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## ACCELERATING STRATEGIC TRADE BETWEEN FLORIDA AND MEXICO'S PORTS

- ***With an exchange of over \$11 billion dollars in 2021, Mexico ranks #3 as a destination for Florida origin exports and #2 as a source of imports. Trade and investment between the two economies has grown significantly over the course of several years.***

*World Trade Center Miami (WTCM) led a successful 24-person trade mission to Mexico, June 19-24, 2022. It was held in partnership with the Consulate General of Mexico in Miami, the Florida Ports Council, Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce, CAMACOL (Latin Chamber of Commerce and Industry of USA), American Airlines, Miami International Airport as well as supported by Enterprise Florida, U.S. Commercial Service and the U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce.*

In this first trade mission organized by the WTCM, the delegation visited Mexico City and Merida with the objective of promoting bilateral trade between Mexico and Florida and continuing to strengthen the significant commercial relationship between both economies.

A key goal of the trade mission was to continue to advance the work of the Florida-Mexico Work Group on Maritime Commerce which was established in 2019 through a letter of intent signed between the Florida Ports Council and the Coordination of Ports and Merchant Marine in Mexico (Coordinación General de Puertos y Marina Mercante-DGCPMM) to grow maritime trade between the two economies as well as establish the Florida/Mexico Work Group, a public-private partnership, to regularly meet and advance on mission.

Five Florida Ports participated in the trade mission such as *Port Everglades, Port Manatee, Port Miami, Port Tampa Bay* and *Port of Panama City*. During the visit, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the *Isthmus of Tehuantepec* (Mexican South Belt) and the *Florida Ports Council* to advance cooperation in nautical commerce and take advantage of this strategic infrastructure and industrial platform.

This mission is part of phase two of a multi-year effort to transform the foundations of this relationship into a strategic business partnership by establishing a commercial, investment and co-manufacturing operations between Florida and Mexico and leveraging the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

As part of the delegation, **Alice Ancona**, SVP&COO at WTCM and Florida representative of the Florida-Mexico Work Group emphasized that *“Over the next few years will see the continued evolution of a more robust supply chain between Mexico and Florida as companies continue to explore re-shoring and nearshoring solutions. Co-manufacturing between Florida and Mexico is one way to provide supply chain security and resiliency as well as significant time and cost savings for manufacturing operations by leveraging Florida’s ports. The Florida-Mexico Workgroup and this mission are key to this effort”*.

*“Mexico is one of Florida’s top trading partners, and maintaining this valuable economic relationship is important. We see substantial opportunities for growth in bilateral waterborne trade for Florida’s seaports. Special thanks to Consul General Chait Auerbach and World Trade Center Miami for their trade mission leadership”*, **Michael Rubin**, President and CEO at Florida Ports Council.

Mission participants had face-to-face meetings with key business and government officials, as well as with chambers of commerce and other industry associations in Mexico City and in Mérida, Yucatán. Some of the high-level meetings include the presence of Mexico Secretary of Tourism, Miguel Torruco Marqués; the Director General of the Corredor Interocéánico del Istmo de Tehuantepec; Rafael Marín Mollinedo; Roberto Velasco Álvarez, Chief Officer for North America at the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Mónica Duhem, Head of the Global Economy Intelligence Unit at the Ministry of Economy, and Cap. Ana Laura López Bautista, General Coordinator for Ports and Merchant Navy. Also, productive meetings with state government officials of Querétaro and Yucatán who presented the tourism, economic, infrastructure and investment opportunities where held.

**Jonathan Chait**, Consul General of Mexico in Miami, concluded that *“As a result of this mission, the Mexico-Florida bilateral relation has been strengthened, tapping on the unique opportunities Mexico offers; enhancing bilateral two-way trade through nautical routes, increasing connectivity and further building the supply chains in North America, to boost the competitiveness of our region”*.

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