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TEXAS PORTS COMMITTEE CHAIR CREIGHTON VISITS PANAMA

Fact-finding mission to Panama Canal points out potential economic boom for Texas

Panama City, Panama – Senator Brandon Creighton (R-Conroe) recently visited the Panama Canal Zone as part of a Texas-Panama Trade Mission focused on the enhanced canal as a gateway to global trade for the state.

“People too often think of the Texas economy in terms of oil rigs and skyscrapers, but we’re also a global leader in maritime trade thanks to the way our ports connect our robust manufacturing capabilities with the world,” said Creighton, Chair of the Senate Select Committee on Texas Ports. “With the recent upgrade to the Panama Canal, Texas must be ready to receive the larger vessels the legendary waterway can accommodate to remain competitive on the global stage.”

Completed in June, the Panama Canal expansion project doubled the waterway’s capacity with a new lane of traffic sized to accommodate larger ships, called “New Panamax,” which are not only one and a half times the size of their predecessor model, they can carry more than twice the cargo.

“Moving products to market is a core tenet of economic success and moving MORE to market is how Texas competes and wins,” continued Creighton. “I’m confident that my colleagues in the legislature, the leaders of our state’s port cities and the employees who work in them will collaborate on maximizing the opportunity represented in these improvements.”

Led by Ambassador Juan B. Sosa, Consul General of Panama, Creighton’s group featured officials for the Panama Canal including Oscar Bazan, Executive Vice President Business Development and Planning and Marianela Dengo De De Obaldia, Manager of Strategic Relations for the Canal. Together, they had the opportunity to inspect the Canal improvements, meet with trade representatives and tell the story of Texas’ maritime prowess.

“By virtue of handling more than a quarter of America’s shipping tonnage in a given year, Texas is ranked second in the country for volume,” said Creighton. “The Port of Beaumont is America’s largest military gateway, Houston leads in overall tonnage and Galveston is a top-five cruise port, so we’re well-equipped to compete. I’m confident we can do even better in the years to come.”

During the last legislative session, Creighton authored a bill to improve the Sabine Neches Waterway, a vital economic artery for the state. In the 2017 session, he intends to keep the focus on essential economic infrastructure.

“I believe government has a limited but vital role in economic development, primarily as it relates to infrastructure,” concluded Creighton. “With an economy ranked 12th in the world and a robust port system, we are better equipped than just about any other state to handle waterborne commerce and we’ll be working to ensure Texans benefit from our status as a gateway to the world.”

