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## **ProvPort - A critical player in America's Marine Highway**

July 11, 2013 - Rhode Island

Rhode Island and its waters have been integral to America's growth and independence from pre-Revolutionary War days until today. From striking the first blows for freedom against the HMS Gaspee, to our preeminence in maritime and manufacturing trade throughout the 18th, 19th and 20th Century, the aptly named "Ocean State" has found a strong place in America's marine highway system.

Today, Rhode Island ports vary in size and cargo but offer huge time and cost-saving potential to businesses looking to get their freight around the world efficiently. With the promise of increased short-sea shipping and use of Arctic waterways, ports like those found here in Providence and Rhode Island are getting an important second look.

ProvPort is strategically poised along the Boston-Washington corridor, with immediate access to major interstate highways, two major rail services (Providence & Worcester and AMTRAK,) and a convenient and thriving soon-to-be international airport.

With a 40-foot draft and 100-foot turning radius in its basin, ProvPort is able to service many vessels; and just recently acquiring two brand new cranes and additional barges, ships will soon have the potential to be (off)loaded berth-side or serviced at Jamestown (RI) with its 100-foot waters. The opportunities - which will be significantly enhanced with the expansion of the Panama Canal next year - are vast.

Currently, ProvPort, which is managed by Waterson Terminal Services, handles liquid bulk (such as fuels and chemicals,) and break bulk (coal, salt, concrete, iron and steel scrap.) Its break bulk exports have climbed by 12.2% in the past decade (according to the U.S. Bureau of the Census Foreign Trade Division,) with coal and scrap its leading dry bulk export commodities, and with South East Asia now our lead trading partner for the New England break bulk export market.

And while Boston tops the New England ports for dry bulk exports, Providence is still a factor. Scrap remains our primary export; in fact, Sims Metal Management has located its world headquarters right here along the Port of Providence, where it maintains an important presence, creating well-paying jobs for local residents and shining a light on the virtue of a working waterfront.

With major ports such as Boston, Bridgeport, Searsport (M,) and New Haven, Providence continues to lead other New England ports in terms of break bulk import cargo - particularly automobiles. (6/24/13, RI Strong Ports: Overview of Freight Flows in the Region and Intermodal Connections, John Riendeau, RIEDC.) In 2011, Providence Harbor handled 7,553,000 tons of cargo. The opportunities for growth prevail.

According to a recent study by the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, there is great potential for a container feeder service. In fact, "imported Asian container service has increased at East Coast ports, including New York, Boston, and Baltimore, and potentially at Halifax in the

future..." that report says, increasing the potential to build a barge feeder system between New York and Rhode Island as an alternative to trucking containerized cargo between the Port of NY/NJ and RI's ports.

There is also reportedly great room to expand offshore wind development and specialty cargo through ProvPort and Davisville.

With the activity between the U.S. Department of Transportation model administrations and new investments in port infrastructure in Rhode Island, we are in a solid position to grow. We urge you to take a look at Providence for your expansion opportunities. For more information, contact James Bennett, director of economic development at [jbennett@providenceri.com](mailto:jbennett@providenceri.com).

Angel Taveras is the mayor of Providence.

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