Industry-Led Effort to Digitize Barge Document Process
Current Barge Process

Shipper (seller) calls buyer and verbally applies barge

Buyer has 2 choices

Keep Barge

By 4:30pm, consignee & billing is due to barge lines

Apply out barge

Bill of Lading Generated from barge line; sent to shipper

Shipper overnights BOL and supporting docs to first buyer

(barge can be re-applied out, up to 7 days after BOL date, by last owner of day before)

BOL & Documents sent thru the trade chain (2 - +40 times)

BOL kept by final owner of barge
Impact of Current Document Process

- The BOL & supporting docs are overnighted to each counterparty in the chain for BOL endorsement ($9-15/package for overnighting)
- Can take weeks or months for final owner of barge to receive BOL
- Many office hours spent daily “looking for Fedex packages, lost pieces of paper, trying to track down documents”

Documents interchanged within trade chain:
- Bill of Lading
- Invoice
- Grade Certificate
- Weight Certificate
- Barge Reconsignment History (if applicable)

+100,000 barge transactions per year; ~500,000 documents annually
Industry-Led Efforts to Change

• NGFA/NAEGA Workshop in New Orleans in February 2018 with +40 participants from barge lines, operators, grain companies, exporters, and technology providers

• NGFA Industry 10 person task force created in Spring 2018 with representation from shippers, exporters and barge lines; to identify system needs and propose an electronic solution
Future System Goals

Replace current paper BOL process with an industry-adopted electronic solution

Ease of Use
Centralized location for document transfer
Ability to electronically sign and transfer ownership of BOLs

Security & Privacy
Visibility to only to transactions your company is involved in
Integrity of the electronic BOL; clear, time-stamped ownership of barge

Cost Effectiveness