



**Hampton Roads  
Transportation Planning Organization  
November 18, 2009 Meeting**

**AGENDA NOTE HANDOUT**

**Item #15:**

**For Your Information – Berkley Bridge Lifts**



## COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

### DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

1700 North Main Street  
SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA 23434  
VirginiaDOT.org

VID S. EKERN, P.E.  
COMMISSIONER

November 17, 2009

Good Morning,

On October 9, 2009, the Fifth Coast Guard District commander issued a *Temporary Deviation* from the regulation governing the operating schedule of the Berkley Bridge across the Eastern Branch of the Elizabeth River. This temporary deviation allows the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to schedule weekday bridge lifts, greatly benefiting motorists in the Hampton Roads region.

Based on the Texas Transportation Institute *Methodology for the 2009 Urban Mobility Report*, each 15 minute Berkley Bridge opening costs on average over \$22,000 in motorist related delays associated with lost time. This is a lost time cost of **\$1.1 million per month** because of unscheduled bridge lifts. As you can see, this temporary deviation offered by the Coast Guard saves not only time, but it also saves the citizens of Hampton Roads a significant amount of money!

During this temporary deviation, from October 9, 2009 to March 9, 2010, the Berkley Bridge will open to vessels requesting passage at 9 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Exceptions include federal holidays and emergency lifts. Bridge lifts are not permitted under current regulations during peak travel periods, from 5 a.m. to 9 a.m. and from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The Coast Guard has also submitted a *Notice of Proposed Rule Making* for a three-year deviation plan that would enable VDOT to schedule bridge lifts through October 5, 2012. If the temporary deviation expires without this additional Notice of Proposed Rule Making recommendation, VDOT will be required to open the Berkley Bridge on-demand, once again, starting March 10, 2010.

I hope you will see the benefit scheduled bridge lifts have to the motorists in the Hampton Roads region, and that you will solicit your contingency's support for the continuation of the temporary deviation through the Notice of Proposed Rule Making.

The Coast Guard is taking public comment through December 8, 2009 for both of these rulings. For your convenience, I have attached a brief survey for you to use and to forward, returning it either by e-mail to VDOT or through the United States Post Office directly to the United States Coast Guard.

Through the submission of this survey, you will be supporting the motorists of Hampton Roads and the continuation of scheduled bridge lifts.

Thank you for your continued support,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dennis Heuer'.

Dennis Heuer, P.E.  
District Administrator  
VDOT Hampton Roads District Office



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

1700 North Main Street  
SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA 23434  
VirginiaDOT.org

**FIFTH COAST GUARD DISTRICT FEEDBACK SURVEY**  
**Docket USCG-2009-0754**

The Virginia Department of Transportation and The United States Coast Guard  
Want To Know What You Think!

Recently, the U.S. Coast Guard issued a *Temporary Deviation* and a *Proposed Modification* to the regulations governing the operation of the I-264/I-464 Berkley Bridge across the Eastern Branch of the Elizabeth River in Norfolk. You can now plan your travel according to scheduled weekday bridge lifts at 9 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.

These scheduled lifts are currently temporary so that the Coast Guard can get feedback from you, the traveling public. To assist in receiving feedback, please complete this short survey.

Yes No

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ I support scheduled weekday Berkley Bridge openings.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ I enjoy being able to plan my weekday travel trips around scheduled Berkley Bridge openings and find that it saves me time and money.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ I would find it unpredictable and inconvenient if an additional ten minutes was added to my wait time during a scheduled bridge lift to keep the bridge open longer for an approaching water vessel.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ I would like to see scheduled bridge lifts continue past the *Notice of Temporary Deviation from Regulations* (Public Notice 5-1158) which expires March 9, 2010.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ I would like to submit my comments to the Coast Guard in support of both the *Temporary Deviation* and the *Notice of Proposed Modifications* (Public Notice 5-1157) that would allow for scheduled bridge lifts through October 5, 2012.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

*Notice of Temporary Deviation from Regulations* [Public Notice 5-1158] ends March 9, 2010.

*Notice of Proposed Modifications to the Regulations Governing the Operations of the Berkley Bridge Across the Eastern Branch of the Elizabeth River in Norfolk, VA* [Public Notice 5-1157] extends the current temporary deviation from March 9, 2010, until October 5, 2012.

**SEND SURVEY**

If you would like to mail your comments, mail directly to the Coast Guard:  
Commander (dpb), Fifth Coast Guard District, 431 Crawford Street, Portsmouth, Virginia 23704  
or e-mail VDOT at [hamptonroadsinfo@vdot.virginia.gov](mailto:hamptonroadsinfo@vdot.virginia.gov) to be forwarded for comment.

Questions? Call 757-925-1660

**Comments must be received by the Coast Guard on or before December 8, 2009.**