



Port Houston is the local advocate and steward of the Houston Ship Channel, a critical economic engine for our region. Port Houston's federal partner, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), regularly dredges the Houston Ship Channel to maintain its width and depth. Dredging is also currently underway to expand the Channel, work known as Project 11. This expansion is critical to maintaining the safety and efficiency of the Channel.



Photos taken from East Clinton DMPA site

We have heard concerns about dredged materials and reassure the community that Port Houston has seen **no evidence of contamination or discharges** at any of the dredged material placement areas that would pose a hazard to human health or the environment.

FACT

Materials taken from the Houston Ship Channel as part of Project 11 have been tested before being placed in dredged material placement sites.

USACE tests dredged materials for placement suitability. These test results are compared to screening criteria that USACE developed with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The USACE has followed all applicable testing required under protocols developed with the EPA: these materials have been tested and approved for placement based on federally required procedures.

FACT

Project 11 dredged material do not pose a risk to human health.

USACE went above and beyond regulatory requirements to reassure the community that Project 11 dredged materials do not pose a risk to human health, even under a residential exposure scenario. It compares Project 11 sediment samples to Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Texas Risk Reduction Program Tier 1 Protective Concentration Levels (PCLs) for residential soils. If Placement Areas were to be converted to community or residential use in the future, the TCEQ Tier 1 PCLs used would be the appropriate criteria.

FACT**TCEQ residential standards are protective of human health.**

TCEQ's Tier 1 PCLs are the health-protective chemical concentration levels for different land uses. TCEQ sets Tier 1 PCLs by considering how toxic a chemical is and how much of that chemical a person might encounter through routine activities, and then calculates a level of that chemical at which a person can safely be exposed. This results in conservative and protective exposure thresholds.

***Example:** To calculate the residential soil PCL, TCEQ assumes frequent and high-level exposure to a chemical – for instance, 30 years living in that place, a 70-year lifespan, and 350 days per year exposed to the chemical.*

The EPA regional screening levels cited by some advocacy groups are not intended to indicate elevated risk to human health. Rather, they are starting points for EPA to determine site-specific standards, which are often much higher.

FACT**When several samples are taken, it is appropriate to use average chemical levels.**

Sample averages, not isolated samples, are most representative of the material deposited in the sites, since these materials get mixed together during the dredging process and in dredge material placement sites.

FACT**When screened against the TCEQ Tier 1 PCLs for residential soils, nearly all chemicals are below the limit considered protective of human health.**

Hundreds of chemicals were analyzed and were below their respective residential Protective Concentration Levels (PCLs). In the many samples taken, there was only one exception, where arsenic exceeded its PCL.

The average level of arsenic detected in the 86 samples taken by the USACE and advocacy groups was 4.2 parts per million, well below the Tier 1 PCL of 24 parts per million, and below the regional Texas average of 5.6 parts per million.

Benzidine has also been mentioned by advocacy groups, but this chemical is unlikely to still be in the area since it was banned from U.S. production in 1973 and breaks down very quickly in the environment. USACE tested one recent sample for benzidine and did not detect any. Samples taken by advocacy groups in the areas surrounding the dredged material placement sites were not tested for benzidine.

FACT**Routine testing of the material regularly dredged for channel operations and maintenance also shows no risk to human health.**

For the last 40 years, these dredged materials have been shown to pose no elevated risk to human health, measured against the appropriate protective concentration limits for human health – residential Protective Concentration Levels (PCLs).

FACT**It would take 439 trucks per day, every day, for 10 years to move the dredged material placement areas to another location.**

Moving the material from the placement sites would result in immense community impacts, including truck traffic and air and noise emissions. Given that testing has shown these materials pose no risk to human health and the environment, these community impacts are unnecessary.

We care about our community and are committed to being good neighbors.

If you have questions, please contact us at 713.670.1000