



Alfred S. Austin *Chairman*
Steven G. Burton *Vice Chairman*
Joseph F. Diaco, M.D. *Secretary*
Hillsborough County Commissioner Victor D. Crist *Treasurer*
City of Tampa Mayor Pam Iorio *Assistant Secretary/Assistant Treasurer*

for information
Brenda S. Geoghagan *Director of Public Information and Community Relations*
813-870-8707

NEWS RELEASE

Tampa-New Gateway to Cuba!

Tampa International becomes the Next US Gateway

TAMPA, FL (March 7, 2011) – Tampa International Airport gets the green light to accept flights to and from Cuba. Today, the Airport has received its official approval from U.S. Customs and Border Protection to operate Cuba flights.

TPA becomes the next gateway to Cuba in the U.S. following Los Angeles (LAX), New York (JFK) and Miami (MIA). Three licensed charter operators have formally indicated their intention to provide service to Cuba from Tampa which includes Air MarBrisa, Island Travel & Tours, Ltd., and ABC Charter.

The State of Florida, by U.S. Census statistics, has the largest Cuban-American population in the entire nation and the Tampa Bay service area is ranked second in the nation only to the Miami-Dade County service area.

“I wish to thank the President and his administration for allowing more points of entry into Cuba. The flights of course will assist economic development for both sides. But more importantly, the new policies will better enable the tens of thousands of Cuban Americans in our City to reunite with their families whom they may not have seen for decades,” stated Steven Burton, Vice Chairman, Tampa International Airport.

“The Cuba service reflects our vision of Tampa International Airport which is motivated by our commitment to the Tampa Bay community – keeping the needs and desires of our customers at the forefront of our air service initiatives,” stated Joe Lopano, CEO, Tampa International Airport.

The modified travel restrictions to Cuba state “purposeful” travel. Passengers must have close relatives in Cuba or must be involved in medical and agriculture business sectors; or traveling for education and religious activities. The Airport expects to offer flights by summer or early fall.

-TPA-

Joseph W. Lopano, *Chief Executive Officer*
