

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20510**

December 10, 2009

The Honorable Fred P. Hochberg  
Chairman and President  
Export-Import Bank of the United States  
811 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20571

Dear Chairman Hochberg:

As you know, international trade is a major economic driver in the state of Louisiana. Our state exports a variety of agricultural and manufactured goods, including rice, sugar, cotton, petroleum and coal. Despite the devastation caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Louisiana has experienced a tremendous growth in trade activity during the last five years. For example, in 2008 alone, Louisiana exported nearly \$41.9 billion dollars worth of goods and services, representing a 38 percent increase from 2007, more than triple the national export growth rate for that year. With this in mind, we write to respectfully request that you consider opening a regional office of the U.S. Export-Import Bank in New Orleans, Louisiana. The establishment of an Export-Import Bank regional office would build upon excellent existing resources in New Orleans and provide the Gulf South region with much needed Export-Import Bank presence in the coming years.

In particular, it is our understanding that in the Fiscal Year 2010 budget, there are funds to open one new U.S. Export-Import Bank regional office. During a June 30, 2009 field hearing of U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship at the Port of New Orleans, you mentioned that the Export-Import Bank was considering expanding their current outreach operations by opening new regional offices throughout the country. In follow up questions, you indicated that the Bank had already conducted a preliminary review of possible locations in high-export volume areas where the establishment of a new regional office would have the most impact. On the basis of this criterion, you mentioned New Orleans was a top contender. We strongly support the opening of an Export-Import Bank regional office in New Orleans.

The opening of a regional office in Louisiana would prove to be an easy transition given the presence Export-Import Bank already has in the state. In 2008, the Bank supported more than \$19,351,000 in insurance policies and over \$18,693,776 in working capital to Louisiana businesses. Our state's vibrant small business community accounts for 84 percent of all exporting companies in Louisiana and they have also benefited tremendously from the Bank's programs, receiving \$13,949,437 in term loans and guarantees from the Bank. Many other members of our business community would also stand to benefit from the Bank's programs.

In addition to the positive impact that opening a regional office would have on Louisiana, the Bank's presence would have a significant impact on other Gulf South states as well. Currently, the Bank's eight regional offices are located in only five states throughout the country, including California, Florida, Illinois, New York and Texas, with an average of four employees per office. It is our understanding that for decades, the Bank has covered part of the Gulf South with a representative based in a regional office in Houston. This representative was recently moved to a Dallas branch office. Historically, however, in-market activities in the Gulf South have been very limited, due in part to tight travel budgets. For example, the Export-Import Bank has only been able to have their Dallas-based representative in the Louisiana market for about five to ten business days per year. Recently, the U.S. Small Business Administration appointed an Export Finance Specialist for New Orleans, to complement the existing staff of the U.S. Export Assistance Center operated by the U.S. Department of Commerce. The addition of an Export-Import Bank regional office, coupled with

these other excellent Federal export assistance resources located in the city, would further establish New Orleans as a top destination and hub for Gulf South business owners looking to become involved in international trade.

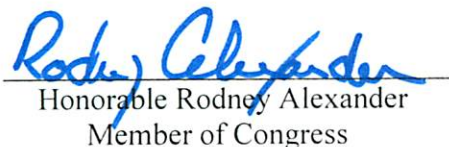
In closing, we note that currently the Bank covers the Gulf South region out of its Florida and Texas based offices. A regional office in New Orleans would be a logical and efficient hub focused on commerce in the Gulf South region. Furthermore, Louisiana's rail system and five deepwater ports along the lower Mississippi River form a strategic commercial corridor, connecting Louisiana to more than 30 states located in the heartland of the United States. A New Orleans regional office would allow the Bank to better serve Louisiana and other Gulf Coast states and also enable the Bank to reach small exporters and business owners from other areas of the country that utilize our port facilities.

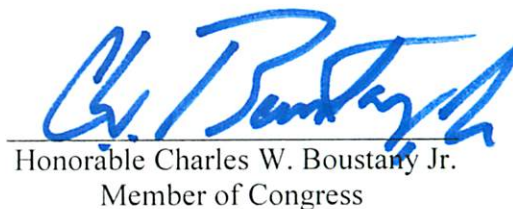
Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

  
Honorable Mary L. Landrieu  
United States Senator

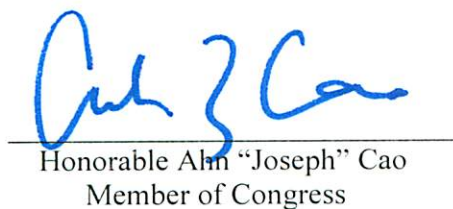
  
Honorable David Vitter  
United States Senator

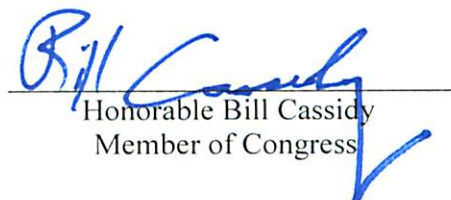
  
Honorable Rodney Alexander  
Member of Congress


  
Honorable Charles W. Boustany Jr.  
Member of Congress

  
Honorable Charlie Melancon  
Member of Congress

  
Honorable Steve Scalise  
Member of Congress

  
Honorable Alm "Joseph" Cao  
Member of Congress

  
Honorable Bill Cassidy  
Member of Congress

  
Honorable John C. Fleming  
Member of Congress