



**For Immediate Release  
APRIL 28, 2020**

## **PORT HOUSTON MOVES FORWARD DESPITE COVID-19 HEADWINDS**

**Houston Ship Channel Expansion Project Makes Progress  
Port Provides Relief to Customers and Users**

**HOUSTON** – The Port Commission of the Port of Houston Authority conducted its public meeting electronically, following social distancing guidelines. Ports are a core link in the national supply chain, and the Commission went forward with conducting the business of the busiest waterway in the nation.

Port Houston has kept the health and safety of its workers, customers, users and partners, visitors, and community as its number one priority. In his report to the Commission, Executive Director Roger Guenther focused on Port Houston’s response to the COVID-19 health crisis and highlighted the importance of providing relief to customers and users hit hard financially because of the pandemic event.

Guenther shared that while Port Houston realized strong double-digit gains in containers in the first two months of the year, resulting in an increase of 11 percent for first quarter volume overall, the March volumes in particular declined 11 percent compared to March of 2019. Steel, breakbulk cargo and autos are down for the year.

“While we are fortunate to serve the biggest export manufacturing base in the country and are among the largest concentrations of consumers in the Southern United States, there likely will be further declines. Today, we should provide relief to our customers and users as possible and appropriate,” said Guenther. “As the state gradually reopens, we must be prepared and ready to ensure the necessary infrastructure to support our local, state and national economies once it’s full steam ahead.”

He noted that despite challenges, business reflected a bright spot with notice that Evergreen container lines confirmed a new weekly feeder service to start in early May. This is a Trans Pacific transshipment service with Port Houston via Manzanillo, Colon, and Kingston.

Port Commission Chairman Campo formally announced that the Chief of Engineers and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), signed the report recommending approval of the Houston Ship Channel expansion project. The document is a culmination of a four-year, \$10 million study conducted by USACE in partnership with Port Houston to identify needed channel improvements and determine economic value to the nation.

In his remarks, Chairman Campo commented that securing this significant approval is a milestone in the effort to widen and deepen the Houston Ship Channel. He noted that the current crisis highlights the critical role ports – and the greater Port of Houston – must have to ensure cargo keeps moving and that supplies are delivered to hospitals and goods reach grocery and retail shelves.

Consistent with taking care of matters for today, but keeping an eye towards the future, the Port Commission passed several items on its agenda that supported investing towards improvements to the channel, as well as Port Houston public terminals. Highlights included a \$400 thousand agreement with the USACE for the design and review of the channel project, and a watershed drainage study with the City of Houston, Harris County, and Harris County Flood Control District.

Additionally, the Commission authorized more than \$9 million towards improvements to the wharves and infrastructure at the Turning Basin Multi-Purpose and on other terminal properties.

At the start of the meeting, Chairman Campo welcomed new Port Commissioner Cheryl Creuzot and thanked former commissioner Theldon Branch for his service and contributions towards the success of the port. Chairman Campo also expressed his appreciation to Roger Guenther, senior staff, and port employees for their service during this unprecedented event “none of us have ever seen” and for “keeping the port open, employees safe, and customers coming.” He also expressed great gratitude to essential workers including the longshoremen, contractors, truckers and others committed to safely working on the front lines and working remotely, to keep commerce moving and providing people of the critical goods and supplies that are desperately needed during these difficult times.

**CONTACT:**

Lisa Ashley, Director, Media Relations

Office: 713-670-2644; Mobile: 832-247-8179; E-mail: [lashley@porthouston.com](mailto:lashley@porthouston.com)

**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](http://PortHouston.com).*

Photos and captions provided below on following page.

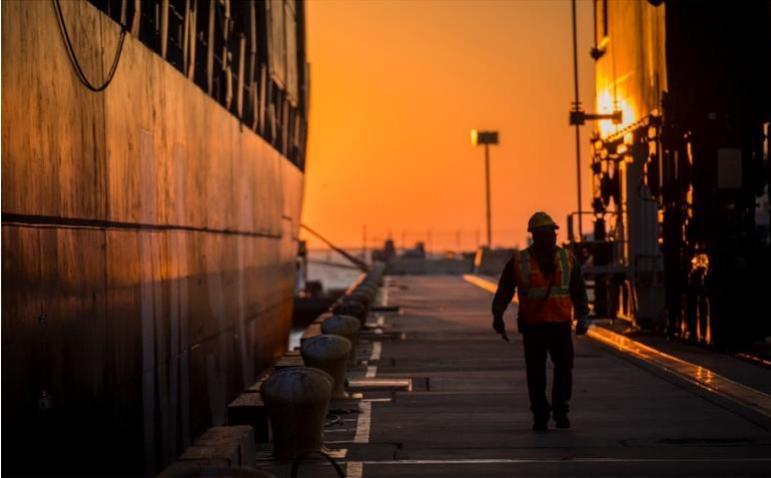
Photos and captions:



Caption: Port Houston keeps cargo moving.



Caption: Port Houston keeps cargo moving.



Caption: Port Houston, people on the front lines keep cargo moving.



Caption: Port Houston, people on the front lines keep goods moving.