

**NEWS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY
AND THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND
ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL**

MEDIA RELEASE

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Delaware Unveils Two New Vessels to Protect Waterways and Critical Infrastructure DSP Maritime Unit and DNREC Join Homeland Security Fight

Dover – Protecting the State’s key assets and infrastructure along Delaware’s waterways just got easier with the unveiling of the new and first-ever Delaware State Police (DSP) Maritime Unit and two new vessels that will be used for homeland security patrols and surveillance. The vessels, DSP Marine One, and the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control’s Marine Patrol Oscar (MP Oscar), will proactively patrol Delaware’s 100-miles of waterways.

Today, Gov. Jack A. Markell, U.S. Sen. Chris Coons, Safety and Homeland Security (DSHS) Secretary Lewis D. Schiliro and Natural Resources and Environmental Control Secretary (DNREC) Collin O’Mara joined with local homeland security partners to emphasize the importance of enhancing security along Delaware’s waterways.

“One of government’s most important roles is protecting its citizens,” said Governor Jack Markell. “Business conducted along our waterways is an integral part of our economy. Our port, bridges, refineries, and chemical facilities are vital links in regional commerce. We are protecting our State’s assets, its businesses and the people that call Delaware ‘home.’ It’s our responsibility to ensure, as best we can, that Delaware and its residents are safe and secure.”

"The strength of Delaware's economy is directly related to the safety of our waterways, so we must do all we can to secure this critical component of our infrastructure," Sen. Chris Coons said. "These two vessels will be important assets in the protection of the ports, bridges, refineries, and chemical facilities on which our communities depend. I'm proud that today we're unveiling another strong example of what we can achieve when our federal and state governments work together in the shared pursuit of a more secure nation."

The focal point of the new, enhanced security capabilities is the creation of the DSP Maritime Unit which was funded through a \$1.6 million federal Port Security Grant. The unit, which became operational in August, focuses on critical infrastructure protection, high visibility patrol and prevention, emergency response with allied agencies and units, recovery operation support and outreach to the maritime community. The unit will utilize, Marine One, its new 36-foot vessel for its patrols.

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“It is often said that Homeland Security begins with Hometown Security. As the custodian of the State’s waterways, our hometown is the 100 miles of land along the ocean, bay and riverfront. Adequately securing these crucial assets is significant not only for our State but also for the region. We are meeting this challenge with the support provided by our partners—DNREC, US Coast Guard, FBI, Wilmington Police Department and our local volunteer fire companies,” Schiliro said.

The DSP Maritime Unit, currently the State’s only agency with a full-time Maritime Homeland Security mission, is staffed with three troopers on a full-time basis. Additional troopers have been outfitted and trained in the Unit’s operations and assist the full-time members in addition to their current road patrol assignments. The unit is co-located with the Delaware Information and Analysis Center and works regularly with a specially trained intelligence analyst.

DNREC unveiled a new marine patrol vessel, the MP Oscar, the boat the Division of Fish and Wildlife Enforcement will use to assist in protecting the safety and security of Delaware’s citizens and critical infrastructure.

“DNREC’s new Homeland Security boat increases Delaware’s preparedness capabilities and provides a greater presence on the water,” said Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control Secretary Collin O’Mara. “With an overall length of 22 feet, MP Oscar has a shallow draft that enables our enforcement agents to patrol areas where larger vessels would be unable to maneuver. The boat is equipped with the latest technology capable of addressing today’s homeland security threats near critical infrastructure and key maritime assets along the Delaware River – one of the busiest river-systems in the country.”

DNREC was awarded a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of \$130,866 through the Chemical Buffer Zone Protection Program to purchase MP Oscar, a Boston Whaler Justice model. The vessel is outfitted with the latest in marine electronics – radar, GPS (global positioning system), marine and state radios, and forward-looking infrared imaging (FLIR) that provides enhanced pictures by sensing infrared radiation from heat sources. FLIR can be used at night and in times of low visibility to search and detect illegal access to infrastructure. MP Oscar is also equipped with Raymarine day and night cameras used to document structures, other boats and individuals. Side scanning sonar equipment can detect debris and obstructions on the bottom of waterways and help investigate illegal underwater activities.

DNREC Fish and Wildlife Enforcement is a member of the Delaware Maritime Security Working Group and partners with the Delaware State Police Maritime Unit, the Wilmington Police Department Marine Unit, the Delaware Information and Analysis Center, the Delaware River and Bay Authority, and the Department of Safety and Homeland Security in safeguarding waterways, while protecting critical infrastructure.

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