

# *Southern Currents*



## Notice to the Area Port of New Orleans Trade Community

**Date:** December 19, 2023

**No:** 24-013

**SUBJECT: Tri-Port Vessel Entrance and Clearance System [VECS] Oversight Centralization**

This notice is to inform vessel agents operating on the lower Mississippi River in the New Orleans Tri-port *i.e.*, *the consolidated ports of New Orleans, Gramercy and Baton Rouge for vessel entrance and clearance purposes*, that the Customs and Border Protection [CBP] Vessel Entrance and Clearance System [VECS] oversight will be centralized at the Port of Gramercy, LA. This centralization of managerial oversight for VECS will streamline Tri-port operations, optimize CBP staffing, and provide a single point of contact to industry for issues with VECS.

**For VECS issues requiring managerial oversight in the New Orleans Tri-port please contact Port Director James Welch at (225) 268-9454 or at [james.j.welch@cbp.dhs.gov](mailto:james.j.welch@cbp.dhs.gov).**

Outside of VECS issues, vessel agents should continue to coordinate with the appropriate branches in the Port of New Orleans, or the Gramercy and Baton Rouge Port Directors. *There are no changes to traditional, non-automated/non VECS, paper vessel entrance and clearance transactions, processes, and procedures. Vessel agents will continue to coordinate non-automated transactions with the appropriate Marine Division.*

Direct questions about this trade notice to Assistant Area Port Director Mark Choina at [mark.s.choina@cbp.dhs.gov](mailto:mark.s.choina@cbp.dhs.gov)

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