



# FLORIDA SEAPORTS

## CHARTING OUR FUTURE

502 East Jefferson Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Phone: (850) 222-8028 · Fax: (850) 222-7552

E-mail: [info@flaports.org](mailto:info@flaports.org)

[www.flaports.org](http://www.flaports.org)

### Florida Seaport Transportation and Economic Development Council

The Florida Seaport Transportation and Economic Development (FSTED) Council is a public entity created by statute and charged with implementing the state's economic development mission by facilitating the implementation of seaport capital improvement projects at the local level. The Council was created within the Department of Transportation and consists of the port directors of the 15 publicly owned seaports and a representative from the Department of Transportation, the Department of Community Affairs, and the Governor's Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development.

In 1990, the State Legislature created the FSTED Program, under Chapter 311, Florida Statutes (F.S.), to finance port transportation projects on a 50-50 matching basis. They established this alternative to the traditional Department of Transportation program because they understood the importance of Florida's international trade to the state's economic progress and job creation and because they recognized the urgency of building the transportation capacity needed for the state's 15 public deepwater seaports to satisfy their customer's demands and compete in the fast-paced global marketplace.

Chapter 311 creates a partnership between the state and its seaports. It is driven by an approach to project development that reflects the special characteristics of seaports: they are public entities, but must function as businesses to fulfill their public purpose. Like any business, they must demonstrate a service orientation and prompt response to customer demand, flexibility to meet changing market trends and accountability to ensure sound investments. This approach is key to the success of Chapter 311 and the seaport bond financing programs authorized by Section 320.20, F.S., in accelerating the pace at which our seaports have been able to build the facilities needed to compete with out of state ports and to sustain and enlarge the state's share of international commerce.

The FSTED Program requires consistency with local comprehensive plans and matching funds from each seaport; thus seaport investments are driven by a local commitment to meet the community's strategic objectives. Eleven of the 15 seaport governing bodies comprise directly elected officials. The Port of Tampa's Board includes elected officials as well as members appointed by the Governor; the Port of Jacksonville's Board is appointed by the Governor and by the Mayor of Jacksonville; Port Panama City's Board is appointed by the elected City Commission; and the Port of Port St. Joe's Board is appointed entirely by the Governor.

Responsibility for project development through the FSTED Program is thus initiated at the local level, based on an understanding of market demand and local seaport opportunity and capacity to implement statewide goals. At the State level, project review is accomplished by two state agencies that are full voting members of the FSTED Council. They are the Department of Transportation and the Department of Economic Opportunity.

Section 311.07(3)(a), Florida Statutes, provides that program funds will be used to fund approved projects on a 50-50 matching basis with any of the deepwater ports governed by a public body. An approved project is a project that has been approved by the FSTED Council. Grant funding under the program is limited to specific types of port facilities or port transportation projects.

The FSTED Council has several committees, which discuss and facilitate issues related to the environment, growth management, and seaport security.