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Office of the Governor
NEWS RELEASE

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**GOVERNOR SIGNS LEGISLATION PROVIDING \$159 MILLION
FOR PORT DREDGING AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

Gov. Christie Whitman today signed legislation appropriating \$159 million for dredging in the Kill Van Kull and Newark Bay channels and for soil decontamination and reclamation projects to ensure that the Port of New York and New Jersey retains its competitive edge. The legislation also provides funding for beach projects in Cape May and for dredging of the Margate Channel.

"New Jersey is at the hub of the world's major markets. When you add to that a highly skilled, reliable workforce, like the International Longshoremen's Association, it gives us distribution advantages unequaled on the East Coast," the Governor said.

"Shipping in New Jersey is a \$50 billion industry, with more than \$13 billion of goods shipped every year. The port of New York and New Jersey employs 170,000 workers; 80,000 of them New Jerseyans," Governor Whitman said.

"As the main access to Elizabeth port and Port Newark, the Kill Van Kull channel will be the entryway for the world's largest vessels. We expect the number of containers through the port to triple by the year 2020 and double again by 2040, creating 170,000 new maritime jobs here in the process," she said.

The Governor said working together with port interests her administration has made transportation a priority for New Jersey. She said her New Jersey First Program provides a transportation vision for the 21st century, one that stresses the importance to New Jersey of a good system for transporting people and products.

She said a key part of that vision was the decision by Sea-Land/Maresk to stay in the Port of Newark-Elizabeth terminal. The Governor said she promised the ILA she would fight hard to retain the companies and the state succeeded in doing so.

Also, Governor Whitman said, she is committed to the Portway project, which is aimed at improving roadways to and from major rail and seaport facilities and eliminating the truck gridlock that sometimes occurs. The bills signed by the Governor were:

S-8, which appropriates \$101.3 million from the 1996 Dredging Bond Act to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey for dredging the Kill Van Kull and Newark bay channels. The appropriation is a central part of the agreement negotiated with Sea-

Land/Maersk to retain the companies as tenants in the Newark/Elizabeth Port. The bill was sponsored by Senators Donald T. DiFrancesco (R-Middlesex/Morris/Somerset/Union) and Raymond J. Lesniak (D-Union) and Assembly Members Joseph Azzolina (R-Middlesex/Monmouth), Alex DeCroce (R-Essex/Morris/Passaic), Richard H. Bagger (R-Middlesex/Morris/Somerset/Union) and William D. Payne (D-Essex/Union).

S-1425, sponsored by Senators Donald T. DiFrancesco (R-Middlesex/Morris/Somerset/Union) and John O. Bennett (R-Monmouth) and Assembly Members Kenneth C. LeFevre (R-Atlantic) and Nicholas Asselta (R-Cape May/Atlantic/Cumberland), which appropriates \$20.732 million from the 1996 Dredging Bond Act for various projects. The bill appropriates \$20 million to the Office of Marine Resources to fund the Strip Mining Reclamation Project, which utilizes dredge spoils for strip mine reclamation in Pennsylvania. The Governor's line item veto reduced the amount appropriated for the mine reclamation project to \$10 million, thus the total amount appropriated by the bill is \$10.732 million.

The bill also appropriates \$32,000 for the Cape May Mosquito Commission Beach Project and \$700,000 for Margate Channel improvements.

S-1296, sponsored by Senators Donald T. DiFrancesco (R-Middlesex/Morris/Somerset/Union) and Edward T. O'Connor, Jr. (D-Hudson) and Assembly Members Alex DeCroce (R-Essex/Morris/Passaic), Joseph V. Doria, Jr. (D-Hudson) and Joseph Charles, Jr. (D-Hudson), appropriates \$27 million from the 1996 Dredging Bond Act to the Office of Maritime Resources to provide New Jersey's share of the costs of dredging the Port Jersey Channel, located in the Hudson River Harbor.

A-2923, sponsored by Assembly Members Steve Corodemus (R-Monmouth) and Alan M. Augustine (R-Middlesex/Morris/Somerset/Union) and Senators Joseph M. Kyriillos, Jr. (R-Middlesex/Monmouth) and Andrew R. Ciesla (R-Monmouth/Ocean), appropriates \$20 million from the 1996 Dredging Bond Act to the Office of Maritime Resources to fund demonstration projects for the decontamination of dredged materials from the Port Region.

A-2639, sponsored by Assembly Members Paul DiGaetano (R-Bergen/Essex/Passaic) and Joseph V. Doria, Jr. (D-Hudson) and Senator Donald T. DiFrancesco (R-Middlesex/Morris/Somerset/Union), provides for new procedures that will allow the Longshoremen's Register to be opened in order to expand the pool of eligible workers at the Port of New York and New Jersey. For example, these new procedures allow employers to petition the Waterfront Commission of New York Harbor to open the Longshoremen's Register for prospective applicants. The petitioning employer must certify that the selection of persons sponsored was made in a fair and non-discriminatory manner in accordance with the laws of the United States, New Jersey and New York that deal with equal employment opportunities. In addition, the bill opens the Longshoremen's Register by "grandfathering" in certain persons issued registration on a temporary basis to meet emergency needs and who are still registered by the Commission.

The Governor also signed **S-1958**, which reduced the amount previously appropriated for dredging and dredge material disposal projects from \$32 million to \$26.7 million. This reduction was necessary to facilitate the \$101.3 million appropriation authorized in bill S-8. S-1958 was recommended by the Dredging Project Facilitation Task Force. The Task Force determined that the reduced amount is sufficient to fund the original purpose of the previous appropriation, which is to construct a processing facility to dewater and stabilize contaminated dredge materials from various projects. The facility will be operated by a private entity and handle about 500,000 cubic yards of dredge material, and manufacture a soil-like product for use in designated brownfields reclamation, landfill closure and transportation projects. The bill was sponsored by Senator Donald T. DiFrancesco (R-Middlesex/Morris/Somerset/Union) and Assembly Member Alex DeCroce (R-Essex/Morris/Passaic).