



FLORIDA SEAPORTS

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Florida Ports Council

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Doug Wheeler, President

April 6, 2012

The Honorable Rick Scott
Governor of the State of Florida
The Capitol, PL 01
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Re: Please Sign Important Transportation Investment Legislation, SB 1998

Dear Governor Scott,

Thank you for your dedication and leadership on seaport development in Florida. We are proud to be your partners in the vision of Florida as the global trading hub of the Americas. We cannot stress enough how important the efforts by you and Transportation Secretary Ananth Prasad have meant to the growth of the maritime industry in Florida. More maritime businesses than ever are looking first to Florida as the place to locate or expand.

As you know, the Florida Legislature has passed Senate Bill 1998 and sent the bill to you for your signature. We were proud to be partners with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), the Florida Chamber of Commerce, Associated Industries, the Florida Manufacturing Association, and others to advocate for the passage of this legislation. This legislation will continue your efforts to invest in strategic economic development projects around the state. Some of the highlights of the bill to enhance state infrastructure include:

- Re-dedicates \$200 million in funding to strategic transportation projects “which focus on job creation, and which increase the state’s viability in the national and global markets;”
- Creates the Strategic Port Investment Initiative with a minimum statutory amount of \$35 million, to be administered by FDOT, in cooperation with Florida seaports;
- Requires FDOT to develop a Freight Mobility and Trade Plan to highlight the incentives and programs created to promote Florida trade and expanded port activities;
- Creates the Intermodal Logistics Center (ILC) Infrastructure Support Program and allocate \$5 million per year towards funding for up to 50% of the eligible costs of local government or private projects at ILC facilities that meet certain criteria; and,
- Provides an expedited hearing process for additional challenges to the issuance of an environmental resource permit by the Department of Environmental Protection. This process would not abrogate the rights of affected parties, but rather ensure that such proceedings are not improperly delayed.

While Florida’s unemployment is dropping, there is still much work to be done to ensure that our state once again leads the nation in private-sector job creation. By signing this important legislation, you have an opportunity to further strengthen Florida’s role as one of the most business-friendly states in the country. We urge you to sign SB 1998, and thank both you and the Florida Legislature on your bold leadership this session.

Respectfully



Doug Wheeler
President