



## Florida Department of Transportation-D-6 News Clip Port of Miami Tunnel Project

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From: *Miami Times*, Thursday, February 23, 2006  
Subject: **State takes first step toward tunnel at seaport**

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By Charlotte Libov

Construction of the long-awaited Port of Miami Tunnel, which is to connect the city's Dodge Island seaport with the mainland interstate highway system, is closer to reality.

The Florida Department of Transportation has just issued a request for statements of qualification, the first step in a nine-month process to select the bidder who would design, finance, build and operate the \$1 billion-plus project.

The tunnel is to link Interstate 395 and the MacArthur Causeway on Watson Island with port facilities on Dodge Island.

Trucks entering and leaving the seaport have increasingly congested downtown streets, often backing up as much as a mile waiting to enter the port. A tunnel is seen as a solution to both the traffic problems and the increasing time burden on trucking concerns.

According to the notification of the qualifications request, the project is to accomplish these three goals:

- Widen the MacArthur Causeway Bridge.
- Connect Watson Island and Dodge Island.
- Provide connections to the Port of Miami roadway system.

The deadline to submit statements of qualification is March 31. The department of transportation is to announce a short-list of qualified proposers by mid-June and award the contract in December.

The winning concessionaire will be responsible for privately financing the project. However, the state's department of transportation and its local funding partners are to provide about \$300 million in "construction milestone payments" or contingency funds during the construction period.

The projected opening date of the tunnel is 2012, the transportation department has said.

The request for statements of qualification is posted on the official project Web site, [www.portofmiamitunnel.com](http://www.portofmiamitunnel.com).