

By Senator Garcia

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Senate Resolution No. ____

A resolution recognizing the importance of Florida's bid to become the permanent location for the Secretariat for the Free Trade Area of the Americas; recognizing the importance of promoting safe commerce between the United States and its trading partners in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America.

WHEREAS, negotiations are progressing on development of the Free Trade Area of the Americas, which will unite the economies of the Western Hemisphere by creating a single free trade agreement among 800 million consumers with a combined gross domestic product of \$14 trillion, and

WHEREAS, Florida is competing to become the permanent location for the Secretariat for the Free Trade Area of the Americas, which, together with the trade and investment activity under the agreement, would create new jobs and revenues for the state and local governments, and

WHEREAS, total merchandise trade between Florida and the Western Hemisphere exceeds \$45 billion dollars annually and represents more than 65 percent of Florida's total merchandise trade, and

WHEREAS, the State of Florida recognizes the critical economic contribution of the state's agriculture industry and supports efforts to ensure that the interests of the agriculture industry are incorporated into trade negotiations and agreements, and

WHEREAS, the terrorist events of September 11, 2001, have led to the development of new security requirements on vessels, seaports, and the state's trading partners, and

1 WHEREAS, the United States Bureau of Customs and Border
2 Protection has created the Container Security Initiative to
3 extend the United States' zone of security outward in North
4 America, Europe, Asia, and Africa, and

5 WHEREAS, the United States Congress has financed the
6 development of Operation Safe Commerce in New York, New
7 Jersey, California, and Washington to develop a secure global
8 supply chain among seaports in those states and their
9 international trading partners in Asia, Europe, and Africa,
10 and

11 WHEREAS, enhancing the security capacity of seaports in
12 the Western Hemisphere will enhance the development of
13 North-South trade and investment flows, and

14 WHEREAS, hosting the Secretariat for the Free Trade
15 Area of the Americas, together with increased safe and secure
16 international trade and investment activity stemming from the
17 trade agreement, will solidify Florida's role as the "Gateway
18 to the Americas," NOW, THEREFORE,

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20 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

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22 That the Senate recognizes the importance of, and
23 expresses its continued support for, Florida's bid to become
24 the permanent location for the Secretariat for the Free Trade
25 Area of the Americas.

26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate recognizes the
27 importance of, and expresses support for, cooperative efforts
28 by the state and the federal government, international trading
29 partners, the maritime industry, and other business interests
30 to develop and share best practices to enhance security at
31 foreign seaports and thereby promote the safe, secure, and

1 expeditious movement of goods throughout the Caribbean,
2 Central America, South America, and the United States.
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