

# Port of Albany Seeks Significant Improvements, Expects Increased Ship Traffic



*by Pete Bardunias, President/CEO, the Chamber of Southern Saratoga County*

*Richard Hendrick, General Manager of the Port of Albany addresses the July 18 press conference as US Senator Chuck Schumer, Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan, and GE Power Vice President of Global Supply Jeff Connelly (in suit, right) look on.*

The Port of Albany and US Senator Charles E. Schumer have announced an effort to secure TIGER grant funding for the Port to increase exports and create jobs in the Capital Region for companies like GE and Siemens.

In a July 18 press conference at the Port, the Senator said this much-needed grant would help improve current obstacles like moving and storing heavy cargo and supporting Capital Region manufacturers that develop next-generation technology equipment that is super-sized and over-dimensional for road or rail transport. “The Port of Albany has been a major hub of job creation and economic activity for generations, but it has needed some critical infrastructure upgrades for years to better accommodate for the larger cargo shipments our manufacturers need to export. This major overhaul has real potential to reshape the face of this critical maritime transportation hub, and would finally allow our manufacturers across the state to export the next-generation technology and manufacturing equipment that was previously too large to ship out of Albany,” said Schumer. “This project is the definition of what TIGER

grant funding is all about, and that’s why I’m urging the DOT to award the nearly \$18 million in funding that will make this project a reality.” The Port of Albany, according to its 2015 Annual Report, generates roughly \$800 million in regional and statewide economic output annually. It provides 1,400 jobs locally and 4,500 jobs statewide. The port makes roughly \$3 million in annual revenue as a result of tenant leases and, from 2010-2015, the port achieved a 15 percent increase in vessel calls.

Jeff Connelly, GE Power’s VP of Global Supply, said, “Our newest products are bigger and heavier than ever, so this enables the delivery of power across the world, “adding that “GE exports 90 percent of the equipment produced at the Schenectady factory.”

As the President/CEO of New York state’s largest marine-friendly chamber of commerce, I wholeheartedly concur with the Senator’s sentiments. We need a strong, robust Port to handle ship traffic on the Hudson, and accommodate more barges coming down from upstate and Great Lakes destinations via the revitalized New York State Canal System.