

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 23, 2010

The Honorable Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC, 20500

Dear Mr. President,

To assure that the project remains on its critical path for completion coinciding with the opening of the expanded Panama Canal in 2014, the Port of Miami is committed to work with its state and local partners to front the federal share of the total project cost. We are seeking your support of this initiative, by including a nominal amount of \$100,000 - \$500,000 in construction funds in the FY 2012 budget.

The Port of Miami, the largest container port in Florida and the 11<sup>th</sup> largest in the nation, is a vital contributor to the local, state and national economies, accounting for 176,000 high-paying jobs and \$18 billion in economic impact annually. As the closest major U. S. port to the Panama Canal, the Port of Miami is positioned as the first port of call for the next generation of fully-laden post-Panamax vessels that will transit the expanded Panama Canal beginning in 2014. It is also the only port south of Norfolk, VA with an authorized -50 foot depth which is "ready to go" and can be completed by 2014.

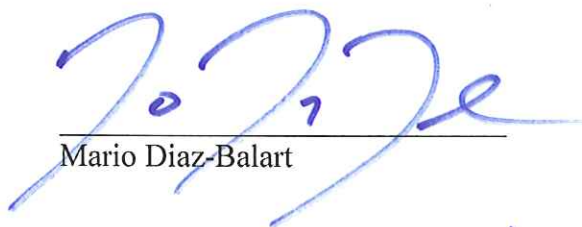
With the project authorized and the preconstruction work on schedule for completion by August 2011, the US Army Corps of Engineers could be ready to advertise by late summer of 2011, with completion of the deepening to correspond with the opening of the expanded Canal. The non-federal share of the cost of the project has already been identified through a combination of state and local sources. As indicated, the Port of Miami is now committed to front the federal share which is estimated to be \$75 million.

The deepening will allow the Port to double its existing cargo business over the next ten years and create more than 33,000 permanent, well-paying jobs. Moreover, project completion will assure that the U.S. remains a leading player in the post-Panamax global economy and will not lose jobs overseas. Without additional East Coast deep draft capacity in place by 2014, it will force the use of foreign transshipment hubs and the Port of Miami and Florida's heavily export-oriented trade with Latin America and the Caribbean will be eroded.

To accommodate the post-Panamax ships, the Port is undertaking a significant landside infrastructure program. The Port's dredge and infrastructure improvements, such as the \$1 billion tunnel under construction, have the strong support of business and community leaders of Miami-Dade County who are sending a united message to Washington about the national significance of the Deep Dredge project in creating jobs and commerce.

We respectfully request, in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations, that you consider the immediate and long term benefits to Florida and the nation of the Miami deep dredge project. Thank you for your consideration of an FY 2012 budget allocation, however nominal, in order to assure timely completion of this important national project.

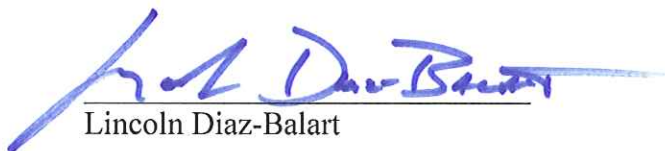
Sincerely,



Mario Diaz-Balart



Kendrick Meek



Lincoln Diaz-Balart