



**For Immediate Release
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New Asia Service to Call Port Houston **Texas Oversized Market Seen as Prime Area for Carrier Growth**

HOUSTON – Port Houston will be the first port of call in the United States on a new direct Trans-Pacific Asia service being launched by THE Alliance called the “EC6,” an East Coast all water service via Panama calling the U.S. Gulf.

Economic expansion and corporate relocations (Tesla, Hewlett Packard, Oracle are among several new corporate relocations recently announced) have fueled a large and fast growing consumer base and strong housing market which has translated to new import distribution centers in Houston and throughout Texas. Combined with the biggest manufacturing region in the North America for exports, Houston and the U.S. Gulf is a prime area for carrier service growth.

In its service network announcement for 2021, member carriers of THE Alliance which include Ocean Network Express (ONE), Hapag-Lloyd, Hyundai Merchant Marine (HMM) and Yang Ming Line have stated they are, “launching the East Coast Loop 6 (EC6), the first service within THE Alliance network to directly and seamlessly connect the US Gulf with important ports in Asia.”

“With the introduction of the EC6, HMM is delighted to add direct coverage between Asia and Port Houston to our expanding global service portfolio” said Jay Y. Lee, Chairman and CEO, HMM (America) Inc. “The EC6 will allow us to better serve our current customers who have voiced their desire for options between the US Gulf and Asia as well as open up a growing market for us” continued Mr. Lee.

Among the nation’s top container ports, Port Houston was 2019’s fastest-growing, according to data from maritime sector data vendor IHS Markit PIERS. Port Houston nearly hit the 3 million mark for twenty-foot equivalent units last year, recording 2,987,291 TEUs and is on track to approach the same record for 2020 despite the pandemic.

“We are very excited about the start of this new service by THE Alliance. It offers our regional exporters and importers new options,” Executive Director Roger Guenther said. “We look forward to providing them great efficiencies through our modern facilities.”

“Port Houston’s strategy of relentless focus on customer service and continued investment in terminal capacity allows it to seamlessly handle double digit growth in container volumes,” stated Guenther.

Port Houston is a prominent import gateway with a growing population base that is adding to customer demand. Loaded imports at Port Houston grew 5% in 2019, driven by a broad spectrum of companies from sectors including retail, alternative energy, food and beverage, and industrial materials.

“Hapag Lloyd has had a long presence in Houston and the Gulf. The new EC6 service will provide a new premium solution to our customers in Texas, Louisiana, Alabama and the Southern United States. Port Houston is a great partner and is among the best terminal operators in North America.” stated Uffe Ostergaard, President of Hapag Lloyd, North America.

The new service launched by THE Alliance is part of an adjustment of its overall network. THE Alliance said they made changes to offer customers more capacity in trade lanes with the greatest demand. Additionally, the network has been evaluated and reconfigured to ensure better frequency, more competitive transit times and comprehensive port coverage.

The EC6 service will call the ports of Kaohsiung – Hong Kong – Yantian – Ningbo – Shanghai – Pusan – (Panama) and Houston on a weekly basis before making stops in New Orleans and Mobile before returning to Panama and onward to Kaohsiung.

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.

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