

# *Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe Meets with Cuban Trade Minister Rodrigo Malmierca*

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Havana, January 4 (RHC)-- The governor of the U.S. state of Virginia, Terry McAuliffe, is paying a three-day visit to Cuba, heading a political and commercial mission, aimed at finding ways to expand economic and commercial relations.

Arriving in Havana on Sunday, the governor of Virginia said that promoting closer links in maritime transportation, in higher education and culture are some of the topics on his agenda.

McAuliffe met on Monday morning with Cuban Foreign Trade and Investment Minister Rodrigo Malmierca. Escorted by Malmierca, he also opened a Virginia-Cuba business forum.

Terry McAuliffe voiced support for a lifting of the U.S. blockade against Cuba, and regretted that U.S. banks and financial institutions have not been allowed to negotiate with Cuba, which he said runs against

standard commercial operations, and hurts U.S. businesses.

Governor Mc-Auliffe is being accompanied by Virginia secretaries of Agriculture, Todd Haymore; Health and Human Resources, William Hazel; Technology, Karen Jackson, and by representatives of the Virginia Commonwealth University and other local institutions.

On Tuesday, Mc-Auliffe will tour the Special Development Zone at Mariel harbor, where he will sign an agreement between that Cuban port and the Port of Virginia.

Virginia, a state with some eight million people, has been a leader in maintaining relations with Havana since the U.S. Congress approved the export of some food items to Cuba in 2000.

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