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SENATORS PROMOTE COMPLETION OF "EAST COAST GREENWAY" - NATION'S FIRST LONG-DISTANCE URBAN TRAIL

(Washington, DC) - Twenty-three United States Senators, led by Senators Paul S. Sarbanes (D-MD) and Susan Collins (R-ME), and representing states along the eastern seaboard, have written a letter to President Bush urging public support and financial assistance for the completion of the East Coast Greenway, the nation's first long distance urban trail.

The East Coast Greenway is a 2,600-mile multi-use trail serving walkers, bicyclists, equestrians, the physically challenged and other non-motorized uses. It is considered the "urban equivalent of the Appalachian Trail," and the trail traverses urban areas from Portland, Maine to Miami, Florida, and passes through sites that showcase our nation's industrial, intellectual and cultural past. When completed this pathway for people will contribute to advancing a number of important goals: increasing transportation options, improving air quality, reducing roadway congestion, encouraging ecotourism and adventure travel, local economic development, improving the health of our citizens via recreation and exercise, and helping to connect people and communities.

"Volunteers and local agencies are currently hard at work on all parts of the route, from Key West, Florida to Maine's Canadian border at Calais. More than 20% of the East Coast Greenway is currently in use and another 40% is in various stages of planning, design or construction," the Senators wrote. "This community-based initiative has received critical support from federal programs administered by the U.S. Departments of Interior and Transportation, the Centers for Disease Control, the Environmental Protection Agency and branches of the Armed Services. States along the trail have utilized millions in federal transportation program funding for the design and construction of local trail segments. However, additional help is needed to ensure that the vision of completing this trail by 2010 is fulfilled.

"We ask for your support by first, accepting the forthcoming invitation to officially launch the East Coast Greenway at the Inaugural event in June 2003 in Washington, DC, and second, directing the Departments of Interior, Agriculture, Transportation, Defense, Health & Human Services, EPA, and the new Homeland Security to work together and make the East Coast Greenway a priority for discretionary funding and technical assistance programs administered by each Agency," the Senators concluded.

Signing the letter in addition to Senators Sarbanes and Collins were: Joe Biden (D-DE), Tom Carper (D-DE), Max Cleland (D-GA), Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY), Jon Corzine (D-NJ), Chris Dodd (D-CT), John Edwards (D-NC), Bob Graham (D-FL), Ted Kennedy (D-MA), Joe Lieberman (D-CT), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Zell Miller (D-GA), Bill Nelson (D-FL), Jack Reed (D-RI), Rick Santorum (R-PA), Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Olympia Snowe (R-ME), Arlen Specter (R-PA), Robert Torricelli (D-NJ), and John Warner (R-VA).

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