



For immediate release
Jan. 28, 2021

PORT HOUSTON THRIVED IN 2020

The Port's Future is Bright

HOUSTON – The Port Commission of the Port of Houston Authority held its first meeting of the year on Tuesday.

Port Chairman Ric Campo began the meeting by expressing his appreciation for the efforts of Houston Ship Channel partners, including federal officials and industry stakeholders and Port Authority staff, as Project 11 (the Houston Ship Channel Improvement program) achieved two significant milestones.



Caption: CMA CGM *Bianca* in January at the Bayport container terminal is the first ship to use six cranes at the public terminal and at that time was the second-largest lift (ship-to-shore cranes moving containers) count on a vessel operation at one of its facilities.

Earlier this month, Project 11 received a “new start” designation, and \$19.5 million in federal funds were included in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 2021 work program to support its work to widen and deepen the channel. This followed authorization of Project 11 in the Water Resources and Development Act of 2020, as part of a larger legislative package passed by Congress in December.

“The significance of this appropriation is tremendous, as it paves the way to a clearer and smoother path to the start of construction,” Chairman Campo said. He underlined the importance of the designation, adding that “there is only one new start designation for a major deep-water channel in the U.S. each year.”

Chairman Campo emphasized that channel partners “were essential in pushing this decision over the top in the 11th hour.” Chairman Campo also laid out key priorities to keep Project 11 moving forward to be “turning dirt” later this year.

Executive Director Roger Guenther highlighted achievements and accomplishments made in 2020 in his staff report to the Commission.

He said that despite the challenges due to the pandemic, Port Houston handled 2.99 million twenty-foot equivalent container units (TEU) in 2020. This mark fell “just shy” of last year’s record by only 828 TEU. Guenther described that as “about a half-day’s work on one ship with three gangs (work crews) working.”

In his report, Guenther also said that there is a bright future for the port that “can only get better” saying that the public container terminals have taken off with a rapid start in 2021. He showcased an aerial photo of the first ship to use six cranes that boasted the second-largest lift count (cranes moving containers from ships) on a vessel operation at Port Houston’s public facilities.

Guenther said that this activity demonstrates the “pent-up demand” by carriers to bring larger vessels to the port, and the urgency to complete Project 11.

The staff briefing included an update and discussion on the Port Authority’s recent draft Disparity Study and Small Business Development Program. Port Authority staff has been “working diligently” on developing recommendations “for a race- and gender- conscious supplier diversity program for Port Commission consideration.”

Chairman Campo said, “Initial discussions will take place with the Commission’s Procurement and Small Business Task Force, to develop elements of a MWBE program to enhance the Port Authority’s Small Business program.” He described the process to include creating policy, identifying resources, developing a budget, and defining program activities, with an advisory and peer review.

Chairman Campo said, “We will push forward to identify steps to successful preparation and implementation of this program.”

Port Houston also released its Clean Air Strategy Plan draft:
<https://porthouston.com/environment/air-quality/>.

The Clean Air Strategy Plan Draft will be available for public comment until Feb. 24. The public may email comments to: environmental@porthouston.com.

The next regular Port Commission meeting is scheduled for Feb. 23.

CONTACT:

Lisa Ashley, Director, Media Relations; Office: 713-670-2644; Mobile: 832-247-8179; E-mail: lashley@porthouston.com

About Port Houston

For more than 100 years, Port Houston has owned and operated the public wharves and terminals along the Houston Ship Channel, including the area's largest breakbulk facility and two of the most efficient and fastest-growing container terminals in the country. Port Houston is the advocate and a strategic leader for the Channel. The Houston Ship Channel complex and its more than 200 public and private terminals, collectively known as the Port of Houston, is 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. 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 \$801.9 billion in economic impact across the nation. For more information, visit the website at www.PortHouston.com.