



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 7, 2015

**CONTACT: GOVERNOR'S PRESS OFFICE**

(850) 717-9282

[media@eog.myflorida.com](mailto:media@eog.myflorida.com)

## **GOVERNOR RICK SCOTT KICKS-OFF THE JAXPORT MILE POINT HARBOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

**JACKSONVILLE, Fla.** – Today, Governor Rick Scott officially kicked-off JAXPORT's Mile Point harbor improvement project which will remove existing navigational restrictions on the St. Johns River at Mile Point. This project will ensure larger ships can travel the channel more efficiently, saving shippers and businesses time and money in loading and unloading cargo. The state invested \$43.5 million for the Mile Point harbor improvement project.

Governor Scott said, "Since taking office, my administration has invested more than \$850 million in seaport infrastructure improvements in Florida, which has helped make our state a global trade leader and has created thousands of jobs. In February, I was excited to announce that Volkswagen Group of America chose JAXPORT as the location of its import facility and Southeastern distribution center, and in April, I announced Nestle USA was shifting a majority of their U.S. to Puerto Rico shipments from the Port of New York and New Jersey to JAXPORT. We look forward to welcoming more shippers and businesses to JAXPORT because of this important investment."

Currently, larger container ships can only travel the St. Johns River during two four-hour periods of the day due to the tidal effects at the Mile Point location. The improvement will correct cross-currents that keep larger ships from using the channel. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approved the project, however, no federal funding was appropriated. The state of Florida advanced the funding to ensure completion of the project.

Florida Department of Transportation Secretary Jim Boxold said, "I applaud Governor Scott and the Florida Legislature for jump-starting the funding of this \$43.5 million project. With the Panama Canal expansion 90% complete, this project will greatly strengthen the port's ability to successfully compete for more post-Panamax ships in the future."

Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry said, "The Mile Point investment will make an already ideal place to do business, get a job and raise a family even better. When it is completed, it will yield a return on investment for Jacksonville's economy which will

increase opportunity for our people. We are so very grateful for elected leaders, such as Governor Scott, who really understand the positive impact of our port and who work hard to turn their vision into action."

JAXPORT Chairman Dr. John Newman said, "The benefits of this investment will continue to support opportunity for the port, our business partners and create jobs for our citizens for decades to come. By moving this project to completion, the Governor, FDOT and JAXPORT make good on our shared commitment to a vital Northeast Florida economy."

Under the present situation, ships face challenges of the strong currents when they try to enter JAXPORT. As the Intracoastal Waterway and St. Johns River converge at Mile Point, the strong currents threaten large container ships whose heavy cargo makes them less navigable, creating a potential safety hazard as well as significant delays where ships are forced to wait for high tides to subside.

Senator Aaron Bean said, "These investments in JAXPORT will pay big dividends in trade volume, in the local economy and jobs for Floridians."

Senator Audrey Gibson said, "By investing in projects like the one we are celebrating today at Mile Point, we continue to position Florida as having the best transportation infrastructure in the country. It is a proud moment for both the Legislature and the Governor."

Senator Travis Hutson said, "By investing in seaport infrastructure improvements, like the Mile Point project, Florida ports will continue to be an economic engine for our state. I am thankful to Governor Scott for recognizing the important role JAXPORT plays for the local community."

Representative Paul Renner said, "Governor Scott understands that important investments in Florida seaports and infrastructure grow the economy and help Florida compete globally. I look forward to seeing Mile Point project's positive impact on JAXPORT and local businesses and families."

Representative Lake Ray said, "Governor Scott's leadership has made Florida ports a significant economic driver for the state. The Mile Point project will allow JAXPORT to continue as an important player in the post-Panamax world."

Representative Charles McBurney said, "The Mile Point project will greatly strengthen JAXPORT's ability to successfully compete in the future. I applaud Governor Scott's commitment to improving and maintaining a first-class infrastructure system in our state."

Representative Jay Fant said, "This project will save shippers and businesses time and money, which will in turn grow jobs and opportunities for families in Jacksonville. I am thankful to Governor Scott for making transportation and infrastructure development a top priority."

Mile Point consists of 5,000 feet of shoreline located along the north shore of the St. Johns River and east of the Intracoastal Waterway (IWW). Great Marsh Island and the Mile Point Training Wall divide Chicopit Bay. The project combines relocation/reconfiguration of the existing training wall, restoration of Great Marsh Island, and the creation of a flow improvement channel in Chicopit Bay.

###