

# PORT CURRENTS

ACCELERATING CLEAN OPERATIONS AT THE PORT OF VIRGINIA

Issue #8 | March 2026

## Clean Ports Grant — Driving a Zero-Emission Future

*The Port of Virginia is entering an exciting new phase in our Clean Ports initiative. After months of planning and coordination, we are moving from vision to action — procurement is now underway for key equipment funded through the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Ports grant. These investments mark an important step toward cleaner operations, cleaner air, and long-term sustainability for the communities we serve.*

### Clean Ports Grant Supports New Locomotives and Battery-Electric Buses

The Port of Virginia is advancing its commitment to cleaner, more efficient operations through the EPA's Clean Ports Program. With support from this federal grant, the port is moving forward with the procurement of new low-emission locomotives and battery-electric buses that will reduce air pollution and improve the environmental footprint of daily operations. The procurement of this equipment was recently approved by the Virginia Port Authority's Board of Commissioners.

#### Locomotives at Norfolk International Terminals:

Funding from the Clean Ports grant is helping the port replace older switcher locomotives with modern, cleaner-burning units. These new locomotives will significantly cut emissions in and around the port's rail yards, supporting healthier air quality for nearby neighborhoods and improving the efficiency of cargo movement.

#### Battery-Electric Buses at Norfolk International Terminals:

The grant also supports the purchase of battery-electric buses that will transport the workforce across port facilities. These buses will reduce diesel use, lower operating costs, and contribute to the port's long-term sustainability goals.

Together, these investments represent an important step toward cleaner transportation, reduced emissions, and a more sustainable future for the port and surrounding communities.

## Did You Know?

### Tech Spotlight: How Battery Energy Storage Systems Stabilize Grid Demand

The port is exploring battery energy storage systems (BESS) as a component of its Clean Ports project. BESS help keep the electric grid steady by storing extra energy when demand is low. As the on-terminal demand for energy increases, the BESS will have stored capacity to buffer peak demands. Think of them as large, rechargeable batteries that smooth out the peaks and valleys of electricity use on our facility. By balancing supply and demand in real time, BESS make the local grid more reliable, support cleaner energy, and help ensure power is available when it's needed most.

#### Why it's important?

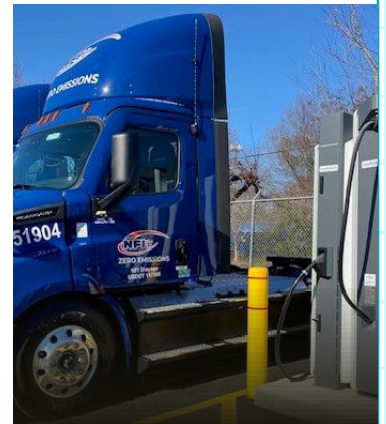
- Helps prevent power fluctuations during high-demand periods
- Improves overall grid reliability and resilience

#### How will it work for the port?

- The BESS will store energy to support electric-vehicle charging, reducing demand on the grid
- The port will utilize opportunity charging to support grid stability

#### Community Benefits:

- Cleaner air for the port and surrounding communities by reducing reliance on fossil-fuels
- Supports long-term sustainability and modern infrastructure investments



**COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT:**  
Highlighting efforts that create lasting benefits.

### Cleaner Transportation

NFI, a leading supply chain solutions provider, has partnered with Meta to launch 10 zero-emission Class 8 battery-electric trucks in Chesapeake — NFI's first electric fleet on the East Coast. Over a six-year, 3-million-mile pilot, this partnership will demonstrate how large electric fleets can be deployed at scale while reducing hard-to-abate transportation emissions.

To power the fleet, NFI is working with Dominion Energy and Electrify America to build and energize new charging infrastructure, supported by Dominion's Make Ready Program. The project brings long-term regional benefits, including job upskilling, stronger grid support, and new infrastructure investment. The Port of Virginia will also see on-terminal gains as these zero-emission trucks move cargo locally, and we are proud to support NFI's leadership in clean transportation.

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## Stay Connected

Our Go-Zero Now project marks a transformative moment for The Port of Virginia and our surrounding communities. With \$313 million in grant funding, we are accelerating our path to Net-Zero by 2040 — replacing diesel equipment, building clean energy infrastructure, and delivering cleaner air for our communities. This is more than an investment in technology; it's an investment in health, sustainability, and the future of freight movement.

We are excited to share our progress with you. Stay tuned for quarterly updates as we continue building a cleaner, greener future for our port team, partners, and communities. If you have questions or would like to share feedback, please reach out to us at:

[publicaffairs@portofvirginia.com](mailto:publicaffairs@portofvirginia.com)

## Read More

[EPA Clean Ports Program](#)

[Port of Virginia Current News](#)

## Progress Toward Net-Zero

The Port of Virginia is committed to Net-Zero by 2040. Even as cargo volumes have grown since 2017, our carbon emissions have decreased thanks to our commitment to cleaner operating equipment through electrification and clean energy integration.

### East Coast's Largest Fleet of Electric/Hybrid Equipment

As The Port of Virginia continues advancing its Go Zero Now project through the Clean Ports grant, it is already building on a strong foundation. The port operates the East Coast's largest fleet of electric and hybrid equipment, with more than half of its machinery running on cleaner technologies since 2022.

By 2025, 59% of the fleet was hybrid or electric, including over 100 hybrid shuttle carriers and fully electric ship-to-shore and stacking cranes. The transition continues with equipment like forklifts and terminal tractors now moving toward zero-emission models. This fleet optimization effort has yielded meaningful fuel savings and improved operational efficiency. Since 2017 the port has saved approximately 11 million gallons of diesel fuel as a result of our efforts.

### By The Numbers:

- Nearly 50% reduction in diesel use. Diesel reliance has been cut almost in half since 2017.
- Consistent year-over-year growth. Electric/hybrid equipment increased every year from 2017 through 2025.
- 46-point drop in diesel use. Diesel equipment fell from 87% in 2017 to 41% in 2025 — a 53% reduction in reliance.

Percent Container Handling Equipment Diesel or Hybrid

