

# *Tampa Wants to Host Cuban Consulate after U.S.-Cuba Relations are Re-established*

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Tampa, March 6 (RHC)-- The Greater Chamber of Commerce of Tampa, Florida, supports the hosting by that U.S. city of a Cuban consulate once diplomatic relations are re-established between Washington and Havana.

A resolution passed unanimously by the chamber's board of directors said it would support the location of a consulate in Tampa or Hillsborough County, and that business leaders would like to see "Tampa return to its rightful and historical place as an economic engine" for facilitating trade with Cuba, reads an article on Tampa's BayNews 9 Webpage entitled "Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce in Support of Cuban Consulate."

Recalling that there was a Cuban consulate in Ybor City before the U.S. broke relations with Cuba in 1961, Chamber President Bob Rohrlarck said that they expect it would be similar to what was previously.

The article comes on the heels of statements by Tampa's mayor Bob Buckhorn who said he was open to the possibility of having the consulate, since

"Tampa is known as the cradle of Cuban independence."

Chamber officials said it makes good business sense, particularly with Tampa's port and its close proximity to Havana. "We are working now for our port to be the gateway for businesses to take goods and supplies to Cuba when relations change," said Rohrlack as quoted in the BayNews 9 article.

The Chamber of Commerce announced plans for a visit by some of its officials to Cuba in May to tour the Special Development Zone in Mariel Port and to learn about business opportunities in Cuba.



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