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**Top Union Official and Two Other Men Indicted in
Investigation Into Alleged Scheme to Extort Money from
Dock Workers**

***Charges stem from ongoing probe by Division of Criminal Justice
& Waterfront Commission***

TRENTON - Attorney General Paula T. Dow, Criminal Justice Director Stephen J. Taylor and Commissioner Ronald Goldstock of the Waterfront Commission of New York Harbor announced that a top official of the International Longshoremen's Association, a Newark police officer and a third man were indicted today in connection with an investigation into an alleged scheme to extort money from dock workers by demanding "tribute" for better jobs and wages.

The indictment stems from Operation Terminal, an ongoing investigation by the New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice and the Waterfront Commission of New York Harbor into the activities of a criminal enterprise that allegedly has exercised control and corrupt influence over International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) locals operating shipping terminals at the Port of New York and New Jersey. Three other defendants were indicted in October.

According to Director Taylor, the state grand jury indictment obtained by the Division of Criminal Justice Gangs & Organized Crime Bureau charges Nunzio LaGrasso, 60, of Florham Park, Secretary-Treasurer of ILA Local #1478. LaGrasso is Vice President of the Atlantic Coast District of all ILA locals. The indictment also charges Rocco Ferrandino, 68, of Lakewood, and LaGrasso's nephew, Newark Police Officer Alan Marfia, 39, of Kenilworth.

LaGrasso is charged with two counts of conspiracy (2nd degree), and one count each of extortion (2nd degree), commercial bribery (2nd degree), official misconduct (2nd degree), and money laundering (3rd degree). Ferrandino, a timekeeper at Maher Terminal in Port Newark/Elizabeth, is charged with conspiracy (2nd degree), extortion (2nd degree), commercial bribery (2nd degree), and money laundering (3rd degree). Marfia is charged with conspiracy (2nd degree), official misconduct (2nd degree) and obstruction of law or governmental function (4th degree).

LaGrasso and Ferrandino were charged in connection with the alleged tribute scheme. Marfia was charged for allegedly using his access to police databases to obtain information for LaGrasso regarding undercover police vehicles that were conducting surveillance near his union office.

The investigation into the alleged criminal enterprise at the New Jersey waterfront revealed that ILA members working at the shipping terminals are required to make a cash "tribute" payment at Christmas time each year to the enterprise out of the year-end bonuses each ILA member receives called "container royalty checks."

It is alleged that those payments are funneled to the criminal enterprise through LaGrasso. The payments must be made for union members to receive high-paying jobs, preferred shift

assignments and overtime, all as determined under the influence of the criminal enterprise. Each of the thousands of union members allegedly must make a payment that typically ranges from a couple of hundred dollars to a couple of thousand dollars depending on the size of the container royalty check. It is alleged that LaGrasso collected some tribute payments directly, but usually relied on accomplices such as Ferrandino to collect them.

As a result of the investigation, the Division of Criminal Justice obtained an indictment on Oct. 26, 2010, charging Joseph Queli, 64, of Wall, and Nicholas Bergamotto, 63, of Newark, with loansharking and money laundering. Queli's wife, Regina Queli, 62, was charged with money laundering and tax evasion for allegedly handling criminal proceeds and failing to report them on tax returns. The indictment was sealed until Jan. 10, 2011 because of the ongoing investigation.

It is alleged that as part of the criminal enterprise at the Port, Queli made loans to ILA members at usurious interest rates, ranging from 78 to 156 percent per year. Queli or Bergamotto, acting on his behalf, would allegedly demand weekly payments from the union members of 1 ½ to 3 percent interest on the loan amount.

Bergamotto allegedly gave the money he collected on such loans to Queli. Queli is also charged in the indictment with theft by extortion because he allegedly threatened bodily injury to one man if he did not make his loan payments.

LaGrasso, Ferrandino, Marfia, Queli and Bergamotto were initially arrested and charged in the investigation in April 2010. All five men remain free on bail.

Second-degree crimes carry a maximum sentence of 10 years in state prison and a \$150,000 fine, while third-degree crimes carry a maximum sentence of five years in prison and a \$15,000 fine. Fourth-degree crimes carry a maximum sentence of 18 months in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

The indictment is merely an accusation and the defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty. The indictment was handed up to Superior Court Judge Pedro J. Jimenez Jr. in Mercer County, who assigned the case to Monmouth County. It is posted with this release at www.njpublicsafety.com.

Supervising Deputy Attorney General Mark Eliades, Chief of the Division of Criminal Justice Gangs & Organized Crime Bureau, and Deputy Attorney General Erin Callahan presented the case to the state grand jury. The Division of Criminal Justice and the Waterfront Commission were assisted in the investigation by the Newark Police Department.

The Port of New York and New Jersey is the largest port complex located on the East Coast of North America. Roughly \$200 billion in cargo moves through the port each year. Through the years, the New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice and the Waterfront Commission have conducted investigations into the activities of organized crime in and around the port. Past investigations have led to prosecution of union officials and members of the Genovese crime family, which has been found to control or exert significant influence over the ILA and commercial activity at the waterfront. Their criminal activities have included extortion, fencing, commercial bribery, loansharking and gambling.