**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO COMMEMORATE THE INAUGURAL CALL OF THE MSC *RITA* ON CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, TO WELCOME THE CAPTAIN, CREW, AND COMPANY, AND TO WELCOME FUTURE SHIPS IN THE GOLDEN GATE SERVICE ROTATION.

Whereas, as part of a new agreement with the Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC), the South Carolina State Ports Authority (SCSPA) welcomed the largest container ship yet to call on the South Atlantic Coast of the United States; and

Whereas, the MSC *Rita* is scheduled to arrive at the Port of Charleston, the deepest natural harbor along the U.S. South Atlantic coast, on February 25, 2010; and

Whereas, at 1,065.6 feet in length, with a maximum draft of 47.5 feet and a capacity of 8,089 TEUs, the MSC *Rita* is one of the largest container ships afloat; and

Whereas, the completion of the Panama Canal expansion in 2014 will forever change the global container shipping industry, as harbor depth becomes increasingly important; and

Whereas, Charleston is the only port in the South Atlantic that ships of this size may call today, with ships up to forty-eight feet of draft able to transit the harbor; and

Whereas, the MSC *Rita* is the first vessel to call on Charleston for the new port rotation of the Golden Gate Service (GGS), an all‑water service transiting through the Suez Canal with port coverage across China and the Middle East; and

Whereas, this weekly service will call on the SCSPA’s Wando Welch Terminal, which was named the most productive port facility in the nation by readers of *Cargo Business News*; and

Whereas, founded in 1970, MSC is one of the leading shipping lines in the world and already sends five additional ships a week to Charleston serving the western Mediterranean, South American, Caribbean, African, and European trade routes; and

Whereas, MSC and the SCSPA recently signed a new agreement that strengthens the company’s commitment to Charleston, and the MSC recently dedicated its new, 45,000 square foot South Atlantic corporate headquarters in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. MSC directly employs approximately 225 professionals in the Charleston region; and

Whereas, the GGS port rotation includes Shanghai, Ningbo, Chiwan and Yantian, China; Singapore; Salalah, Oman; Suez Canal transit; New York; Baltimore; Norfolk; Charleston; Freeport, Bahamas; Suez Canal transit; Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; Colombo, Sri Lanka; Singapore; Chiwan; and Hong Kong. Connecting services through the GGS offer extensive links to ports in India, the Red Sea, and the Middle East. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the Senate, by this resolution, commemorate the inaugural call of the MSC *Rita* on Charleston, South Carolina, welcome the captain, crew, and company, and welcome future ships in the Golden Gate Service rotation.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the South Carolina State Ports Authority and to the Mediterranean Shipping Company.

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