

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **DETROIT/WAYNE COUNTY PORT AUTHORITY STRUCTURES UNIQUE PUBLIC/PRIVATE VENTURE TO SAVE PORT OF DETROIT**

**Detroit, Michigan:** On Friday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, the Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority, City of Detroit Mayor's Office, along with private-sector partners, Nicholson Terminal & Dock Co. and Ambassador Port Corp., announced plans to re-open the City's last remaining general cargo facility, formerly Detroit Marine Terminals in southwest Detroit. Acting on its mission for port preservation, the Port Authority was able to negotiate the deal within the final weeks of a legal settlement that would have placed the 34.5-acre port property on the public auction blocks, thus eliminating it as a true public asset. The former ownership group had defaulted on bonds owed to the Detroit Port Development Corp., a non-profit entity established in the late 1970s that was created, ironically, to bail out the terminal from impending bankruptcy.

The biggest difference today, however, is that the Port Authority has structured a true public-private partnership, unprecedented at the Port of Detroit. Such an organizational structure will solidify the port's role in multi-modal transportation opportunities, by tapping the Port Authority's expertise in government relations, marketing and promotion within the global marketplace. Complementing the Port Authority's involvement is the private investment of the Ambassador Port Corp., a subsidiary of Central Transport. Central Transport offers direct service to 98% of major manufacturing and retail markets across North America. Handling stevedoring and all dockside functions will be Nicholson Terminal and Dock Co., an historical fixture at the Port of Detroit, handling port cargoes for over seventy years in the Metro Detroit area. An unprecedented public-private venture at the Port of Detroit, leadership from all stakeholders realized the unique potential and opportunities such an arrangement offered.

The project will allow for future integration of shipping into Southeast Michigan's multi-modal options. "This will be the first time in southeast Michigan that we'll be able to bring waterborne cargo, rail and trucks all together. In the transportation industry today, that's where it's at," said Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority, Executive Director, Curtis Hertel.

The deal crafted will transfer ownership of the existing port property to the Port Authority which will, in turn, enter into an operating agreement with the Ambassador Port Corp. Nicholson Terminal & Dock Co. has also entered into an agreement to handle all dockside functions at the facility. Immediate plans call for reactivation of the rail spur

into the site, and the updating and modernization of all storage facilities and mobile equipment, bringing Detroit's port up to the standards of its Great Lakes counterparts.

"It will make us very competitive in the Great Lakes," Hertel said.

Having a solid private partner in Central Transport (CenTra) will only enhance the Port Authority's ability to market the facility. "CenTra and its family of companies are in the transportation business, and this is another offering for our current and new customers," said Dan Stamper, president of Detroit International Bridge Co., parent organization to the Ambassador Port Corp. "We'll work to gather business plans for any opportunities to make sure it works for city, port and community.

"We're excited to have an active port facility again, within the City of Detroit," said Port Authority Chairman, Arthur Blackwell, II. "We couldn't allow the City of Detroit, and Southeast Michigan, to lose one of its last remaining general cargo facilities."

Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, Blackwell, II and fellow Board Member, and City of Detroit, Chief Administrative Officer, Derrick Miller, had been investigating opportunities for port expansion and modernization, since the Mayor took office. "Eventually, we could see hundreds of million of dollars of trade flowing through there," said Miller.

Aside from steel shipments, which historically are the port's main imported cargo, additional business is being investigated to diversify the Port of Detroit's portfolio. The Port of Detroit is expected to open immediately, by the end of the month, and offer, long-term, over two hundred jobs, both direct and indirect.

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