

RESOLUTION

NO. R-08-403

CITY HALL: July 24, 2008

**BY: COUNCILMEMBERS FIELKOW, CLARKSON, HEDGE-MORRELL,
WILLARD-LEWIS**

SECONDED BY:

WHEREAS, the maritime industry and the ports of southeast Louisiana are vital to the economic success of New Orleans, our Parish region and the State of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, work will soon begin on the construction of a third, deeper channel within the Panama Canal zone which will allow the world's largest cargo ships to traverse the Canal so that by 2014 large ships will be able to come directly north to the Gulf Coast rather than having to use the congested ports on the East and West coasts of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Gulf Coast ports, including the Port of New Orleans and the ports of southeast Louisiana, have an incredible opportunity for economic growth through this expansion but must take immediate action to seize this opportunity; and

WHEREAS, the region as a whole, including our neighboring parishes and ports, should immediately come together to develop a regional strategy so as to best take advantage of the economic development opportunities associated with the Panama Canal; and

WHEREAS, the Port of New Orleans maintains an office in Brazil but has advised that it could benefit greatly from a Panama-based trade office to more effectively capture the ever-growing Central American trade business; and

WHEREAS, the Port of Houston has recently opened such a trade development office in Panama and other southern ports such as Gulfport, Mobile, Miami and Charleston will all be competing for increased business as a result of the Panama Canal expansion; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of a Southeast Louisiana Trade Office in Panama would maximize the potential for our economic success through providing staff on the ground to promote our interests on a daily basis with Panama Canal Authority officials, local Panamanian government officials, shippers and others within the maritime industry; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of a Southeast Louisiana Trade Office in Panama would be an excellent step to ensure continued, long-term economic success in one of our region's key industries and allow the City of New Orleans and the southeast Louisiana regional community to more effectively capture the ever-growing Central American trade business and take advantage of other trade opportunities within Central and South America; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council requests the Mayor of New Orleans take the lead in creating a regional task force comprised of port authorities, parish governments and other private and public sector stakeholders located in the region to establish a Southeast Louisiana Trade office and to develop a regional strategy so as to best take advantage of the economic development opportunities associated with the Panama Canal.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council of New Orleans supports the establishment of a Southeast Louisiana Trade office in Panama to take advantage of the expansion of the Panama Canal and promote New Orleans and our region's maritime trade interests.

THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION WAS READ IN FULL, THE ROLL WAS CALLED ON THE ADOPTION THEREOF AND THE RESOLUTED AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

AND THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.