



## PRESS RELEASE – For Immediate Release

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### Port of Cleveland inaugurates new cleanup of Cleveland Harbor

#### *Work boats to remove floating debris from river and lakefront as part of Port's environmental stewardship mission*

**OCTOBER 17, 2012** – The Port of Cleveland commissioned two custom-made boats today that will remove floating debris from the Cuyahoga River and downtown Lake Erie shoreline. They are part of the Port's broader mission to help restore the health of the river and serve as a proactive environmental steward in and around our waterways.

The Port formally commissioned the sister vessels – Flotsam and Jetsam – and their crews during a ceremony at North Coast Harbor along Cleveland's downtown lakeshore.

"Flotsam and Jetsam will make a visible and vital impact on our waterways and community," said Port Chair Bob Smith. "They also fit with our strategic role as a steward of two vital civic assets – our ship channel and the downtown lakeshore."

The Port designed and built the aluminum vessels with a \$425,160 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. The Cuyahoga River Remedial Action Plan (RAP) had worked closely with the Port on the grant application.

The U.S. EPA has designated floating debris as an environmental stressor. Such debris, which can range from logs to plastic bottles, is also an aesthetic nuisance and a potential hazard for the commercial vessels, recreational boaters, and wildlife that use the river and lake. Its removal is part of ongoing work to renew the river and remove it from an EPA environmental watch list.

"These boats send a signal to residents and visitors that we are working to help keep our river and lakefront clear and clean of garbage and other floating debris," said Port President and CEO Will Friedman. "Although water quality is much improved, floating debris can leave the wrong impression."

Each boat has a different purpose, but they work in tandem. Flotsam scoops up debris with a shovel and places it in Jetsam's large bagsters. Jetsam also has a special crane to grab larger and heavier debris such as tires and logs. The Port designed the boats to navigate in tight places along the twisting Cuyahoga River and also tow a 250-foot floating boom that can sweep the river of floating debris. The boats are expected to remove enough floating trash to fill dozens of dump trucks annually.

"We have a responsibility to protect the 13,000 trillion gallons of fresh water directly off the shores of Cleveland," said Jenita McGowan, Cleveland Mayor Frank G. Jackson's Chief of Sustainability. "The Flotsam and Jetsam work vessels will be removing debris from the river and the lake not only enhancing recreation and commerce, but helping to reduce plastic pollution and other debris that plague wildlife in Cleveland."



The boats will be operated by crews from the Downtown Cleveland Alliance, whose Downtown Ambassadors are well known for their work cleaning and enhancing city streets.

“Our Clean and Safe Ambassador program has created a vibrant downtown Cleveland, safe and inviting for residents, visitors and office workers,” said Joe Marinucci, the Alliance’s President and CEO. “DCA is the first downtown organization of our type in the country to take on a maritime role. We are proud of this important partnership with the Port Authority, as we reclaim our city’s natural assets.”

The boats will operate daily for the next several weeks, weather permitting, and then resume work next April.

*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.*

#### FAST FACTS

*Flotsam:* Marine term for debris that floats off sinking vessels or falls in the water.

*Jetsam:* Marine term for items that are thrown into the water.

*Service areas:* The boats will work along the river’s 6.5 mile ship channel and about 5 miles of Lake Erie’s shoreline.

*Specs:* 25’10” length x 11’ wide (beam); made of aluminum; weigh about 17,000 lbs.; and travel about 6.5 knots/hr.

*Total crews:* 5-6 members.

*Builder:* Lake Assault Boats, LLC of Superior, Wisc.

During training, the boats removed about 18 cubic yards of floating debris.