

August 23, 2023

SUBJECT : Panama Canal Update

To All Valued Customers:

Vessel operations are being affected by drought conditions in the Panama Canal Zone which reduce the 'draft level' of the canal and adjoining waterways. The following is an update for better understanding:

- The El Niño phenomenon has caused drier conditions in the Panama Canal water basins.
- Since Apr 23, the Panama Canal Authority (ACP) has announced to reduce the draft levels several times.
- This stabilized at 13.41M (44Ft) for the Neo-Panamax from 19th June. (Panamax Max draft 12.04M / 39.5ft is the same as before)
- In the end of July/beginning of August, The ACP took further actions to conserve water by reducing the number of daily transits.

East-West trades are however minimally affected. TPEB uses Neo-Panamax vessels and most of the congestion is at the Panamax lock where oil tankers and bulk and much smaller vessels pass. Delays at the Neo-Panamax locks are only 4-6 days, in line with normal Panama Canal transit conditions.

With the restrictions, the number of available daily transit slots has been drastically reduced. Ocean Carriers usually book the available later dates first and then request ACP for advance transits nearest to their required date. But currently there are not many available booking slots and carriers will be facing some difficulty in booking slots.

Best regards

JAS Forwarding

As Agent for Blue World Line