



**For Immediate Release  
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## **Houston Ship Channel Expansion Reaches Major Milestone** *USACE Report Highlights Project's National Benefits*

**Houston, Texas** – Thursday, Galveston District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) received a signed Chief of Engineers Report (Chief's Report) for the proposed Houston Ship Channel Expansion Project. Signed by Lt. Gen. Todd T. Semonite, USACE Chief of Engineers and Commanding General, the report culminates a four-year, \$10 million study conducted by USACE in partnership with Port Houston to identify needed channel improvements, determine economic value to the nation, and complete necessary environmental requirements. The signed report recommends adoption of the plan presented by Galveston District in order to support economic efficiency of commercial navigation throughout the Houston Ship Channel System.

“This is a major milestone for this project, for the Corps, and for the Houston Port Authority,” added Col. Timothy Vail, USACE Galveston District Commander. “The signature of the Chief of Engineers says that, after considering all the options, the Corps believes this is the best plan to achieve funding and construction. The Chief's Report will be submitted to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works for review. Following review, it will then be submitted to Congress for authorization and funding in the next Water Resources Development Act, which is expected to be considered later this year. Once approved by Congress and signed by the President, the Houston Ship Channel expansion becomes a federal project, and we can move on to design and construction.”

As the non-federal sponsor of the Houston Ship Channel, Port Houston initiated the project nearly 10-years ago. Since then it has worked in close collaboration with USACE Galveston District to develop and accelerate project completion, to best accommodate the increasingly larger vessels in the world's fleet, as well to ensure that channel improvements are in place for future growth. Known as “Project 11,” the current effort represents the eleventh major expansion in the Houston Ship Channel's history.

“What is happening today highlights why the Houston Ship Channel project is needed now more than ever,” said Port Commission Chairman Ric Campo. “Providing infrastructure to keep the flow of diverse and essential products moving, as well as building the foundation for economic opportunities in the future, is a fundamental role of Port Houston. We have gone beyond the minimum requirements of a non-federal sponsor, using our own resources to design, build, and fund urgently needed components of the project.”

The Chief's Report recommends a comprehensive plan that includes modifications to the 50-mile-long Houston Ship Channel System including easing bends, widening the bay reach of the Houston Ship Channel to 700 feet, and widening the Bayport Ship Channel and Barbour's Cut Channel to 455 feet. Modifications to the bayou reach of the Houston Ship Channel would include deepening from Boggy Bayou to the Main Turning Basin, with selective widening between Boggy Bayou and Greens Bayou.

The project will also provide environmental benefits by using material dredged during channel construction to create over 400 acres of tidal marsh and bird island habitat and approximately 377 acres of oyster reef in Galveston Bay.

"We would like to thank our non-federal partner, Port Houston, for actively participating with the Corps over the last four years in plan formulation, engineering and environmental analysis, and report documentation for the recommended plan and final feasibility study," said Andrea Catanzaro USACE Galveston project manager. "This is major step that completes in a long planning process. With this approval, we can now focus the team's efforts on the detailed engineering and design work for the recommended plan."

Located in southeast Texas and spanning Harris, Chambers, and Galveston Counties, Houston Ship Channel is the busiest deep-draft waterway in the United States, with over 9,000 deep draft and 200,000 barge transits per year. According to U.S. Maritime Administration data, the annual deep-water vessel activity at the Port of Houston is nearly equivalent to the combined totals for the next three largest U.S. ports – Los Angeles, Long Beach, and New York/New Jersey. Often described as the nation's irreplaceable port, greater Port of Houston activity sustains 3 million U.S. jobs, generates more than \$802 billion in economic impact, and provides \$38 billion in tax revenue each year.

The system is currently experiencing high vessel transit count and constraints within the current channel configuration. It also currently has limits on vessel-size, draft in the upper channel, and channel configurations.

The Houston Ship Channel provides access to more than 200 private and public docks and berthing areas associated with the greater Port of Houston.

For additional information about the project, including the environmental components of the project, please visit the project's webpage: <https://www.expandthehoustonshipchannel.com/>.

### **About Port Houston**

For more than 100 years, Port Houston has owned and operated the public wharves and terminals of the greater Port of Houston – the nation's largest port for the foreign waterborne tonnage and an essential economic engine for the Houston region, the state of Texas and the U.S. nation. The Port of Houston 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 percent of Texas' total gross domestic product (GDP) – and total of \$801.9 billion in economic impact across the nation. For more information, visit the website at PortHouston.com.

**About USACE Galveston District**

In 1880, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers established Galveston District as its first office in Texas, tasked with overseeing river and harbor improvements in the state. Today, the District’s main missions have grown to include navigation, flood risk management, regulatory oversight, emergency management, and ecosystem restoration.

For more information about the district’s permitting process, visit <http://www.swg.usace.army.mil/Missions/Permits.aspx>. For news and information, visit [www.swg.usace.army.mil](http://www.swg.usace.army.mil); Facebook, <http://www.facebook.com/GalvestonDistrict> or follow on Twitter, <http://www.twitter.com/USACEgalveston>.

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Photos and captions provided below:



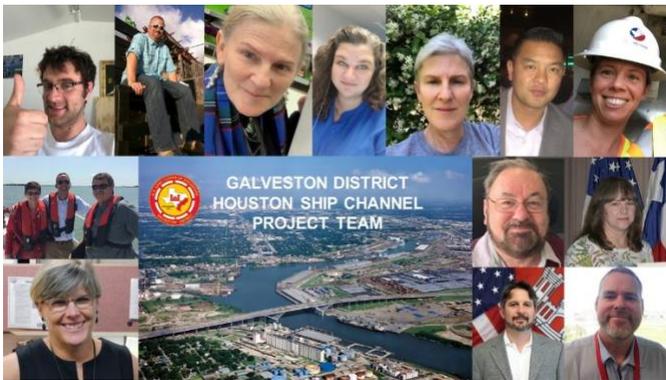
*Captions: Vessel transits and activity along the Houston Ship Channel*



*Caption: Port Houston Executive Director Roger Guenther points out activity on the Houston Ship Channel to Lieutenant General Todd T. Semonite, Chief of Engineers of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, during his tour of the Port of Houston in May 2017.*



*Caption: During a 2017 visit to the Port of Houston, Lieutenant General Todd T. Semonite, Chief of Engineers for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, discusses the Houston Ship Channel expansion project with Port Houston Chief Infrastructure Officer Rich Byrnes.*



*Caption: USACE Galveston District Houston Ship Channel Expansion Project Team*



*Caption: The San Jacinto Monument overlooks the Houston Ship Channel*