



## **Corps Visit Highlights Houston Ship Channel's Importance to Nation**

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**HOUSTON-** During today's meeting of the Port Commission of the Port of Houston Authority, Chairman Janiece Longoria shared highlights of a briefing and tour of the Houston Ship Channel provided last week to Lt. General Todd Semonite, Commanding General and Chief of Engineers for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. During his visit, Chairman Longoria outlined the economic impact of the Port of Houston and made the case that dredging the Houston Ship Channel is an investment that generates jobs and economic benefit for the nation.

Lt. General Semonite came to Houston to see first-hand all the activity at the Port of Houston, and review the progress of improvements being considered during the current Corps mega-study. Conducted in partnership with Port Houston, the study is looking at potential future improvements to the channel. Following a briefing with leadership and staff, Lt. General Semonite was given a waterside channel tour, highlighting opportunities of the project.

Chairman Longoria shared that Lt. General Semonite was "very impressed" with what he saw and learned. He featured his visit to the Port of Houston in an ongoing series "On the Road Again with LTG Semonite." His comments about the port can be seen at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oSzwlbCeIHo>

In his report to the Port Commission, Executive Director Roger Guenther said that Port Houston "continues to perform well operationally," handling nearly 13 million tons of cargo for the year, an increase of nine percent over last year. Total container volumes have also grown, by 12 percent. "A majority of this increase is due to loaded units, which showed an increase of 16 percent compared to the same time last year," he said.

During his report, Mr. Guenther also commented on "tremendous investments" being made along the channel by the private sector, in addition to the ongoing investments by Port Houston. Mr. Guenther highlighted that several items on the agenda for the Port Commission's consideration, including a permit for dock construction as well as barge leasing facilities, would support private sector investment efforts that would in turn help create growth opportunities for the region.

Those items were approved by the Port Commission today. Other items approved included the purchase of nine new rubber tired-gantry cranes to handle the continued growth in Port Houston's container volumes.

During the meeting, Mr. Guenther acknowledged the passing of Environmental Affairs Director Leah Oberlin. Mr. Guenther commented that Ms. Oberlin was a valued member of the Port Houston family and touched the lives of all who knew her and would be greatly missed.

The Port Commission is scheduled to next meet on Tuesday, June 27.

### **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](http://www.porthouston.com).*

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