



LOUISIANA SENATE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 24, 2014

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Gov. Jindal Signs Major Multimodal Transportation Reform Legislation

SB 573 by Senator Chabert Creates Office of Multimodal Commerce

BATON ROUGE, LA- Senator Norby Chabert (R-Houma) is pleased to announce that Governor Bobby Jindal has signed SB 573 into law. Act No. 719 of the 2014 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature establishes an Office of Multimodal Commerce and creates a Commissioner of Multimodal Commerce.

The new law represents a major policy change in the administration, planning and programming functions in the Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) relative to strategic and intermodal issues. The new law will impact the development of ports and harbors, maritime and water transportation systems, railroad expansion and development, commercial trucking, aviation, and intercity public mass transit.

“Louisiana’s multimodal transportation system impacts almost every element of our lives,” said Senator Chabert. “The difference between commerce infrastructure and basic transportation needs must be better defined in order to support the state’s most valuable economic engines.”

The main focus of the newly created office, which will be under the supervision of a dedicated Commissioner of Multimodal Commerce, is to create a better overall business, tax and legal climate to maximize Louisiana’s multimodal transportation infrastructure. It is an effort to fully capitalize on Louisiana’s unique geographical assets.

“DOTD’s main focus should be on building and maintaining roads to address the massive backlog of transportation projects in Louisiana.” said Chabert.

The new Office of Multimodal Commerce, developed with input from all stakeholders, is the result of over three decades of work by industry, civic leaders and elected officials to establish an authority specifically focused on ports, maritime and the development of a coordinated multimodal policy. Under the new law, industry will continue to be directly involved in an advisory capacity to the Office of Multimodal Commerce. Industry leaders welcome a dedicated advocate in a position of authority within state government to align, coordinate and integrate multimodal commerce.

“We are very pleased with the Governor’s signing of Act 719. Finally, multimodal commerce is getting the attention it deserves,” said Chett Chaisson, Executive Director of Port Fourchon. “We are very thankful for Senator Chabert’s leadership in bringing forth this monumental legislation that will continue to move Louisiana positively forward.”

It is a sentiment echoed by Offshore Marine Services Association Chief Executive Officer Ben Billings. “This legislation is great news for Louisiana’s maritime industry, which contributes over 50,000 jobs to the state’s economy. Reforming government to strengthen this critical sector of our economy, target infrastructure investments, and create a seamless transportation network is a smart move,” Billings said. “We thank Senator Chabert for his hard work and determination to get this done.”

Cathy Gautreaux, Executive Director of the Louisiana Motor Transport Association, stated, “The Office of Multimodal Commerce will provide commercial trucking interests direct input into all aspects of transportation planning. The establishment of a comprehensive policy will improve operating efficiencies to safely move freight for the best value.”

Act No. 719 also establishes a Multimodal Advisory Committee consisting of industry representatives and state officials. The committee is tasked with the development of an operational plan for legislative approval during the 2015 Regular Session.

“Our economic promise is only met when we focus on the fact that if we cannot navigate our waterways, and effectively coordinate our multimodal transportation system- Louisiana has no economy,” said Chabert. “It is time to fundamentally reform the way we do business in Louisiana.”

The newly created Office and Commissioner of Multimodal Commerce will become fully effective July 1, 2016.

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