



**For Immediate Release**  
**May 5, 2025**

**Houston Ship Channel Ranked #1 U.S. Waterway**  
*USACE Ranking and Historic Fleet Week to be held at Port Houston*  
*Announced at Port Commission's April Meeting*



**HOUSTON** – On Tuesday, April 29, the Port Commission of the Port of Houston Authority met for its regular monthly meeting. Chairman Ric Campo opened the meeting with an announcement that the Houston Ship Channel is once again ranked the number one waterway in the U.S., according to a recent report by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Houston's port handles approximately 12% of the nation's total waterborne tonnage.

An incredible 309.5 million short tons of cargo moved through the Channel in 2023, which is the most recent available data, reflecting a 5.3% increase in total tonnage from the previous year and far more cargo than any other port in the nation. In fact, volumes along the Houston Ship Channel are so large that the tonnage gap between Houston and the second-ranked port is larger than 97% of ports in the country.

“This ranking reinforces just how vital the Houston Ship Channel is for our region and for the entire nation,” said Chairman Campo. “More than three million jobs depend on our Channel, and at Port Houston, it's our job to protect this asset. With our Channel expansion project, known as Project 11, we are helping ensure this critical waterway remains open, safe, and competitive for decades to come.”

The 52-mile-long Houston Ship Channel serves more than 200 private and eight public terminals, in industries from petrochemicals and heavy machinery to consumer goods and energy. Its economic influence extends far beyond port gates, supporting 3.37 million jobs nationwide and generating \$906 billion in annual economic activity in the United States.

Chairman Campo also commented on the current tariff situation. “We are, like everyone, analyzing the data and assessing the situation. Tariffs would impact our own expenses at Port Houston, including our STS crane purchases. We support the end goal of strengthening domestic manufacturing and encourage the administration to work with our industry to develop a path forward that minimizes unintended consequences on American workers, exporters and consumers.”

### ***Executive Leadership Team Retirements & Appointments***

Port Houston CEO Charlie Jenkins recognized Chief Operating Officer Tom Heidt, who is retiring after 43 years of working at the port. He has held several roles during his tenure, starting in accounting and assuming the role of Chief Operating Officer in 2015.

“Tom has dedicated his career to Port Houston, and we appreciate him and all he has done to help grow the port to what it is today,” said Jenkins. “With his retirement comes the opportunity for new leadership, and we look forward to what is to come.”

Jenkins went on to highlight other organizational changes, including that effective May 1, 2025, Chief People Officer Jessica Shaver will assume the role of Chief Administrative Officer, overseeing many aspects of the organization, including strategic planning and people management.

Chief Business Equity Officer Carlecia Wright assumes the role of Chief People Officer, and the Director of Operations and Planning Candice Armenoff has been named Chief Strategy Officer, a new position. Port Houston is also actively searching for a Chief Operating Officer to oversee other important aspects of the organization, such as commercial, operations, maintenance, and infrastructure.

### ***Project 11 Updates & Operations Highlights***

Regarding Channel expansion efforts, the USACE is set to award their second Project 11 contract for the construction of the Beltway 8 Dredged Material Placement Area. Meanwhile, the two remaining Port-led Project 11 dredging contracts with Weeks Marine and Callan Marine are progressing on budget. The final segment in the Galveston Bay area, between Bayport and Barbours Cut, is anticipated to be fully completed and open to two-way traffic mid-2025.

Operations updates indicated that the total tonnage across all public terminals through March is down 2%, but this is still an improvement over last month, which saw a decline mostly related to fog. Container volumes since the start of the year have surpassed 1 million TEU and remain fairly flat compared to 2024.

The container terminals recorded the busiest March on record, driven by strong export volume, up 13% from last March. It is noteworthy that this was also largely driven by recovery from February’s low performance. Volumes at the multipurpose facilities remained down as well, at 7% since the start of

the year, but they rebounded slightly month over month by 2%. This was driven by weak liquid imports and export dry bulk volumes, while steel was up 4% since the beginning of the year.

### ***Additional Meeting Updates & Announcements***

Earlier in the month, Charlie Jenkins met with Congressman Mike Collins, representative from Georgia and Chair of the Water Resources & Environment Subcommittee of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. They discussed the future of the Houston Ship Channel and its importance to the national economy, as well as how to improve the laws promoting maritime transportation and infrastructure. The relationship is particularly important as it is related to the WRDA bill, legislation that instructs the USACE on the intent of Congress and outlines priorities.

Commissioners DonCarlos, Fitzgerald and Robb attended a ribbon cutting to celebrate the opening of the new Holly Bay Pavilion at Holly Bay Park in Pasadena, as part of Port Houston's East Harris County Greenspace Program. "We were happy to be able to support this initiative and be part of the community's beautification work, giving them a space to gather and enjoy the outdoors," said Chairman Campo.

It was also announced that the City of Houston along with Port Houston, and other partners, will be hosting the Navy Fleet Week for the first time in November 2025. "We are excited to be a part of this celebration, honoring 250 years of the U.S. Marines and Navy," said Jenkins. "We will also be hosting a few ships at our terminals and look forward to partnering with the city on this exciting milestone event."

During the meeting, the Port Commission also approved the Port Authority's Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) including the Report of Independent Public Accountants, with an unmodified opinion and no findings.

The Port Commission meets next on Tuesday, May 20, 2025.

### **About Port Houston**

For more than 100 years, Port Houston has owned and operated the public wharves and terminals along the Houston Ship Channel, including the area's largest breakbulk facility and two of the most efficient container terminals in the country. Port Houston is the advocate and a strategic leader for the Channel. The Houston Ship Channel complex and its more than 200 private and eight public terminals is the nation's largest port for waterborne tonnage and an essential economic engine for the Houston region, the state of Texas and the U.S. The Port of Houston supports the creation of nearly 1.5 million jobs in Texas and 3.37 million jobs nationwide, and economic activity totaling \$439 billion in Texas and \$906 billion in economic impact across the nation. For more information, visit the website at [PortHouston.com](http://PortHouston.com).

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