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Focus on Business: Industry collaboration tests 13.5M draft vessel transit through Second

Narrows: A group of industry stakeholders has worked together for three years to review the standing rules for the Second Narrows Marine Restricted Area (MRA) that were in place since 1986. As a result of these cooperative efforts — including several simulations and live tug and tanker tests over two years — on May 17 Port Metro Vancouver and stakeholders including [BC Coast Pilots](#), [Kinder Morgan](#), [Pacific Pilotage Authority](#), [SMIT](#) and [Seaspan](#) tugs, [Westward Shipping](#) and others welcomed through the Second Narrows the first ever transit of an Aframax size tanker with a draft over the 12.5M limit. The successful transit of this vessel headed to Asia means that Aframax tanker vessels may now load to a draft of 13.5 meters and consequently carry more cargo in the same size ship. The Aframax tanker was able to load 10 per cent more cargo, equating to an additional 10,000 metric tonnes per trip.

“Canadian producers are pleased to see the all the hard work that has been done to safely increase cargo loading with a deeper draft restriction,” said **Greg Stringham**, the [Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers’](#) (CAPP) vice-president of markets and oil sands. “It opens the door to lower transportation costs and expanded options for new markets for Canadian production”. This final test confirmed for BC Pilots that a 13.5M draft vessel can safely transit the Second Narrows with the correct tug package. **Ian Anderson**, President of [Kinder Morgan Canada](#), the pipeline operator that delivered the crude from Alberta to the West Coast, said, “I am most proud of the fact everyone involved has worked collaboratively together to further improve the safety and efficiency of vessels transiting the port.”



A period of pilot training and familiarization is necessary to have an adequate pool of pilots trained and ready for such transits. BC Coast Pilots (BCCP) are presently designing the training course with the input and advice of the pilots who completed the most recent live trial, and anticipate they will meet these requirements by late fall or early in 2010. Refer to the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority [Harbour Operations Manual](#) for marine regulations.