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-- MEDIA ADVISORY --

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Funding Approved for Major Improvements to New Bedford State Pier

(BOSTON) – Today, Rep. Bill Straus (D-Mattapoiset), co-chair of the Joint Committee on Transportation, Transportation Secretary and CEO Frank DePaola, and Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Maeve Bartlett announced funding for major improvements at the State Pier in New Bedford.

The capital improvements will allow for the installation of refrigeration equipment in one of the State Pier warehouses which will increase shipping options for goods requiring cold storage at the dock. The Patrick Administration will provide an estimated \$1,000,000 for the project. Upon completion, the installation will enable the State Pier to receive and process greater volumes of break bulk perishables, such as fruits and vegetables, and is seen as a key initiative in the attempt to expand the role of the Port of New Bedford within the American marine highway system. Representative Straus worked closely with the state agencies in support of this project.

“I am pleased that this investment is being made in the State Pier, and I fully expect the project will result in immediate benefits to the local economy many times over the initial outlay,” said Rep. Straus. “Bringing refrigerated capacity to the Pier will position this region to better compete with ports in the northeast and mid-Atlantic states,” he added.

“At MassDOT, we understand the importance of investing in transportation to create and strengthen economic opportunities for the long term,” said Secretary DePaola. “I’m pleased this investment will directly support economic opportunities by funding the installation of refrigeration equipment for the New Bedford State Pier.”

“The Patrick Administration is committed to maintaining and investing in our state properties to maximize opportunities for Massachusetts residents and businesses,” said Secretary Bartlett. “This project will create jobs and contribute long-term economic activity in the Commonwealth.”

Representative Straus stated, "New Bedford State Pier is an important regional transportation asset of the state which must be taken care of. I want to thank Secretary DePaola for his help and responsiveness in taking action on this project. A commercial port of our size and capacity needs to remain competitive with other harbors on the east coast."

Currently, the Port receives produce from overseas bound for Canadian markets, but with the addition of refrigerated processing space, it is hoped that New Bedford will become a gateway for American grocers here in the northeast, as well. The public pier hosts a number of marine commercial and industrial activities and is protected from non-water dependent development under state law.

Once completed, the renovation is projected to create up to 60 new jobs and to double the number of ships bringing fruits and vegetables to and through New Bedford.

Installation is expected to be completed in mid-2015.

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