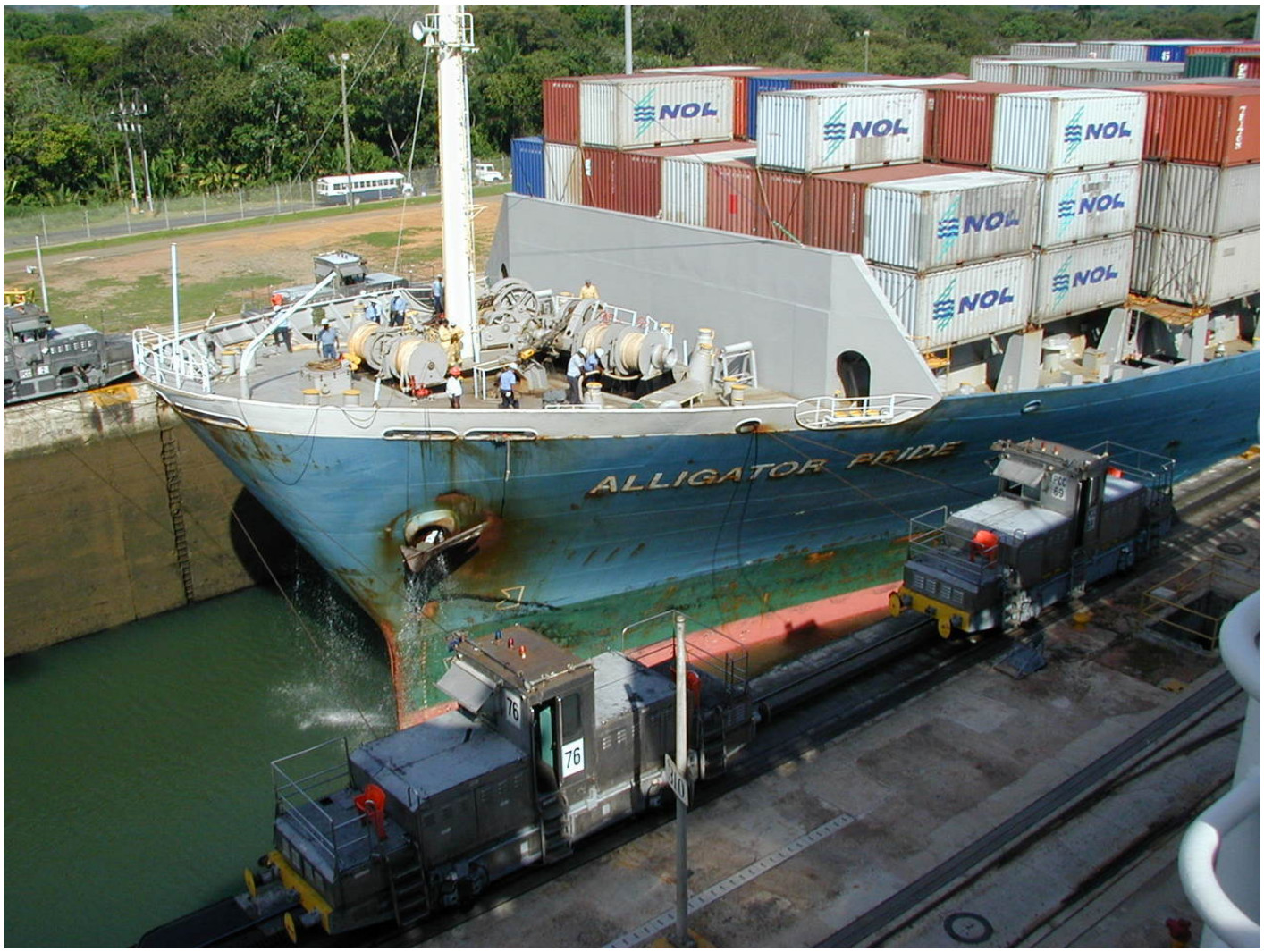
The Panama Canal transit will be limited the effects of El Niño



The Canal Authority will limit Panamáinformó from April 18 the draft of vessels transiting the waterway. The measure is due to the drought caused by El Niño, which maintains extremely low levels in the two artificial lakes that feed the canal, lakes Gatun and Alhajuela.

Maximum allowable draft will be 11.89 meters (39 feet), the Authority said in a statement, noting that "this temporary and preventive action is taken due to the effects of El Niño."

The statement added that "this phenomenon produces a periodic warming of ocean waters in the tropical Pacific" and "changes the pattern of rainfall in many regions of the planet, with the consequent drought in the canal basin".

The current El Niño is one of the strongest recorded in the last fifty years.

The first draft restrictions were announced due to low water level was in 1998, when Panama also suffered a severe drought caused by El Niño.

The Authority announced a similar measure last year, but removed the restriction because some rainfall were recorded.

Panama is currently at the end of the dry season began in December and is expected that with the arrival of the rainy season in April restriction may be lifted after a short period.
The great expectation is now centered around the opening this year of expected channel expansion works, started in 2007. The construction of a third set of locks will allow moving ships with tonnage three times higher than today.

Source: Portal Fruticola