

New Jersey Department of Transportation
Bureau of Research

Technical Brief



Impact of EPA 2012 Commercial Pump-Out Regulations

This study investigated how the EPA Vessel General Permit (VGP) would affect maritime commerce in New Jersey. Data were solicited from various agencies and analyses were performed to investigate what may impact New Jersey maritime operations; and what New Jersey needs to do to prepare for the VGP requirements.

Background

The US EPA issued the VGP for managing vessel discharges under the Clean Water Act. As a result, commercial vessels operating in the New York/New Jersey Harbor and at the Delaware River will be required to comply, including possible additional conditions imposed by the state or other states whose waters are adjacent to New Jersey. Compliance may have an impact on maritime commerce operations in New Jersey.

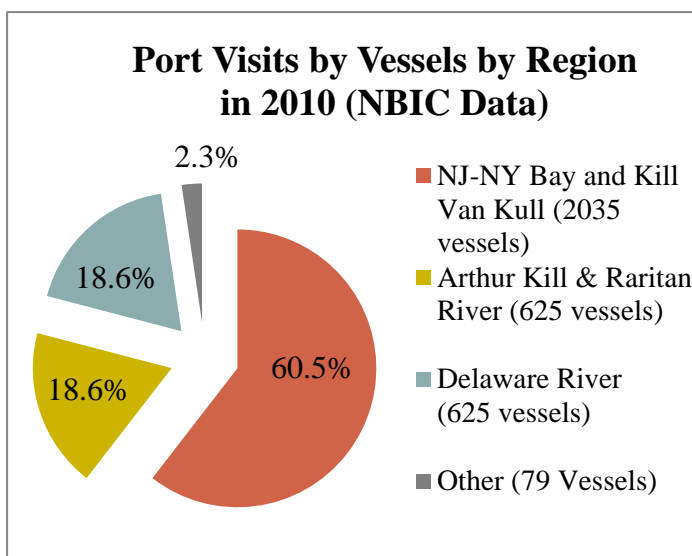
Research Objectives and Approach

In order to study the impact of the VGP on the maritime industry in New Jersey, data were collected from US EPA, US Coast Guard, and US Army Corps of Engineers and analyzed. A stakeholder committee was formed and meetings held to discuss key VGP issues.

Findings

The main findings of this study are:

- The VGP regulates discharges from vessels in three effluent limits: general effluent; 26 specific discharge streams; and water-quality based limits.
- The VGP requirement generally expresses Best Management Practices (BMPs). A web site which contains all the VGP requirements and documents was prepared. The URL of the website is <http://transportation.njit.edu/vgp>.



- Under the Clean Water Act, states can add additional requirements regarding local water quality. New Jersey's policy is not to impose additional requirements to federal regulations and maintains the federal standards. New York has extended their rules regarding graywater and bilgewater discharge ban until the end of the permit term.
- Primarily, the VGP relies on self-monitoring, self-inspections, and self-reporting of violations.
- The VGP requires vessels to carry out a number of actions, including weekly, annual, and dry-dock inspections, quarterly testing of waste streams, extensive record-keeping, training, and disciplinary actions.
- 57,173 vessels filed Notice of Intent (NOI) in 8 types of vessels.
- Approximately, 3000 to 4000 vessels arrive in New Jersey annually.
- There are over 200 ports or waterway facilities in New Jersey. These facilities can be classified into 5 regions based on the waterway. The busiest region is Ports on New York/New Jersey Harbor and Kill Van Kull.
- The VGP will affect New Jersey in four areas: government's roles, discharges handling and on-shore facilities, compliance issues, and economic impact.
- Many vessels do not have room for on-board treatment facility or holding tank for graywater or other types of discharge.
- 170 pump-out facilities for recreational vessels sewage only exist in New Jersey. These may not be used by, and are not compatible with, commercial vessels.
- No onshore graywater or ballast water pump-out facilities exist in New Jersey.
- US EPA is proposing new, more stringent numeric technology-based effluent limitations applicable to vessels with ballast water tanks in 2013 VGP. This may cause potential economic repercussions and logistical challenges.
- If onshore facilities are determined to be needed in New Jersey, a funded program for storage and treatment facilities should be planned.

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A final report is available online at: <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/refdata/research/>. If you would like a copy of the full report, send an e-mail to: Research.Bureau@dot.state.nj.us.

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