Markell, Carper, Coons and Carney Announce $10 million for Port of Wilmington

WILMINGTON, Del. – Today, Governor Jack Markell U.S. Sens. Tom Carper, Chris Coons and Congressman John Carney (all D-Del.), announced a $10 million grant award to the Diamond State Port Corporation from the United States Department of Transportation.

This TIGER V grant award will fund a project to rehabilitate a wharf dating back to 1923 which serves two critical general cargo berths at the Port of Wilmington and is in urgent need of repair. The cost of the project is $13.4 million, and the Diamond State Port Corporation, which owns and operates the Port, will fund the remaining $3.4 million.

Earlier this year, Governor Markell joined the Congressional Delegation in writing a letter to Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood in support of this TIGER V grant request from the Diamond State Port Corporation. The Port of Wilmington is critical to the entire region's economy, and is responsible for more than 4,300 direct, indirect and induced jobs for about 12,500 related jobs annually, as well as $360 million in business revenue and $34 million in state and local taxes. This capital project will dramatically improve and extend the ability of the Port to serve its many customers and ensure its continued role as an economic engine for the state and region.

"This funding is a tribute to the hard work of our federal delegation and the value that the maritime industry places on the Port of Wilmington," said Governor Markell. "The investments we make in the Port will continue to be an integral part of our strategy to create jobs and grow Delaware's economy."

The Port's grant application was selected for funding from more than 700 applications through a competitive, merit-based evaluation process.

"The Port of Wilmington is vital to the economy of Delaware and the entire region," said Sen. Carper. "As America's No. 1 seaport for fresh fruit imports, it supports thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in revenue. The TIGER evaluation process recognized the strong economic value of investing in our port's infrastructure and the TIGER program continues to offer a strong return for taxpayers on innovative infrastructure investments that help to support our ongoing economic recovery. With this grant, which took an all-hands-on-desk effort to get, the Port is well positioned for the future."

"The Port of Wilmington and the region's maritime infrastructure are critical to Delaware's economic strength," Senator Coons said. "With two ship berths in need of repair, the Port's ability to handle more and heavier cargo has been at risk, but this investment in the Port of Wilmington will keep hard-working Delawareans on the job and create new opportunities for urgently needed job growth. There was considerable competition for these TIGER V grants and only the projects capable of creating the most jobs were funded. I am heartened that the potential of the Port of Wilmington to create new jobs was recognized by the Department of Transportation, and pledge to continue working to help more Delawareans benefit from it."

"A strong, competitive Port of Wilmington is critical for Delaware," said Congressman Carney. "This grant will allow the Port to better meet the needs of its existing customers. It also puts the Port in a better position to compete for new business, which will create jobs for Delaware workers and grow the economy. Investments in infrastructure are investments in the long-term future of our economy."

"We are delighted to receive this grant," said Diamond State Port Corporation Executive Director Gene Bailey. "On behalf of our board, and the men and women who work at the Port of Wilmington, I would like to thank Governor Markell, Delaware's Congressional Delegation and Delaware maritime community for their steadfast and enthusiastic support of our TIGER V application. This award by the U.S. Department of Transportation confirms the importance of our port as a critical transportation asset in the U.S. and as a vital link in the international supply chain."