

# [***Salvage crews race against the clock to remove massive chunks of fallen Baltimore bridge***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BTD-80B1-DYMD-604B-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

SPARROWS POINT, Md. — Nearly three weeks since Baltimore’s Francis Scott Key Bridge collapsed under the impact of a wayward cargo ship, crews are using the largest crane on the Eastern Seaboard to haul the wreckage to a nearby salvage yard.

The heaviest section so far weighed about 450 tons . In the salvage yard Monday morning, workers disassembled the metal trusses by attacking them with propane torches and a pair of giant shears that sliced them into more manageable pieces. Rising from the water nearby was the Chesapeake 1000, a [*floating crane with a storied history*](https://apnews.com/article/baltimore-maryland-bridge-crane-history-e8476975f771f848a68e3dea071e5e65) that includes helping the CIA retrieve part of a sunken Soviet submarine.

The Key Bridge took five years to construct in the 1970s. Now, it’s a race against the clock to dismantle the remnants of a fallen [*Baltimore landmark*](https://apnews.com/article/baltimore-bridge-collapse-cultural-identity-91c3bfe8c235eff0157808691259a514).

On March 26, six construction workers plunged to their deaths in the collapse. Four bodies have since been recovered.

Salvage crews are hoping to recover the two remaining bodies once more of the debris has been removed. They’re also working toward their goal of opening a temporary channel later this month that would allow more commercial traffic to resume through the Port of Baltimore, which has remained largely closed since the March 26 collapse. Officials plan to reopen the port’s main channel by the end of May.

So far, over 1,000 tons (907 metric tons) of steel have been removed from the waterway. But the work is tedious, dangerous and incredibly complex, leaders of the operation said Monday during a visit to the salvage yard at [*Tradepoint Atlantic*](https://apnews.com/article/baltimore-bridge-collapse-04-03-2024-2c0273f1e6ef2340a17b4cd25469a780), the only maritime shipping terminal currently operating in the Port of Baltimore.

The facility, which occupies the site of a former Bethlehem Steel plant northeast of Baltimore, has ramped up operations to accommodate some of the ships originally scheduled to dock at the port’s other terminals.

Before removing any pieces of the bridge, divers are tasked with surveying the murky underwater wreckage and assessing how to safely extract the various parts. Coming up with a roadmap is among the biggest challenges, said Robyn Bianchi, an assistant salvage master on the project.

“There’s a lot of debris, there’s rebar, there’s concrete,” she said. “We don’t know what dangers are down there, so we have to be very methodical and slow with that.”

At the same time, crews are working to remove some containers from the cargo ship Dali before lifting steel spans off its bow and refloating the vessel.

“It presents a dynamic hazard,” said Joseph Farrell, CEO of Resolve Marine, which is working on refloating the ship. He said once that happens, the Dali will return to the Port of Baltimore. “Getting it out of there is a priority.”

In the meantime, state leaders are echoing [*calls by President Joe Biden*](https://apnews.com/article/biden-visit-baltimore-bridge-collapse-politics-b4388845fc912f0a0b491d05b5ac5cf8) for Congress to authorize the federal government to pay for 100% of the cleanup and reconstruction. That would require bipartisan support, and some hard-line congressional Republicans have already suggested controversial demands to offset the funding.

Maryland Gov. Wes Moore said he would welcome any federal lawmakers to visit and view the wreckage up close.

“I ask you to get on the water, and I ask you to see it firsthand. I ask you to get a clear understanding of what it means,” he said during a news conference Tuesday where he was joined by Republican state leaders including former Gov. Bob Ehrlich and Sen. Johnny Ray Salling.

Salling, who spent 26 years working at Bethlehem Steel before entering ***politics***, said the bridge collapse has affected him in a deeply personal way. He praised Maryland lawmakers for quickly passing legislation to help port workers and others suffering financially.

“It was the right thing to do,” he said. “We are stepping up.”

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