WSP USA designed a consolidated refrigerated container yard that provides increased, centralized and efficient storage of containers used in the perishable food trade.

WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA (July 16, 2020) — North Carolina State Ports Authority (NC Ports) made history with the arrival of one of the world’s largest container ships – and the Port is ready to receive up to 1,200 refrigerated containers a similar ship can carry.

The MV Hyundai Hope sailed into the port on May 20, marking the port’s first visit by an ultra-large container vessel (ULCV). The ship is 1,200 feet in length and has a carrying capacity of nearly 14,000 TEUs. This milestone highlights the port’s commitment to improving the infrastructure necessary to support the larger container vessels calling on East Coast ports. The ship’s arrival came at the completion of the port’s Turning Basin Expansion Project, which expanded the turning basin in Cape Fear River from 1,400 feet to 1,524 feet.

As part of the ongoing effort to increase the Port of Wilmington’s capabilities, WSP USA led the team that designed and provided construction administration services for a new refrigerated “reefer” container yard. The yard will be used to receive, and temporarily store, refrigerated containers destined for import and export.
“The Port of Wilmington’s new refrigerated container yard will allow NC Ports to handle more refrigerated containers than ever before,” said Kosal Krishnan, national maritime leader and senior vice president at WSP. “This is a critical gateway port for refrigerated cargoes, and this expanded container yard is providing tremendous support to agriculture and grocery businesses that depend upon prompt and efficient distribution services to reach customers throughout the entire South-eastern U.S.”

The new yard is located near the Port of Wilmington Cold Storage facility. It provides 27 reefer racks to support the stacking of refrigerated containers as well as a new on-terminal refrigerated container service area. It consolidates refrigerated cargo in one area to improve efficiency, which is critical for the movement of perishable goods.

Overall, the project increases the port’s number of reefer plugs from 235 to 775, with provisions that allow for an expansion to more than 1,000 plugs through an additional project phase.

The opening of the reefer yard comes as NC Ports experiences unprecedented growth in the cold chain sector. Over the past five years, refrigerated container volume through the Port of Wilmington has quadrupled. This year, volumes have been trending up by 30 percent as demand for imports and exports continues to grow. This recently completed project is a key component to a $200 million capital improvements plan that will modernize Port of Wilmington and enhance its terminal efficiency.

About WSP USA
WSP USA is the U.S. operating company of WSP, one of the world's leading engineering and professional services firms. Dedicated to serving local communities, we are engineers, planners, technical experts, strategic advisors and construction management professionals. WSP USA designs lasting solutions in the buildings, transportation, energy, water and environment markets. With more than 9,500 employees in 150 offices across the U.S., we partner with our clients to help communities prosper. wsp.com

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