



MARITIME EXCHANGE

for the Delaware River and Bay

Leading the Way to Port Progress

John T. Reynolds, Chair
Uwe Schulz, Vice Chair
Dennis Rochford, President
Lisa B. Himber, Vice President
A. Robert Degen, Esq., Secretary, Solicitor
James F. Young, Esq., Assistant Secretary
Dorothy Mather Ix, Treasurer

December 4, 2009

The Honorable Beau Biden
Attorney General
State of Delaware
Carvel State Office Building
820 N. French Street
Wilmington, DE 19801

Dear Attorney General Biden:

As our jobless rate continues to soar, and motions are made in Federal Court to stop the Delaware River Channel deepening project, I would ask that you keep in mind the families of port workers in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware who will be adversely affected should the deepening project fail to move forward as planned.

After years of comprehensive planning and progress in laying the necessary groundwork to create thousands of new high-paying jobs for local residents, as well as maintaining hundreds of current and regional port-related jobs, we are in a fight for our lives. Jobs, and the entire future of the tri-state industrial port on the Delaware River, are in jeopardy.

Just last week, five hundred fifty workers lost their jobs when Valero announced its decision to close the Delaware City, DE refinery. Within the past few weeks, we have lost two of seven refineries on the river. As our economy begins to improve, our ports will play a major role in our recovery and the creation of new economic opportunities for our residents – if we act now to ensure the viability of our ports.

While other ports to the north and south of us are deepening their channels to accommodate larger shipping vessels, we must dredge the Delaware River Channel now to maintain and improve our competitive edge for new refining opportunities – as well as other commercial shipping and trade opportunities.

Time is of the essence and we must not squander this vitally important economic opportunity. We must act now and begin to dredge this critically important channel. The tri-state's entire industrial maritime industry and workforce hangs in the balance. Further delays are a threat to the economic survival of so many local families and communities in all three states.

Recently, major business leaders like Warren Buffet and George Soros invested in the future of key industrial and transportation infrastructure like railroads and ships. Others will take their lead and follow quickly with similar type investments. We sorely need the jobs and investment that these types of infrastructure investments will produce.

We cannot afford to be pushed to the back of the line and let the clock tick while we lose good paying, skilled industrial jobs and the economic opportunities that create good jobs. We must seize this opportunity now and dredge the channel in order to lure new capital investment in private and public sector port development.

Our competitors are moving fast while we here in the tri-state region find ourselves continually stuck in the muck and stagnation of political, bureaucratic, and now legal red tape.

The time to act is now. The time to lead is now. The time to dredge is now. Please stand up for the families and communities who depend on the ports for their economic survival.

Sincerely,



Dennis Rochford
President