

March 17, 2021

JAXPORT

Port Canaveral

Port Everglades

Port of Fernandina

Port of Fort Pierce

Port of Key West

PortMiami

Port Manatee

Port of Palm Beach

Port of Panama City

Port of Pensacola

Port of Port St. Joe

Port St. Pete

Port Tampa Bay

The Honorable Ron DeSantis
Governor, State of Florida
The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Governor DeSantis:

Thank you for including funding for economically distressed seaports in your federal stimulus budget recommendations. Your leadership has been instrumental in steering Florida's economy through the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We truly appreciate your efforts to provide much-needed relief to Florida's maritime economic development sector.

In partnership with your Department of Transportation and Department of Economic Opportunity, Florida's seaports have maintained their role as a critical component of Florida's economic prosperity and have created one of the most vibrant and competitive business environments for maritime commerce in this hemisphere. Florida's 15 deep water seaports represent a robust business enterprise that supports nearly 900,000 direct and indirect jobs and contributes \$117 billion in economic value to the state of Florida, accounting for approximately 13 percent of Florida's gross domestic product.

As you know, until now, seaports have been the only transportation hub to not be granted COVID relief funds. Yet, the coronavirus pandemic has had a devastating impact on jobs and economic activity at Florida's seaports. Decreased passenger activity due to the pandemic is estimated to have cost the state 169,000 jobs lost and nearly \$23 billion in lost economic activity through 2020. Without your support, Florida seaports may have been unable to respond to the significant economic impacts that we expect to continue while the passenger vessel industry remains suspended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

We look forward to working with you to ensure Florida's seaports have the resources necessary to support and promote the state's economic recovery from impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. Again, we thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Doug Wheeler,
President & CEO