

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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M A R I N E H I G H W A Y S T U D Y

Portland, Maine - New York, N.Y.

SUMMARY REPORT

Prepared By The

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Augusta, Maine

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Appropriation No. 3254.1

February 28, 1973



DAVID H. STEVENS
Commissioner

AUGUSTA, MAINE
04330

State of Maine
Department of Transportation

February 28, 1973

TO: The Honorable Senate and
House of Representatives
of the 106TH Legislature

Gentlemen:

The 105TH Maine Legislature under RESOLVE S.P. 386-L.D. 1141, provided \$10,000 to the Maine Port Authority for a "Feasibility Study for New Marine Facilities for the Port of Portland".

Implementation of the Government reorganization program approved by the 105TH Maine Legislature placed the Maine Port Authority within the Maine Department of Transportation as the Bureau of Waterways.

I am pleased to submit a summary report of a study of the "Marine Highway" which analyzes the potential operation of vehicle and passenger ferries between Portland, Maine and New York, New York.

A detailed report is being made available to the Maine State Library.

Additional work is planned on this study in coordination with the work of the U. S. Maritime Administration on the design of the vessels and also in efforts to obtain a builder and operator of the vessels.

Respectfully submitted,

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

David H. Stevens
Commissioner

DHS:ls

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

A

S U M M A R Y R E P O R T

to the

106th Maine Legislature

on

THE MARINE HIGHWAY STUDY

Passengers-Passenger Vehicles

and

Commercial Vehicle Traffic

between

Portland - New York

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Valuable assistance and guidance was provided by Clark Neily, Economic Development Director, City of Portland.

In addition, the cooperation and assistance of the following individuals and agencies is gratefully acknowledged. Mr. George Garrett, V. P. Greater Portland Chamber of Commerce; Mr. Frank Howe, Executive Director Maine Turnpike Authority and personnel of the Turnpike Authority who distributed the travel survey cards; The Maine Department of Commerce and Industry; Commissioner E. C. Fabber and Assistant Commissioner David Malamud, Economic Development Administration, Department of Ports and Terminals, City of New York; the following U. S. Maritime Administration Officials: Mr. Richard Black, Manager Shipbuilding and Port Program, Office of Research and Development; Mr. Burt Kyle, Chief and Mr. John Davies, Office of Domestic Shipping; Mr. Ernest T. Barnes, Chief, Division of Ports; Mr. Richard Gage, Director, Office of International Activities; Mr. Constantine Foltis and Mr. William Shubert, Office of Ship Construction.

INTRODUCTION

The "Marine Highway" idea contemplates the operation of two combination passenger and vehicle carrying ships daily between the ports of Portland and New York. This would provide one trip per day in each direction.

The ships would provide a reliable alternative for automobile tourists as well as commercial highway traffic as the trip would continue for both the vehicle and the driver while the traveler enjoyed comfortable overnight accommodations. The ships would also utilize certain innovative features such as modular passenger accommodations adjustable to traffic demands and gas powered turbines that would permit relatively high operating speeds.

To determine the feasibility of a service of this type it is necessary to develop an estimate of the traffic potentially available, the size and type of ships and other facilities necessary to handle the traffic and whether or not such ships can be operated profitably on revenues they can reasonably expect to generate.

The State of Maine undertook the task of determining what traffic might reasonably use the service, study the locations of port facilities at both Portland and New York, study certain innovative services such as small package handling (utilizing specialized containers), and to develop a rate system based upon the costs of auto travelers and commercial vehicles when using conventional highway routes.

This information has been submitted to the U. S. Maritime Administration for use in its analysis of the size, type and design of vessels required to handle the estimated traffic and to determine the overall economic feasibility of operating the ships.

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

The study examined three basic sources of traffic, i.e. passengers, passenger vehicles and trucks or commercial vehicles.

In cooperation with the Maine Turnpike Authority, 50,000 travel survey cards were distributed randomly to passenger vehicles at the southbound lanes of the York Toll Plaza. This distribution included 20,000 during the Labor Day Weekend, 1971 and 15,000 during the weekend of October 9 - 11, 1971. Another 15,000 were distributed during all of the weekends of January, 1972. The data collected from this initial survey was analyzed by the Maine Department of Commerce and Industry and provided basic input to the overall study.

The initial traffic survey card included a question asking those interested in a proposed Marine Highway Service, if they would complete a detailed travel questionnaire. Of the 8,360 initial questionnaires returned,

45 percent were interested in the Marine Highway. Detailed travel questionnaires were distributed to 2,495 of those indicating interest and 57 percent of them returned the completed questionnaires.

The truck or commercial vehicle study was conducted in part by personal interview and mail questionnaire. Efforts were directed toward those trucking firms who are known to have extensive operations between Maine and New York or points beyond. The study included all classifications of carriers, i.e. common, contract, private and exempt.

During the course of the study contacts were made with potential ship operators and meetings were also held with the office of Ports and Terminals of New York City, to determine their interest and degree of participation. The New York Port office had responded favorably. Further information is required, however, before any final decisions are made on facilities in New York. As soon as more information is developed on the design of the vessels, additional meetings are planned including meetings with the Port of New York Authority.

