

**RESOLUTION NO. 2008 - 0908**

**A RESOLUTION OF FLORIDA'S HEARTLAND REDI, INC. AND FLORIDA'S FRESHWATER FRONTIER, INC. EXPRESSING SUPPORT THAT THE SITE SELECTION PROCESS FOR INLAND PORTS BE FOCUSED CENTRALLY WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE SOUTH CENTRAL RURAL AREA OF CRITICAL ECONOMIC CONCERN.**

**WHEREAS**, the counties of DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands and Okeechobee, the cities of Belle Glade, Pahokee and South Bay and the community of Immokalee have been designated by the State of Florida to be the South Central Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern (referred to herein as the "FHREDI Region"); and

**WHEREAS**, there exists a public/private interest in developing Multi-Modal Logistics Complexes (more commonly referred to as an "inland port") to serve the freight handling and distribution needs of Florida's port system attributed to the existing congestion of current facilities and the anticipated increase in volume within the next four years when the Panama Canal expansion is expected to be nearing completion; and

**WHEREAS**, an inland port is necessary for Florida to maintain its global competitiveness while gaining the economic benefits of an expanded transportation and logistics industry; and

**WHEREAS**, there have been multiple potential sites identified that are within the FHREDI Region, and if those that are the most centrally located within the region are ultimately selected, it will provide the most noticeable economic benefit to the FHREDI Region including job retention and creation and will attract a multitude of support industries associated with an inland port; and

**WHEREAS**, there have been multiple potential sites identified that are outside the FHREDI Region and if selected will provide little to no noticeable benefit to the already economically challenged FHREDI Region; and

**WHEREAS**, while there will likely be opportunities for multiple inland port developments within Florida in future years, establishing a site for South Florida in the very near future centrally within the boundaries of the FHREDI Region will produce the highest yield of economic benefit regionally ; and

**WHEREAS**, Florida Department of Transportation's most likely case assumptions for the year 2025 indicate that the economic impact from an inland port represents about 65,000 total jobs for the region, \$3.6 billion of new personal income, \$2.3 billion of new business revenue and \$334 million of new total tax revenue; and

**WHEREAS**, the potential economic impact that results from the proposed purchase of U.S. Sugar assets by the South Florida Water Management District will be devastating to the economy and lives of citizens of the FHREDI Region; and

WHEREAS, the Board supports pursuing inland port sites centrally within the boundaries of the FHREDI Region that will result in the least amount of adverse environmental impact and will create the most amount of positive economic impact, and will greatly improve the economy and the lives of the citizens within the FHREDI Region and provide a positive solution to economic impact created by the loss of jobs attributed to the sugar industry.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Directors of Florida's Heartland REDI, Inc. and Florida's Freshwater Frontier, Inc. that:

1. The Board of Directors request that key legislative leadership within the State of Florida support the determination of which centrally located sites within the boundaries of the FHREDI Region are the most economically and environmentally feasible for inland port development in the least amount of time, and to proactively support the implementation of this development plan.
2. The Board of Directors further request that the State of Florida provide the necessary financial incentives to attract the private sector's involvement and to support the streamlining of the permitting process associated with this development in order to expedite this opportunity to develop.

Approved and duly adopted by Florida's Heartland REDI, Inc. this 15<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2008.

Florida's Heartland REDI, Inc.

By: K.S. "Butch" Jones  
K.S. "Butch" Jones, Chairman

ATTEST:

Andrew Jackson  
Andrew Jackson, Secretary

Board Members present at the meeting: 17  
Board Members voting for the resolution: 17  
Board Members voting against the resolution: 0  
Board Members abstaining: 0