



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Houston Ship Channel Expansion Authorized by Congress**

*Project 11 included in Water Resources Development Act Legislation*

**HOUSTON –** On Monday, Congress passed the 2020 Water Resources Development Act. The bill formally authorized the expansion of the Houston Ship Channel, which was recently ranked the #1 U.S. Port in total waterborne tonnage. These are just the latest milestones reached by the busiest waterway in the nation, averaging 50 deep-draft vessel transits every day.



Vessels transiting along the Houston Ship Channel

“Today’s announcement is BIG. The authorization to widen and deepen the Houston Ship Channel is BIG for our region, the state of Texas, and our nation,” said Executive Director Roger Guenther. “It is BIG for economic prosperity and growth of industry that is served by the busiest waterway in the country.”

The Houston Ship Channel and the public and private terminals along it moved nearly 285 million tons of cargo in 2019. That was almost 47 million tons more than any other U.S. port and a 6% increase compared to the previous year. To support this vital waterway's continued growth, planning for the deepening and widening of the Houston Ship Channel has been Port Houston's top priority for nearly a decade.

The Houston Ship Channel expansion, known as Project 11, will widen and deepen the channel for safer and more efficient navigation of vessels calling the port.

The project also includes new environmental features to benefit channel users. "Project 11 is expected to improve regional air quality by increasing the efficiency of vessel movements and reducing potential congestion along the Houston Ship Channel. New bird islands and oyster reefs will be created as part of the project," Port Houston Chairman Ric Campo said. "The bottom line is an expanded channel that will positively impact the flow of goods in and out of our region."

The Houston Ship Channel supports 3.2 million jobs in the nation, with 1.35 million in Texas, and nationwide economic impact totaling \$802 billion.

As the Houston Ship Channel's non-federal sponsor, Port Houston has been the waterway's advocate and strategic leader working in partnership with the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Expansion of the channel has been Port Houston's top priority for nearly a decade.

"Today's WRDA success didn't happen overnight – it took many years of planning," Guenther said, in appreciation to all partners and stakeholders for their support of the effort.

Along with Port Houston's eight public terminals, there are more than 200 private facilities along the channel, and many of these stakeholders have actively participated in driving the expansion project forward.

Chairman Campo added his congratulations to everyone "for driving this change forward and for leading the way toward progress that will help the Houston Ship Channel remain the economic powerhouse it is today."

Guenther said that steps remain to reach the start of construction and emphasized that passage of the WRDA bill is significant, "but our work is not done."

Guenther explained that after WRDA is enacted, the next step in the project delivery process will be to secure a 'New Start' designation from the Administration and discretionary funding from the Corps of Engineers. "Over the next couple of months, our teams will be advocating to achieve this next benchmark," he said.

"As the advocate and a strategic leader of the Houston Ship Channel, we are a steward of progress. But we aren't doing it alone," Guenther said. "It takes a lot of support to be included in a WRDA bill, and this exciting step would not have been possible without the support of so many, and we are especially grateful to all the elected officials who have been vital to this effort."

Port Houston produced a special video on the importance of the channel expansion project and appreciation to all the elected officials, partners, and stakeholders involved in bringing Project 11 to this milestone <https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/VizBCQWgmzIyjMPhxLuCt?domain=youtu.be>.

**About Port Houston**

For more than 100 years, Port Houston has owned and operated the public wharves and terminals along the Houston Ship Channel – 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. nation. The more than 200 private and eight public terminals along the federal waterway supports the creation of nearly 1.35 million jobs in Texas and 3.2 million jobs nationwide, and economic activity totaling \$339 billion in Texas – 20.6% of Texas’ total gross domestic product (GDP) – and a total of \$801.9 billion in economic impact across the nation. For more information, visit [www.PortHouston.com](http://www.PortHouston.com).

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