SUMMARY OF STUDY FINDINGS

The study reveals that the proposed service, operating on a 15-hour sailing schedule, could expect to attract potential traffic in its first year of operation as follows:

Passengers	328,897
Autos	90,899
Trucks	1,359

Information developed after the study was completed indicates that ocean containers now moving over the highways could be expected to utilize the Marine Highway's sailing schedule and roll-on, roll-off capability as a feeder service to and from the port of New York.

The study also shows that the greatest passenger market potential can be developed on a 15-hour transit time between Portland and New York using two identical vessels, one operating in each direction daily.

The transit time factor has a definite influence on the amount of truck traffic that the ships can expect to handle at least during the early stages of the service. Truck traffic is expected to grow as the carriers divert more of their trailers to movement by the Marine Highway. It is further believed that the motor carriers will divert growth traffic to the Marine Highway, in lieu of additional over the road crews.

Total (yearly) revenue projected for the first year of operation at estimated traffic volumes would be \$6,817,095.

The study indicates that the ships should be designed for capacities approximately as follows:

SHIP:	No. of Passengers	1,000
	Staterooms	250-300
	Vehicles	300
	Time of run	15 hours
	Power Plant	Diesel or Gas Turbine
	Twin Screw	
	Bow Thrusters	
	Draft	14 to 20 feet
	Beam	75 to 80 feet
	Length	500 feet

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF PROPOSED SERVICE

The operation of two combination passenger and vehicle ferries between Portland and New York would produce economic benefits to both regions. In addition to providing a unique travel experience for people going to and from northern New England, the proposed Marine Highway would also add a reliable, relatively low-cost public transportation service not now available.

By handling commercial vehicles, it would also provide operating economics for motor carriers. In the long run, it would help stabilize their costs, reduce maintenance, result in more efficient use of personnel and reduce the potential of loss from hijacking. The ships will create new employment opportunities for marine personnel as well as bringing new and expanded business to the port cities, particularly the waterfront areas.

STUDY SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that a substantial number of passengers and passenger vehicles can be expected to use a service of this type once inaugurated. Although the initial use by commercial vehicles may be relatively light, the study suggests that this source of traffic would prove increasingly important as time goes on. In both areas it would be necessary to make the service known to prospective users through an adequate promotion program and in the case of commercial motor vehicles it would be necessary to actually put salesmen in the field to sell the service.

Transit times of the ships are important to the commercial vehicle operators and to a large number of the passengers and passenger vehicle travelers. Obviously the distance between Portland and New York can be covered by highway driving in six to seven hours. This avoids staying overnight enroute, but results in a rather long and in some instances, unpleasant trip for a significant number of drivers. The Marine Highway idea is attractive to a substantial number of these people because it will be convenient and they can enjoy a pleasant overnight trip, arriving refreshed and ready for a full day of activity. Prospective passengers make it clear that the service must be reasonably priced, with good, but not overly luxurious accommodations.

The study concludes that the idea is worthy and that the figures produced establish substantial interest and prospective use, justifying further study by the Maritime Administration to determine the size and type of vessels required to handle the anticipated traffic and whether such vessels can be operated within the revenues produced from charges consistent with the costs that travelers incur by highway.

STUDY COST AND TIME PHASING

Of the \$10,000 appropriated \$6,856.31 has been expended leaving a balance of \$3,143.69.

Additional work on the study will be carried on throughout the calendar year 1973 leading to final conclusions and recommendations. Further attention is required in the development of terminal facilities in the Port of New York. This effort involves both the Department of Ports and Terminals, City of New York and the Port of New York Authority. It will also be necessary to continue to develop interest in the project within the private sector by direct contact with prospective ship operators as well as through the publication of articles in trade journals and other promotional efforts.

The U. S. Maritime Administration is now working with the study data to develop a preliminary vessel design and costs to test the economic operating feasibility of the ships. The Maritime Administration is also investigating the most appropriate power plant for the ships to use as well as the possibility of modifying existing vessels for refitting.

APPROVED

JUN 23 '71

BY GOVERNOR

CHAPTER

28

RESOLVES

STATE OF MAINE

S. P. 386 — L. D. 1141

RESOLVE, to Provide Funds for a Feasibility Study for New Marine Facilities for the Port of Portland.

Port of Portland; feasibility study. Resolved: That there is appropriated from the Unappropriated Surplus of the General Fund the sum of \$10,000 to the Maine Port Authority for the purpose of providing for a feasibility study of new marine facilities for the Port of Portland.

This is a study to determine the role that the Port of Portland might play in the extension of existing passenger and vehicle service; roll-on, roll-off shipping, and container handling facilities and services.

This study is designed to examine the economic feasibility of a proposed new "marine highway" concept between the Port of Portland and the Port of New York which would utilize the existing new ferry facilities in Portland.

IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,.....1971

Read and passed finally.

.....*Speaker*

IN SENATE,.....1971

Read and passed finally.

.....*President*

Approved.....1971

.....*Governor*