

12/13/2006 Moran to Meet with Cuban Officials This Week

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran will be in Cuba later this week to meet with government and trade officials, including a possible visit with Raul Castro.

"I have long fought for the opening of trade and easing of the embargo of Cuba," Moran said. "These meetings with Cuban officials come at a unique time as the health of Cuban leader Fidel Castro continues to be in question. I want to get a better understanding of the political situation in Cuba, explore further opportunities to export U.S. agriculture commodities and work to establish a framework for our countries' relations during this time of transition in Cuba."

In 2000, Moran successfully helped open the door to agriculture trade with Cuba. The passage of H.R. 4461 allowed for the export of agriculture products to Cuba for the first time in 38 years. A move by the Department of Treasury in 2005, however, changed its interpretation of the cash payment in advance rule as it relates to agriculture exports to Cuba. The change caused payments to be made before ships leave U.S. ports rather than making payment upon delivery. Agriculture exports to Cuba were on the rise from 2001 to 2005, but the change resulted in decreases in agricultural trade between the two countries. In June, the House approved an amendment introduced by Moran prohibiting Department of Treasury funds from being used to administer, implement or enforce its change of the payment of cash in advance rule.

Moran is a senior member of the House Committee on Agriculture.

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