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Gov. Edwards Announces \$1.8 Billion Louisiana Port Expansion Project

NEW ORLEANS, La. - Gov. John Bel Edwards announced a historic public-private partnership between the state of Louisiana, the Port of New Orleans and two global maritime industry leaders to build a \$1.8 billion state-of-the-art container facility on the Lower Mississippi River. The new Louisiana International Terminal (LIT) in St. Bernard Parish will be able to serve vessels of all sizes, dramatically increasing Louisiana's import and export capacity and stimulating the creation of more than 17,000 new jobs statewide by 2050, Port NOLA estimates.

New Jersey-based Ports America, one of North America's largest marine terminal operators, and Geneva, Switzerland-based Mediterranean Shipping Company, through its terminal development and investment arm Terminal Investment Limited (TiL), have committed \$800 million toward the project. In addition to the partners' investment, the construction of the terminal will be supported by a substantial commitment from Port NOLA, as well as state and federal funding sources. The joint venture will also operate the terminal once construction is complete.

"This public-private partnership with the Port of New Orleans, TiL and Ports America has the potential to become one of the most impactful economic development projects in our state's history," Gov. Edwards said. "It leverages the economic power of our greatest natural resource – the Mississippi River – and enhances Louisiana's ability to attract new investment from companies competing in the global marketplace. Access to global markets represents expanding opportunities for both urban and rural communities. The powerful impact of this world-class logistics asset will benefit not only residents and businesses in south Louisiana, it will benefit advanced manufacturing, agribusiness and energy workers all across the state."

The project is currently in the design and permitting phase of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' environmental review process. Barring unforeseen delays, construction is slated to begin in 2025 and the first berth to open in 2028.

"Ports America and Terminal Investment Limited are global industry leaders and we value their partnership in the Louisiana International Terminal," Port NOLA President and CEO Brandy D. Christian said. "This investment, in addition to the billions of dollars the joint venture will contribute over the life of the lease, demonstrates their confidence in our gateway's ability to serve vessels of all sizes, while creating jobs and opportunity for Louisiana."

At full build-out, LIT will be able to handle 2 million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) annually, taking advantage of the deeper 50-foot Lower Mississippi River Ship Channel and avoiding height restrictions from Mississippi River bridges further up the river. This new terminal will also strengthen Louisiana's ability to attract distribution centers, logistics services and value-added services through Port NOLA's multimodal connectivity.

“Ports America is looking forward to partnering with the Port of New Orleans and the State of Louisiana in the development of sustainable infrastructure that meets the long-term needs of the global container logistics industry on the Mississippi River,” said Matthew Leech, President and CEO of Ports America. “With over 100 years of operations in New Orleans, Ports America is excited to be part of the future for the next century.”

“We are very excited to announce this partnership that will strengthen Port NOLA’s competitiveness, making it a key facility in the Gulf of Mexico capable of handling ultra-large container vessels,” said TiL Terminal Investment Director for North America Tom Van Eynde. “Today, the container trade in Port NOLA mainly consists of export cargo, making it an exception among U.S. ports, which are usually import-heavy. LIT will attract new container trades, providing access for local industry to cost-competitive shipping options. The development of this facility cements TiL’s commitment to further strengthen American infrastructure, making Port NOLA accessible for larger vessels and increasing its throughput capacity in a sustainable way that will bring measurable benefits to the community.”

Following an extensive site selection process and feasibility studies, Port NOLA purchased 1,200 acres of land in Violet in 2020, sufficient to accommodate the terminal, value-added services and warehousing facilities, and provide a natural buffer for the nearby community. The latest design incorporates community feedback gathered over the last two years regarding traffic, drainage and other impacts on nearby homes and businesses.

"This partnership is pivotal for the future growth in trading Louisiana agricultural commodities in the global marketplace," said Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry Commissioner Mike Strain, DVM. "While bulk grains, grain products, and edible oils are exported through the port, the dominant product is poultry. Poultry is one of the largest agricultural enterprises in Louisiana, contributing over \$1 billion to the state's economy. This project will only further the success of Louisiana agriculture exporters and the many products they have to offer the global market. We welcome this momentous new partnership and the economic impact it will have across Louisiana."

“The legislature is proud of its investment in the Louisiana International Terminal which will enhance our state’s longstanding position as a leader in international trade and will increase economic activity and development for the region and state,” said Senate President Page Cortez. “Investments such as these help enhance and attract public private partnerships that deliver economic vitality. The combined investments by the state legislature and federal delegation create a strong foundation that will provide opportunities for generations.”

“This is a great example of private investors bringing high dollar commitments to the State of Louisiana because it’s clear we can offer an unmatched advantage. The location of the Louisiana International Terminal offers deeper draft and federal hurricane protection thanks to state and federal investments to make Louisiana’s waterway infrastructure more resilient,” said Louisiana Speaker of the House Clay Schexnayder. “Those state and federal investments continue to pay off as we attract and further grow international trade and create jobs in every corner of the state.”

“The Louisiana International Terminal will enhance our state’s longstanding position as a leader in international trade. One of the keys to success for this project is the construction of the St. Bernard Transportation Corridor, which will connect Lower St. Bernard to the interstate system to serve both the terminal and the public,” said Louisiana Senator Sharon Hewitt. “I am proud to have worked with my colleagues in the legislature and the governor to secure a \$50 million funding commitment from the state for this critical infrastructure. And I will continue to work with the Port of New Orleans, our federal delegation, and our local leaders to ensure that the infrastructure needed to support the Louisiana International Terminal is delivered timely. I commend the Port of New Orleans for its vision and tenacity in pursuing this project, and I look forward to working with all the stakeholders to ensure the project is built to support and serve the entire state.”

View the updated site plan and learn more about LIT at LouisianaInternationalTerminal.com.

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