



**For immediate release
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Port Houston Continues to Grow and Prosper

HOUSTON – Today, the Port Commission of the Port of Houston Authority held its first regular meeting of 2017. Welcoming a record crowd in attendance, Port Houston Chairman Janiece Longoria affirmed that “2016 was another successful year for the port.” Preliminary operating and financial reports show that container volume for Port Houston increased by two percent in 2016 to nearly 2.2 million TEUs, and has grown by 11 percent over the last three years.

In lauding the efforts of the Commercial Division she remarked that “We have successfully retained cargo that was diverted during the prior year...and have increased cargo volume across most of our trade lanes.” She underscored the importance of partnership for continued success.

Other notable accomplishments in 2016 highlighted by Chairman Longoria included successfully repurposing the former cruise terminal at Bayport to an automobile processing facility. She also underscored that Port Houston had secured a third weekly liner service from East Asia, increasing business through the Panama Canal, and “significantly improving Houston’s position in the East Asia container import and export market.”

Facilities owned and operated by Port Houston handled 34.8 million tons of maritime cargo in 2016, only three percent lower than 2015 despite headwinds from reductions in steel. “Steel imports were down as expected for the year,” Executive Director Roger Guenther observed in his staff report to the Port Commission, “but container volume and bulk products saw really positive gains.”

Reflecting on 2016, Guenther further shared that these positive results “are a credit to the leadership of the Commission, staff, and all of our partners in remaining successful and competitive for the economic well-being of our region.”

“The New Year brings tremendous opportunity as well as challenges that we will continue to tackle, to keep Port Houston and our busy waterway growing and prospering,” Guenther added.

Regarding the year ahead, Guenther noted two milestone anniversaries: Bayport Container Terminal will celebrate its 10th Anniversary in February, and Barbours Cut Container Terminal, the first container facility to serve the Gulf Coast, will turn 40 this summer. These two Port Houston terminals handle nearly 70 percent of container business in the Gulf.

During the meeting, Chairman Longoria also congratulated Port Commissioners Clyde Fitzgerald, Roy Mease, and Dean Corgey on their recent reappointments to the commission. She noted that Port Commissioners “volunteer their time and expertise” to ensure that Port Houston “continues to drive regional and state prosperity.”

Port Commissioners, staff, and meeting attendees also heartily congratulated Chairman Longoria on her reappointment on January 9th by the unanimous vote of members of the Harris County Commissioners Court and Houston City Council. Ms. Longoria has served as Commission Chairman since January 8, 2013.

Noteworthy actions taken by the Port Commission today included approval of the audited financial statements for the Port Houston Restated Retirement Plan for the Fiscal Year ending July 31, 2016. The commission also approved a funding agreement with the Texas Department of Transportation and Port Terminal Railway Association, for constructing and completing the Broadway Second Main Track, which addresses a long standing bottleneck to ease freight rail movement of Port Houston cargo.

Chairman Longoria opened 2017's first Port Commission meeting with words of remembrance and a moment of silence to honor Steve Stewart, founder, Chairman, and former President of Gulf Winds International, who passed away January 26 after an extended illness. She noted his many contributions to the maritime industry and to our region.

The next meeting of the Port Commission is scheduled for March 21.

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About Port Houston

For more than 100 years, the port has owned and operated the public wharves and terminals of the Port of Houston – the nation's largest port for foreign waterborne tonnage and an essential economic engine for the Houston region, the state of Texas, and the nation. It supports the creation of nearly 1.175 million jobs in Texas and 2.7 million jobs nationwide, and economic activity totaling almost \$265 billion in Texas – 16 percent of Texas' total gross domestic product – and more than \$617 billion in economic impact across the nation. For more information, visit Port Houston's website at: www.porthouston.com.

Source: Port Houston



Photo: Port Commission Chairman Janiece Longoria (center), Port Commission Dean Corgey, G&H Towing President Steve Huffman, pilots, and tugboat crew members. During the Port Commission meeting held today, Chairman Longoria recognized the heroic efforts and coordination of all pilots, tugs, fireboat dock personnel and oil spill responders to contain a dangerous fuel spill and fire involving M/T Aframax River crude carrier in Sept. 2016, resulting in no injuries or loss of life, and minimal amount of channel closure.