

Office of the Governor

PO BOX 004
TRENTON, NJ 08625

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor
Wendi Patella
609-777-2600

RELEASE: May 28, 1999

Governor Whitman Outlines Vision for New Jersey Ports

Gov. Christie Whitman today told the "Ports and New Jersey" conference that her New Jersey First transportation vision will help make the state a powerhouse for commerce and industry in the 21st century.

"Our New Jersey First program provides a transportation vision for the 21st century, one that puts the smooth passage of people and goods on center stage. And, our ports have a leading role in what we envision for the new millennium," the Governor said.

New Jersey First includes more than \$120 million for dredging project, and New Jersey has also received \$60 million in the upcoming federal budget.

The Governor said retaining New Jersey's ports as a premier shipping destination will also require improving the highways that support the ports. She said the \$545 million Portway Project will help eliminate the "freightlock" caused by truck traffic.

One third of all New Jersey truck traffic uses the 10-mile zone surrounding Port Newark-Elizabeth, and industry experts predict that volume will more than double in the new millennium.

"The highways in this area simply can't handle this volume. They were built in the 20s and 30s to handle the needs of those times, not today's demands. And with the exception of the New Jersey Turnpike, there has been little improvement to the system in more than half a century," Gov. Whitman said.

The Governor also pointed to the \$45 million Port of Camden Gateway project that will clean up Route 30 and begin economic development and revitalization of the area.

With the theme "Surviving and Prospering in the 21st Century," the port conference, held at the Brunswick Hilton in East Brunswick, is a half-day gathering of more than 250 public and private officials to examine issues related to the long-term economic health of New Jersey's ports. It is sponsored by PSE&G; and the New Jersey Society of Environmental, Economic Development. Gov. Whitman enacted legislation proposing a \$300 million bond issue for environmentally sound port dredging and the clean up of contaminated property. The bond proposal was overwhelmingly approved by New Jersey voters in 1996.

The Bond Act is providing \$205 million for dredging projects to keep the Port of New Jersey and other ports and waterways throughout the state open and economically viable and for the development of environmentally safe methods of

managing dredged material. New Jersey has 76 ports and terminals throughout the state.

The maritime industry contributes more than \$50 billion to the state economy. The two largest are the Port of Newark-Elizabeth and the Port of Camden.

The Port of Newark-Elizabeth, the third largest in the United States and the premier port on the Eastern seaboard, employs 166,000 people, about half of whom are New Jersey residents.