



**For Immediate Release
March 29, 2019**

Response to Houston Ship Channel Emergency Recognized; Houston Channel Economic Value Impact to Texas Results

HOUSTON – Port Houston Commission Chairman Ric Campo recognized the efforts and expressed great gratitude to those responding to an emergency event along the Houston Ship Channel that impacted the channel and surrounding neighboring communities.



Port Houston Fire Chief William Buck, Senior Captain Stan Kozlowski, Engineer/Operator Kyle Jordan and Driver/Operator Mark Lewis were present at the meeting and received a round of applause of appreciation on behalf of all their firefighting peers for their emergency response efforts.

“The response to the emergency event along the Houston Ship Channel was an amazing effort led by the Port Community,” he remarked. He also shared that more than 1,000 people from multiple agencies had responded to the incident, which resulted in shelter-in-place alerts and air monitoring of nearby communities in the Houston region as well as the closure of the channel and partial delays.

In his remarks during the Port Commission meeting of the Port of Houston Authority, Chairman Campo noted his gratitude for “too many to name.” However, he did highlight the efforts of the Port of Houston Authority firefighters for their valiant efforts responding to the emergency.

In his report to the Commission, Executive Director Roger Guenther provided the following details regarding how the Port of Houston Authority’s Fire Department responded to the incident:

March 17 at the onset of the industrial fire, two Port Houston fireboats responded to the scene. Over the course of the next three days, Port Houston firefighters fought the fire around-the-clock using its three fireboats. The fireboats are specially-equipped to respond to industrial emergencies along the Houston Ship Channel. In those first three days, Port Houston firefighters contributed over 725 hours, and the fireboats pumped more than 65 million gallons of water to support the firefighting effort.

Initially, the tank fire farm was extinguished but re-flashed a couple of days later. Two fireboats remained in the vicinity conducting air monitoring for the safety of the surrounding communities. On Friday, March 22, the fire re-flashed shortly after chemicals and the water foam mixture from fighting the fire leaked into the channel via a drainage ditch.

Guenther reported that Port Houston's firefighters immediately moored one of the fireboats and began providing firefighting water, while the other fireboat was stationed at the mouth of the drainage ditch to extinguish any fire before it reached the ship channel.

Guenther reported that between March 17 through March 26, Port Houston firefighters spent 2,300-man hours on this incident and at least two of the three fireboats worked continuously throughout the event. Port Houston Fire Chief William Buck, Senior Captain Stan Kozlowski, Engineer/Operator Kyle Jordan and Driver/Operator Mark Lewis were present at the meeting and received a round of applause of appreciation on behalf of all their firefighting peers.

Also, during the meeting, Chairman Campo and Executive Director Guenther released and discussed preliminary results of the Houston Ship Channel Economic Impact Study. "The economic impact to the Houston Ship Channel region is \$339 billion in state economic value, up 28% from four years ago. More than 1.35 million jobs statewide are impacted by the Port of Houston, a 15% increase from four years ago." The detailed report will be discussed next month with John Martin presenting the results at the next regular Port Commission.

Actions taken during the Port Commission meeting included authorizing staff to advertise and receive proposals to provide services for a disparity study to sustain best business practices.

Representatives of the International Longshoreman's Association and the West Gulf Maritime Association addressed the commission concerning two-way traffic along the Houston Ship Channel. Last month, members of the Coalition of a Fair Open Port discussed and provided a presentation regarding this matter, during the Feb. 27 Port Commission meeting.

The next regular monthly Port Commission meeting is scheduled April 23 at 9:00am.

**Port Houston February Overall Cargo Performance
Year to Date Report**

Total tonnage 6.5 million tons, up 6% for the year
413,000 TEUs, up 6% for the year

755,000 tons steel, up 44% for the year

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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 greater 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. The Port of Houston 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 website at PortHouston.com.