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NEWS RELEASE

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Gov. Whitman Creates Advisory Group to Guide Future of Ellis Island, New Jersey

Gov. Christie Whitman today signed an executive order creating an advisory committee to guide the preservation and future use of Ellis Island.

"We are very proud that yesterday's U.S. Supreme Court decision establishes, once more, New Jersey's proper place in American history and we want to take an active role in preserving Ellis Island for future generations," said Gov. Whitman. "In keeping with the responsibility that this decision places on New Jersey, I am signing an Executive Order today to create the Advisory Committee on the Preservation and Use of Ellis Island."

Ending a dispute that spanned over 160 years, the U.S. Supreme Court yesterday declared that the majority of Ellis Island belongs to New Jersey. As a result, New Jersey's laws will now apply to 22.5 of the island's 27.5 acres. Part of the main building and several other buildings, including the hospital complex, now belong to New Jersey.

The Advisory Committee on the Preservation and Use of Ellis Island is charged with exploring all potential future uses of the structures on Ellis Island, New Jersey. The group will also consider the best methods to maintain, restore, and put to beneficial use the structures on the island in a manner that is consistent with the historic significance of the island.

"We are seeking to preserve New Jersey's portion of Ellis Island not just for the citizens of New Jersey, but for all Americans who recognize the pivotal role Ellis Island played in America's life and perhaps their own," said Gov. Whitman.

Gov. Whitman said that the state will cooperate with, consult, and assist the National Parks Service, which supervises Ellis Island, to determine the best use of the structures.

The advisory committee will recommend a plan to the Governor and the State Historic Preservation Officer.

The 13-member advisory committee will be comprised of the following members:

- The Attorney General or his designee
- The State Treasurer or his designee
- The State Historic Preservation Officer
- The Director of the Division of Taxation, or his designee
- A Senator to be appointed by the President of the Senate
- An Assembly Member to be appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly
- The Mayor of Jersey City or his designee
- A member of the New Jersey Congressional delegation
- No more than four members of the public to be appointed by the Governor based upon professional experience and expertise in urban planning, history, architecture and/or historic restoration

In 1993, New Jersey filed a motion with the U.S. Supreme Court asking that the court declare the original $2\frac{3}{4}$ acres of Ellis Island to be within the jurisdiction of New Jersey, with the remaining 24 acres to be within New York's jurisdiction. New Jersey's claim was based upon an 1834 boundary agreement between this state and New York.