

Dear Neighbors,

Your Florida Legislature is committed to doing what is necessary to stimulate job growth and improve the prosperity of our great State.

We have a great opportunity to take advantage of the expansion of the Panama Canal, which Panama has undertaken so that larger and heavier ships will be able to use the canal. With the widening of the Panama Canal, many ships which now unload their cargos on the west coast of the United States will instead be able to pass through the Panama Canal and unload their cargos in ports along the east coast, including Port Everglades.

In anticipation of the opportunities that this expansion will create for increased business in and around Port Everglades, the Broward County Board of Commissioners approved the Port Everglades 20 Year Master/Vision Plan. The information about the projects below comes from the Office of the Port Everglades Director Phillip Allen, who has done an outstanding job with his team planning for this great opportunity. Funding these projects outlined below will require a combination of state and federal dollars. Providing this funding will be my highest priority as we begin our next legislative session in January.

One of the plan's critical projects is the Southport Turning Notch Expansion, which will lengthen the existing deepwater turn-around area for cargo ships from 900 feet to 2,400 feet. This will allow five new cargo berths to be built. This project alone would be expected to increase the economic activity in our area by \$10.7 billion annually. This expansion would be expected to create approximately 2,220 construction jobs in the short term and an additional 5,529 regional jobs by 2027 if completed according to the Master Plan.

A second project is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Deepening and Widening Program. This project will deepen the channel to meet the needs of the larger ships with heavier loads that will be able to transit the Panama Canal. This will allow our port to reap the full benefits of the increased shipping traffic which will result from the expansion of the Panama Canal. Widening and deepening the channel at Port Everglades would be expected to create 4,659 construction jobs now and 1,491 regional jobs by 2027 if completed according to the Master Plan.

The third project is the development of an Intermodal Container Transfer Facility, which will be used to transfer international containers directly between ship and rail, instead of having the containers hauled to and from off-port rail terminals. This project is expected to create 767 construction jobs and should be completed by late 2013.

Port Everglades, with an approximate value of economic activity of \$14 billion, is already a powerful economic engine for this region. The expansion of the Panama Canal together with implementation of the Port Everglades 20 Year Master/Vision Plan will help ensure that this figure will only increase through the years. As stated, these projects will require a substantial commitment from our limited state and federal resources during these challenging times.

I am honored to represent you in Tallahassee as we fight to stimulate job growth and to strengthen our economy for a better future.

Sincerely,

George Moraitis
State Representative
District 91