



**For Immediate Release
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Port Houston Community Grant Award Recipients Announced
Project 11 Continues on Schedule

Houston, Texas – The Port Commission of the Port of Houston Authority met in virtual session for its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, September 29.

A notable item on the agenda was the 2020 Community Grants Program, established by the Port Authority to fund programs to enhance local communities, while advancing the Port Authority’s mission and vision. The application period launched on June 22 and more than 60 organizations applied through mid-August. At the meeting the Port Commission authorized its Community Relations Committee to act on staff’s award recommendations, and during the committee meeting that followed, nine groups were awarded grants totaling close to all of the allocated \$250,000 funding. A list of the grant recipients is available on Port Houston’s website.

Other actions taken by the Port Commission included adoption of a resolution of intent to finance the Houston Ship Channel Expansion Channel Improvement Project with the proceeds of debt obligations – the first step for financing “Project 11,” the upcoming work on the channel. The Commission also authorized continued professional services with HDR Engineering, Inc. to assist staff during the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund process as it provides comments to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Additionally, the Commission approved, with two members dissenting, a \$250,000 challenge grant award to the Severe Storm Prediction, Education, and Evacuation from Disasters (“SSPEED”) Center at Rice University, to assist in further developing the Galveston Bay Park Plan storm surge defense system. Port Chairman Ric Campo highlighted that the funds are contingent on SSPEED securing an additional \$750,000 in funding.

Other matters addressed by the Port Commission included the approval of a \$10,000 donation from Port Houston to the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) emergency relief fund, to provide direct assistance to other public port employees in the Gulf Coast region impacted by Hurricane Laura and other storms during the 2020 Hurricane season.

In his staff report, Executive Director Roger Guenther remarked that while total tonnage for the year through August was down 5%, September container volumes remain solid, with minor impact from the three-day closure of the channel during Tropical Storm Beta. Guenther shared that the public terminals remained open and continued to serve customers during that closure.

The Executive Director also reported that “tremendous progress” continues to be made towards authorization of the Houston Ship Channel’s widening and deepening Project 11, along the other work to move it forward.

During the meeting Chairman Campo announced that the upcoming Disparity Study, to help identify ways to enhance minority and women-owned contracting opportunities with the Port Authority, was expected soon. Griffin and Strong, P.C. was commissioned in Aug. 2019 to perform this independent analysis.

Chairman Campo shared that the Commission and staff would have the opportunity to review the document and offer comments before release of final findings and recommendations following Griffin and Strong’s presentation perhaps as early as the next Port Commission meeting. Chairman Campo added that he was looking forward to receiving the findings and reiterated Port Houston’s commitment to diversity and inclusion.

The Community Advisory Council Meeting of the Port Commission Authority is scheduled Oct. 1, and its agenda is available at <https://porthouston.com/leadership/public-meetings/>.

The next Port Commission meeting is Tuesday, Oct.27.

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About Port Houston

For more than 100 years, Port Houston has owned and operated the public wharves and terminals of the Port of Houston – the nation’s largest port for foreign waterborne tonnage and an essential economic engine for the Houston region, the state of Texas and the nation. It supports the creation of nearly 1.175 million jobs in Texas and 2.7 million jobs nationwide, and economic activity totaling almost \$265 billion in Texas – 16 percent of Texas’ total gross domestic product – and more than \$617 billion in economic impact across the nation. For more information, visit the port’s website at PortHouston.com.