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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Results of Study on U.S. Soybean Competitiveness Set for Release

*Congressman Steve Scalise (LA) to give remarks at December meeting, Statement of support from U.S. Senator David Vitter (LA)*

New Orleans, LA- Following a joint-study on the U.S. competitiveness of soybean exports, leaders from the World Trade Center of New Orleans, the Big River Coalition, and the University of Southern Mississippi plan to release a report on their findings during a meeting on December 17, 2014 at the Westin Canal Place. Congressman and House Majority Whip Steve Scalise (LA-1) will be present for the announcement and give remarks in support of the release.

The report titled "Emerging South American Competitiveness to U.S. Soybean Exports" exposes issues that currently threaten the United States' position as a leader in the world soybean market. Results of the report highlight the critical need for infrastructure investments to improve the inland waterway infrastructure of the Mississippi River System in order to compete with South American markets, which are rapidly growing in sophistication and capacity. The comparative economic study was conducted by the University of Southern Mississippi.

"The Mississippi River and our Louisiana ports have a propitious impact on our national economy, goods transportation systems, and job creation," Scalise said. "According to this newly released report, the Mississippi River Basin produces 92% of our nation's agricultural exports and five Louisiana ports facilitate almost three-quarters of our nation's grain exports. Early this year, I proudly fought to ensure passage of the Water Resources and Development Act (WRRDA), a bipartisan bill that strengthens our nation's water transportation infrastructure, and modernizes our ports. WRRDA makes a long-overdue reinvestment in our ports by authorizing important reforms to the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to deepen our waterways and allow America to remain competitive in the global marketplace. Passage of this significant piece of legislation could not have been possible without the efforts of Ranking Member David Vitter and House Transportation Committee Chairman Bill Shuster. This new study only highlights the importance of modernizing our waterborne infrastructure and the critical nature of deepening the Mississippi River to 50-feet in order to keep America competitive and supreme in domestic and international commerce."

U.S. Senator David Vitter has also given his support to the topics outlined in the Report. "One out of every six American jobs depends on trade and maritime commerce. \$180 billion of goods travel to and from American ports on American waterways each year. At the center of it all, the mighty Mississippi serves 31 states in the heartland of America, which is the breadbasket of the world. I grew up in New Orleans, watching huge grain ships and others plowing up and down that mighty Mississippi," said U.S. Senator David Vitter.

"This year I was able to pass the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA), which among a number of other important things, ramps up expenditures to adequately maintain a Mississippi River deepened to 50-feet to accommodate larger vessels. Passing WRRDA is one of the most positive actions Congress has taken this year. It's fully bipartisan legislation that serves as a real bright spot in an otherwise gridlocked Washington. Most importantly, it's a substantive step forward in getting an otherwise sluggish economy moving down the river again."

For more information, contact The World Trade Center of New Orleans at (504) 529-1601 or email [info@wtcno.org](mailto:info@wtcno.org).

### About the World Trade Center of New Orleans

The World Trade Center of New Orleans (WTCNO) is one of the strongest international business organizations in the Gulf Coast region, consisting of 1,000+ companies as well as high profile individual members. This membership base represents a diverse group of industry leaders, companies, professional organizations, and government institutions that include manufacturing, energy, agriculture, maritime, digital media, foreign consulates, and other interests. In 2013, member organizations were able to significantly contribute to the state's record-breaking exports, the total

value of which exceeded \$63.3 billion. This strong international organization creates a variety of opportunities for its stakeholders with the objective to add wealth to its community as well as create jobs through international trade and related services while fostering business and economic development by engaging in allied activities. For more information please visit [www.wtcno.org](http://www.wtcno.org).

#### **About the Big River Coalition**

The Big River Coalition (BRC) was created in Fiscal Year 2011 in response to the announcement by the Commander of the United States Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) Mississippi Valley Division (MVD) confirming the discontinuation of reprogramming funds to maintain the Lower Mississippi River (LMR) navigation channel. This position change immediately meant the Mississippi River's navigation channel would no longer receive preferential treatment. Shortly after the 1989 grounding of the M/V MARSHAL KONYEV (Pilottown) that, in essence, closed the navigation channel to all ship traffic, the USACE's Headquarters announced in a position statement that it would maintain the nation's most critical navigation channel. The BRC's original focus was to obtain additional funding to supplement the shortfall in the Corps' Mississippi River Operations and Maintenance budget, to strive to establish a legislative firewall around the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF), and to represent members of the Mississippi River navigation industry in matters related to coastal restoration. As the Coalition grew and continued to make effective progress on these initiatives, members requested that the Coalition lead the charge to deepen the LMR navigation channel to 50 feet. The Big River Coalition, "*Shaping the destiny of navigation on the Mighty Mississippi.*" For more information please visit [www.bigrivercoalition.org](http://www.bigrivercoalition.org).

#### **About the University of Southern Mississippi**

The University of Southern Mississippi, founded in 1910, is a comprehensive doctoral and research-extensive university fulfilling its mission of being a leading university in engaging and empowering individuals to transform lives and communities. In a tradition of leadership for student development, Southern Miss is educating a 21st century work force providing intellectual capital, cultural enrichment and innovation to Mississippi and the world. Southern Miss is located in Hattiesburg, Miss., with an additional campus and teaching and research sites on the Mississippi Gulf Coast; further information is found at [www.usm.edu](http://www.usm.edu).

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