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PORT OF PALM BEACH AWARDED \$1.5 MILLION FEDERAL SECURITY GRANT

RIVIERA BEACH, Fla. – Port of Palm Beach officials are pleased to have learned today that their port has been awarded \$1.5 million under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Port Security Grant Program. This award, coming in the seventh round of post-9/11 DHS grants to ports, is the first significant such award received by Port of Palm Beach.

“Safety and security represent our No. 1 priority at Port of Palm Beach, so we certainly are pleased to have been selected to receive this grant,” Wayne M. Richards, chairman of the Port of Palm Beach District Board of Commissioners, said today. “We cannot be vigilant enough in taking all steps to keep our port and surrounding communities safe from terrorist incursion.

“We are deeply appreciative to DHS decision-makers for their recognition of our port’s need and, especially, to U.S. Representatives Hastings, Klein and Mahoney and Senators Martinez and Nelson, as well as the U.S. Coast Guard Sector Miami, for their role in raising awareness of our need,” Richards continued.

The \$1.5 million grant is to be combined with \$500,000 in port funds to secure surveillance detection equipment and access control technology.

Port of Palm Beach was among 175 public and private entities that will receive shares of \$82 million made available by DHS for fiscal 2007 to port areas considered not to be at highest risk of terrorist incursion. The eight port regions identified by DHS as having highest risks will split a total of \$120 million in grant funds.

Port of Palm Beach Executive Director Lori A. Baer praised the port’s security director, Ken Hern, for his leadership in understanding the port’s security needs and conveying them in the port’s grant application.

“Receipt of this grant will also benefit those in law enforcement with whom we work, including the U.S. Coast Guard, DHS Customs and Border Protection, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office and Riviera Beach,” Baer said.

The Port of Palm Beach District is an independent special taxing district, a subdivision of the state of Florida, which covers 971 square miles or about half of Palm Beach County. The district has statutory authority to levy ad valorem millage tax but has not done so since fiscal 1975.