



For Immediate Release
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PORT HOUSTON CHAIRMAN DELIVERS STATE OF THE PORT
The Port Remains Strong, Looks Ahead to Future, Diversity and Inclusion Priorities

Houston, Texas – Port Houston Chairman Ric Campo delivered the State of the Port to the Greater Houston Partnership today. In his address, he said the entire port complex continues to be a strong force for the Houston region, the state, and the nation. “The team at Port Houston has faced the COVID-19 pandemic head-on, and they continue working every day to keep cargo moving and commerce flowing,” said Chairman Campo. “I always say that people make things possible, and never has that been truer than this year, amid this pandemic.”

He stressed that the health and safety remain the No.1 priority and that nearly two-thirds of Port Houston’s team report to work on-site, helping deliver crucial goods. He underscored that in 2019, nearly 2 million import tons of food, beverages, medical, pharmaceutical, and personal care products were delivered across Port Houston’s eight public docks.

While still seeing solid business flows, the Chairman acknowledged that the Port is not immune from the effects of COVID-19 and has seen small declines in 2020. He reports that as of the end of September, Port Houston is down 3% year-to-date in containers, and steel is also down year-to-date. He added that tonnage across more than all the 200 industries along the Houston Ship Channel is down 5.5% year-to-date thru July.

Liquid bulk facilities are an integral part of the nation’s energy economy. Campo shared that while crude oil exports are down, it can be expected these oil exports will recover post-pandemic. The Chairman remarked that the greater Port of Houston international tonnage is still 70% ahead of the next closest U.S. port. “Even with a weak year in 2020, the greater Port of Houston will remain the #1 U.S. port for international trade,” he said.

Noting that oil and gas are cyclical and is currently in a downswing, Campo said, “We are in an excellent position to rebound when the oil price recovers.”

In his address, the Chairman also outlined the plan for the next twenty years, calling the priorities the “Four ‘C’s” – Channel, Cargo, Community, and Change. This long-range plan includes the Port’s five-year strategic plan, prioritizing people, infrastructure, stewardship, and partnerships. “We cannot foresee the future, but what we can do is plan for it,” he said.

The Chairman stressed that partnerships are key, and Port Houston is strategically focused on creating two-way communication opportunities. He said that the organization is opening up the dialogue and building these relationships more over the next several years with the neighboring communities around the port. He highlighted a program with a non-profit organization, Buffalo Bayou Partnership, which is in its beginning stages to use Port Houston property as a public park and recreation space.

Campo also emphasized “great strides” with environmental sustainability for the port. He highlighted that in 2020 Port Houston was the first port authority in the world to make the switch to 100% renewable electricity. “This move will eliminate about 25,000 tons of carbon dioxide from Port Houston’s footprint each year,” Campo said.

During his address, Chairman Campo underscored the topic of racial equity, diversity, and inclusion, saying “we strongly believe that we need to be part of the solution.” Campo announced that a Port-commissioned study by Griffin and Strong P.C. on the accessibility of the Port’s Small Business Program would be released sometime next month.

Campo provided an update on one of the Port’s biggest, most important, initiatives, the Houston Ship Channel Expansion – Project 11, a widening and deepening project vital to maintaining the Houston Ship Channel as the economic powerhouse that it is today.

“We know the urgency of this expansion. It’s crucial, and the time to act is now,” Campo said. Port Houston is leading efforts to get the necessary federal appropriations to start the construction project sooner and to begin work in 2021.

“Despite all the current challenges, we have remained on-track with Project 11,” he said. Authorization for the project has been included in both the House and Senate versions of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) legislation. Congress will need to pass the final bill.

“We are continuing discussions with industry to find ways for industry to participate in half the cost of the channel expansion- a commitment that they have made,” Campo added.

In closing remarks, Campo underscored Port Houston's resilience. “As a nation, we will recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and at Port Houston, we are confident our cargo numbers will increase again,” he said.

Campo concluded and said, “We are ready now, and we will be ready then. Port Houston, and the Houston Ship Channel, have always been something you can count on; during times of prosperity, times of recession, and now times of pandemic. It will continue to bring economic value and jobs to our region, today, tomorrow, and in the future.”

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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 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.