



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts: Teresa Arosemena
(Panama) (507) 272.1873
Roqueña Domingo
(U.S.) 202.326.1720

Richard Scher
Maryland Port Administration
(410) 385.4480

**PANAMA CANAL AND MARYLAND PORT ADMINISTRATION FORGE
TIES TO INCREASE ECONOMIC GROWTH**

***MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WILL HELP SPUR TRADE AND
ENCOURAGE THE "ALL-WATER ROUTE"***

PANAMA CITY, Panama, June 2, 2009 – Today, the Panama Canal Authority (ACP) and the Maryland Port Administration (MPA) finalized a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement to increase economic growth and commercial activity between the two entities. Signed by ACP Administrator/CEO Alberto Alemán Zubieta and MPA Executive Director James J. White, the MOU will help spur trade, facilitate information sharing and promote the use of the "All-Water Route," a shipping route to Asia from the U.S. East Coast via the Canal. The MPA oversees the six public marine terminals of the Port of Baltimore.

"The Memorandum of Understanding with the Maryland Port Administration reinforces the importance of the 'All-Water Route' through the Panama Canal," said ACP Administrator/CEO Alberto Alemán Zubieta. "With the current economic climate, it has never been more important to provide optimal customer service, and this agreement will enable us to fully cooperate and work together for continued trade between Latin America, Asia and United States."

As part of the MOU, the ACP and MPA will conduct joint activities and share best practices. Specific areas of focus will include marketing, research and data interchange, technical advancements and personnel training programs. The agreement exhibits each organization's dedication to meeting the anticipated increased levels of international trade. The MOU will help to continue this important trade exchange.

The Canal Expansion Program is also expected to bring larger ships to the U.S. East Coast and the MPA is undertaking its own efforts to increase capacity. The MPA is exploring the possible use of a public-private partnership to operate its Seagirt Marine Terminal and also fund a 50-foot berth. The MPA's goal is to have that berth in operation when the Panama Canal expansion project is completed in 2014. The Port of Baltimore is currently one of only two U.S. East Coast ports with a 50-foot channel.

- more -

"This MOU demonstrates our desire to have a close, productive relationship with the Panama Canal Authority as we move closer to 2014," said MPA Executive Director White. "Ships that now travel to West Coast ports will instead transit to East Coast ports following the expansion. We will want to be ready for that business."

The Panama Canal expansion project will build a new lane of traffic along the Panama Canal through the construction of a new set of locks, which will double capacity, allowing increased traffic and wider ships.

About the Maryland Port Administration (MPA)

The mission of the MPA is to stimulate the flow of waterborne commerce through the State of Maryland in a manner that provides economic benefit to Maryland citizens. The MPA directly markets and promotes the Port of Baltimore, facilitates trade through Baltimore, and supports Port of Baltimore public and private port facilities. The Port of Baltimore is 14th out of 360 U.S. ports for handling cargo tonnage, and 12th for dollar value of that cargo. Baltimore, located in the third largest consumer market in the U.S., is the number one port in America for handling imported forest products and roll on/roll off cargo. The MPA's Web site is www.marylandports.com.

About the Panama Canal Authority (ACP)

The ACP is the autonomous agency of the Government of Panama in charge of managing, operating and maintaining the Panama Canal. The operation of the ACP is based on its organic law and the regulations approved by its Board of Directors. For more information, please refer to the ACP's Web site: www.pancanal.com.

###

This material is distributed by DJE, Inc. on behalf of the Panama Canal Authority. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.