



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Port of Corpus Christi Chairman Ruben Bonilla testifies before the International Trade Commission regarding U.S. restrictions of Cuba trade

(Corpus Christi, TX) --- Port of Corpus Christi Chairman Ruben Bonilla testified before the International Trade Commission (ITC) today regarding U.S. restrictions of Cuba trade. The ITC held a hearing this morning as part of their investigation, *U.S. Agricultural Sales to Cuba: Certain Economic Effects of U.S. Restrictions*. The purpose of the hearing is for the commission to gain a better understanding of the economic effects on U.S. agricultural sales to Cuba of statutory and administrative restrictions related to trade with and travels to Cuba by American citizens.

Chairman Bonilla testified before the commission today to express his concern of current U.S. trade and travel restrictions on Cuba and to suggest corrective measures to ease the pursuit of commerce for U.S. Port Authorities with the Cuba government. The Port of Corpus Christi was the first port in the nation to sign a Memorandum of Understand trade agreement with ALIMPORT, Cuba's central food import agency in 2003. Since this historic trade agreement, several U.S. ports have signed similar agreements and exported \$337 million in 2006.

The United States International Trade Commission is an independent, quasi-judicial Federal agency with broad investigative responsibilities on issues of trade. The agency investigates the effects of dumped and subsidized imports on domestic industries and conducts global safeguard investigations. The agency



also adjudicates cases involving alleged infringement by imports of intellectual property rights. Through such proceedings, the agency facilitates a rules-based international trading system. The agency also serves as a Federal resource where trade data and other trade policy-related information are collected and analyzed. The information and analysis are provided to the President, the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR), and Congress to facilitate the development of sound and informed U.S. trade policy.

Chairman Bonilla is the first Port of Corpus Christi Authority chairman to testify before the International Trade Commission and offered the following corrective measures regarding U.S.-Cuba trade policies to ease commerce and travel: *A general business travel license provision, Un-restricted travel for port authorities, Expedition of direct payment to U.S. banks by ALIMPORT, Open Trade Sanction Reform and Export Enhancement Act to include more U.S. exports to Cuba, Open Energy policy to take advantage of possible nearby oil exploration offshore between Cuba and U.S.*

The ITC issued a press release last month stating that, the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance requested the investigation in a letter received on March 16, 2007 from Committee Chairman Sen. Max Baucus. The ITC will submit its report to the Committee on June 29, 2007.

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