



## Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

235 Promenade Street | Providence, RI 02908 | 401.222.4700 | [www.dem.ri.gov](http://www.dem.ri.gov) | @RhodeIslandDEM

CONTACT: Kim Keough  
[DEM.communications@dem.ri.gov](mailto:DEM.communications@dem.ri.gov)

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### WORK TO REMOVE EYESORE IN PROVIDENCE RIVER BEGINS THIS WEEK

PROVIDENCE, RI – The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) [Marine Debris Program](#) and [the Congressional Delegation](#) announce that work to remove the derelict, sunken crane-topped barge in the Providence River will begin this week.



The removal project is funded by a grant of more than [\\$1.5 million from the NOAA Marine Debris Program](#)

[with funding provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#). The project will remove up to 400,000 pounds of large marine debris from the environment while engaging the community and ensuring a safe, beautiful waterfront is accessible to all. The sunken steel-hulled barge has been in the river since 2017, presenting a navigational hazard, ecological concerns, and limitations to recreational and economic activities for nearby residents in an environmental justice community.

In collaboration with [The Steel Yard](#), materials recovered from the barge's hull will be used to construct community-informed art and amenities at the Public Street coastal right of way. DEM is also partnering with [Save The Bay](#) to host volunteer marine debris cleanups after the barge is removed. These efforts are deeply rooted to [DEM's strategic goals](#) of advancing [environmental justice](#) through community engagement and sustainability through reuse of the salvaged materials.

"I'm glad to see that the removal of this sunken barge is moving forward. Removing this eyesore and safety hazard has been a years-long effort," **said Senator Jack Reed**. "Thanks to the role of my colleague, Senator Whitehouse, federal funding is helping to mitigate this hazard, make this area more accessible, and engage community partners who will repurpose the salvaged materials to create new, exciting works of art."  
"Finally getting this sunken barge out of the water is a big deal. I look forward to seeing what The Steel Yard, Save the Bay, and talented Rhode Island students will do to clean up the Providence River and turn the eyesore into artwork," **said Senator Sheldon Whitehouse**, a senior member of the Senate Environment and

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Public Works Committee who has sponsored bipartisan legislation to reauthorize NOAA's Marine Debris Program.

"Art and activism often go hand in hand, and this federal funding will be used to not only clean up the ocean but also beautify the community with art from repurposed materials," **said Congressman Seth Magaziner.**

"I'm glad federal funding from NOAA will be used to bring together state and community organizations to transform a hazardous eyesore into public art," **said Congressman Gabe Amo.** "Removing this derelict debris is an important step in our collective effort to improve the Providence River and I join my delegation colleagues in celebrating that this work is underway."

"We are excited to support the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and their important work in Providence," **said Demi Fox, Northeast Regional Coordinator for the NOAA Marine Debris Program.** "Not only is this project removing harmful marine debris, but it will also engage the community in transforming materials recovered from the barge into public waterfront amenities and artwork that raises awareness about marine debris prevention."

"The crane's removal is long overdue, and I'm excited to see what our state's talented artists and students create to turn this blight into something beautiful," **said Governor Dan McKee.** "This federal funding from NOAA will aid in cleaning up Providence's waterfront, making it safer for vessels, while also supporting the incredible work of The Steel Yard to empower local artists and strengthen our community."

"This abandoned barge has long been a safety and environmental risk for our neighbors, and I am thrilled that DEM is moving forward with its removal," **said Providence Mayor Brett P. Smiley.** "This project will not only improve navigation and remove harmful materials from our water, but also create an opportunity for community-driven art, underscoring Providence's representation as the 'Creative Capital.' I want to thank NOAA for providing the federal funding that has made this important work possible, helping us transform our waterfront into a safer, healthier and more welcoming space for all."

"DEM is grateful for the federal funding provided by NOAA's Marine Debris Program, which will allow us to remove the barge, a priority we've had for years," **said DEM Director Terry Gray.** "The removal will not only enhance public access to the waterfront around Public Street, but our partnership with The Steel Yard to repurpose the steel into an art installation is a win-win for the entire community."

Preliminary diving and surveying work by contractor [NorthStar](#) will be followed by the removal of the crane from the derelict barge, succeeded by lifting the wreck off the seabed and towing it to a local recycling yard for processing. Water quality testing will be performed before, during and after removal to ensure no contaminants are released from the barge. A silt curtain will also be in place to keep debris from floating downstream. A shellfish survey will be performed before removal to assess the habitat of the area. All necessary permits for the project have been acquired. DEM is in close collaboration the [RI Coastal Resources Management Council](#) (CRMC), the [US Army Corps of Engineers](#) (USACE), and [Rhode Island Derelict and Abandoned Vessel and Obstruction Removal Commission](#) on the project.

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