

# *Caterpillar Distributor First U.S. Company to Set Up Shop in Cuba's Mariel Free Zone*

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Havana, November 4 (RHC) – The heavy equipment manufacturer Caterpillar has become the first U.S. company to set up business in Cuba after the company received permission this week for its Puerto-Rican based dealer RIMCO to set up a warehouse and distribution center at Mariel Special Economic Development Zone.

Ana Teresa Igarza, managing director of the zone, said at a news conference during the Havana International Fair that RIMCO planned to open in the zone next year. In a recent interview, she had said also that Cuba was in advanced negotiations with two other U.S. companies interested in locating at Mariel, which is 28 miles west of Havana.

Cuba seeks to turn Mariel into a hub for manufacturing and sustainable development. A total of 31 companies, both Cuban and foreign, have been approved for the zone, with construction on many of the facilities currently going on. Nine companies already operate out of this 4-year-old free zone.

“We are going to set up a warehouse and distribution center at Mariel and we will be distributing Caterpillar equipment,” Caroline McConnie, RIMCO vice president, said at a news conference at the fair,

adding that the company had received a license from the US Commerce Department and other agencies.”

Caterpillar makes construction and mining equipment, power systems, and marine and industrial engines. RIMCO is the exclusive Caterpillar dealer for Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the British Virgin Islands, Barbados, and other Eastern Caribbean islands.

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