



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NEWS RELEASE

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Media Advisory

Governor's Weekly Radio Message

Gov. Christie Whitman's radio message this week highlights her participation in the World Economic Summit in Davos, Switzerland and the importance of international trade to the state's economy. The text of the message is attached.

The radio message can be accessed by calling the Governor's actuality line at 609-292-3249. It will be available tonight, beginning at 7 p.m., and will run through the weekend.

Governor's Weekly Radio Message Jan. 30, 1998

Hello, this is Christie Whitman.

Because I will be traveling to a major economic conference in Switzerland this weekend, I wanted to speak with you about the role New Jersey plays in the world marketplace.

Some 600,000 New Jersey jobs directly depend on international trade. That includes New Jersey men and women working for companies involved in selling products abroad. And it includes residents who work for foreign firms operating here in the Garden State.

We export 23 billion dollars worth of goods every year. That averages out to nearly \$3,000 for every man, woman, and child in our state. And foreign direct investment in New Jersey amounts to 26 billion dollars, which ranks us fifth in the country.

Strong international trade doesn't happen without effort. We have to work at it. For instance, we have to build and maintain good ports, sturdy highways, and dependable railroads to make certain the goods that come in and out of our state move quickly and efficiently.

The strength of our transportation system is always a matter of great concern. But a few years ago we faced two tremendous challenges. A dispute over how to dredge the Port of Newark was threatening the shipping industry. And our very successful Transportation Trust Fund was about to expire.

Working together, the people of New Jersey solved those problems. We came up with a dredging solution that kept our ports open and thriving while protecting the environment. And we renewed the Transportation Trust Fund with record amounts of money each year.

We can be proud of what we've done together. But we can't stop now. There is much more to be done to make our transportation system the very best it can be. That's why, within the next two months, I will issue a long-term strategic transportation plan to map out the major projects we need to pursue in the coming years.

Of course, international trade involves more than the condition of New Jersey's physical infrastructure. It also depends on thriving companies, low taxes, and support from government for companies looking to do business abroad.

Here again, we're making a difference.

During my term in office, the State has worked closely with a host of companies looking to enter foreign markets. We've cut a host of business taxes to keep our state competitive. At the same time, we've organized trade missions and now operate four trade offices overseas.

Our efforts are paying off. Here in Trenton, there's a famous sign that reads, "Trenton Makes, the World Takes." That motto could apply to all of the Garden State in terms of our success overseas.

Just listen to these numbers. New Jersey exports to NAFTA nations rose by an estimated 15 percent last year alone. Trade in the Pacific Rim was up by about 16 percent, and Europe by an estimated 19 percent. What's more, in the past two years, trade to China alone has increased by 60 percent. Now that's what I call a growth industry.

We in New Jersey depend on free trade and free markets.

We must maintain a strong relationship between state government and the business community and forge trade strategies that will help us bring more trade dollars to our state.

At the same time, we must continue to invest in good seaports and airports, dependable roads and rails, and of course a well-educated, well-trained New Jersey workforce.

New Jersey is a national leader in so many ways. I am confident that we can lead the way in international trade as we make our way into a new millennium.

Thank you, and have a good week.

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