



# PRESS RELEASE – For Immediate Release

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## Port of Cleveland's Cargo Volume Grew 31 percent in 2011

*More growth expected as Port expands rail system in largest construction project in a decade*

**JANUARY 25, 2012** – The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority reported that overall cargo tonnage increased 31 percent in 2011, largely the result of growth in steel, iron-ore and oversized “project” cargo handled by Port facilities.

The Port handled 3.4 million tons of cargo last year – the highest volume since 2008. General cargo volume rose 16 percent as both steel and project cargo posted increases; while bulk cargo increased 33 percent, as more iron ore was handled by Port operations.

“Trade through our port showed strong growth in 2011, which is another indicator of an economic rebound underway in our region,” said Port CEO Will Friedman. “With this momentum we are working harder than ever to develop better waterborne freight connections with global markets to help Ohio firms compete for and win business, and ultimately create new jobs.”

Overall tonnage transiting the St. Lawrence Seaway increased 2.5 percent in 2011.

Separately the Port Authority’s Board of Directors agreed today to enter into a contract for nearly \$3.9 million to construct an on-dock rail loop that will make the Port more competitive.

The Port selected Great Lakes Construction Company, a Cleveland-based company to build the 5,500 feet of additional track. The project is slated to be completed before the end of October, and was made possible by an Ohio Department of Development Logistics and Distribution Stimulus Loan of \$3,025,000. The Port will fund the remainder of the project from its capital budget.

“We are excited to move forward with the rail expansion, which exemplifies the strategic investments the Port is making to grow its maritime operations and spur more economic activity in Greater Cleveland,” said Board Chair Bob Smith. “We are also grateful to the Ohio Department of Development for its vital role in turning this project into reality.”

The rail loop will connect existing on-dock tracks, giving the two Class 1 railroads serving the Port access to the entire general cargo facility and providing enhanced opportunities for rail-to-ship and ship-to-rail cargo handling. This expanded rail service will give local companies more efficient and cost-effective shipping options, and better position the port to handle more railcars at one time, increase exports, and reach customers in a broader geographic area.

Cleveland Commercial Railroad, LLC will manage the scheduling and operations of the Port’s expanded rail system, and market it to area companies.



The board also authorized the Port to enter into a contract for up to \$65,000 with Martin Associates to analyze the business case for launching regularly scheduled liner service between Cleveland and ports in Europe, and possibly Canada. Such service would provide new options for transporting both containerized and non-containerized cargo, offering Ohio shippers a competitive and reliable alternative to established routings, and advancing the Port's strategic aim of diversifying its cargo base. Regularly scheduled service could also provide unprecedented opportunities to export goods from Northeast Ohio by ship directly to world markets.

Martin Associates previously completed market analyses for the Port Authority and recently concluded a bi-national analysis of the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Seaway System. Under the new contract it will conduct market research and identify viable service design options that the Port can use as the basis for an ocean-carrier solicitation program that will begin later this year.

*The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority operates the Port of Cleveland, a leading gateway for waterborne trade on the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Seaway System. Nearly 18,000 jobs and 1.8 billion in economic activity result from the roughly 13 million tons of cargo that move through the Cleveland harbor on average each year. The Port also provides innovative financing services for a wide range of development projects in Northeast Ohio, and is leading initiatives to solve critical infrastructure challenges along Cleveland's waterfronts.*