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NEWS RELEASE

County Executive and Longshoremen's Forum Details Port Expansion's Job Creation

The International Longshoremen Association Deep-sea Locals 1883 & 1694 and New Castle County Executive Thomas Gordon held a successful public forum on the proposal to expand the Port of Wilmington off the Delaware River at the Sheraton Hotel in Wilmington Friday.

"The Key to Rebuilding the Middle Class in Delaware: The Container Port Project" drew a packed crowd with several dignitaries, including U.S. Rep. John Carney.

This proposal to expand and enlarge the Port of Wilmington off the Delaware River would generate thousands of construction, trucking, railroad, warehouse and dockworker jobs as well as several more jobs in supporting businesses. This project would fill in the employment vacuum created with the loss of General Motors and Chrysler jobs, among others.

"I guarantee that if we add thousands of jobs, you'll reduce the crime in the City of Wilmington 80 to 90 percent," County Executive Gordon said.

The International Longshoremen's Association Clerks and Checkers Locals 1883 and 1694 led by Kimoko Harris and William Ashe, respectively, hired Marine consultant Edward Zimny of Paul F. Richardson and Associates to study their idea to expand the Port. Zimny's study detailed how the new port that would take advantage of Wilmington's incredible geographic advantage and give the Port the ability to handle the increasing use of mega ships and the coming expansion of the Panama Canal.

Delaware Farm Bureau President Gary Warren pointed out that grain could fill up the empty freight going back overseas to help ease the trade imbalance. In all, several promising scenarios were discussed during the two-hour forum.

Among those attending were State Sen. Margaret Rose Henry, State Reps. Stephanie T. Bolden, Gerald Brady, JJ Johnson, Dennis Williams and Charles Potter, County Council President Christopher Bullock, Register of Wills Ciro Poppiti, County Councilmen William Powers and Penrose Hollins, Wilmington Mayor Dennis P. Williams, Councilwoman Hanifa Shabazz, New Castle Mayor Donald Reese and Nicholas Ferrara, owner of the land identified as the prime spot for the port.