay and Baltimore Harbor every year. The Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Port Administration (MDOT MPA) and the US Army Corps of Engineers work together to conduct dredging and find placement sites/solutions for the dredged material. Dredging usually occurs in the fall and winter.

## Sediment Quality

Sediments (mostly fine silts, clay, and some sand) accumulate and deposit in the shipping channels. The geologic formations in the region as well as human activities affect the character of the sediment in different locations. Industrial activity, agriculture, and urban development have all left their mark.

Sediment dredged from the navigation channels is tested and managed safely in accordance with state and federal requirements.

## Placement and Use of Dredged Material

Dredged material is generally placed in a carefully engineered area enclosed by a dike, called a placement site. Over time, the sediment dries and can be used to restore eroded wetlands, create upland wildlife habitat, and build new terminal space for the Port. MDOT MPA is working with stakeholders to demonstrate that dredged material can be innovatively reused to provide landfill cover, cap brownfields, and produce engineered fill.

The MDOT MPA conducts a planning process to ensure that Maryland always has 20 years of dredged material placement capacity available. Advisory committees along with state and local agencies participate in the dredged material management program and ensure that communities and stakeholders have information and access to the decision-making process.

The MDOT MPA and the Baltimore District Corps of Engineers are studying the feasibility of widening channels in the Chesapeake Bay to maintain the Port's economic competitiveness.

For more information, visit [www.marylandports.com/greenport](http://www.marylandports.com/greenport).

Published by the Maryland Port Administration

**"Port of Baltimore"**

Follow • Subscribe • Explore



[www.marylandports.com](http://www.marylandports.com)

October 2018