



**For immediate release
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Big New Ship-to-Shore Cranes and Houston Ship Channel Expansion Work Authorized

HOUSTON – A contract for three new Neopanamax electric cranes for the Bayport Container Terminal was approved Tuesday by the Port Commission of the Port of Houston Authority, which also authorized “critical-path” professional services for the Houston Ship Channel expansion project.

The \$35 million dockside cranes are for Bayport’s Wharf No. 5, while the expansion of the ship channel, the busiest in the United States, is needed for improved safety and the future growth of regional and national commerce.

Port Houston Executive Director Roger Guenther noted during Tuesday’s meeting that the growth experienced recently at the port is continuing.

“Operationally, our facilities have handled close to 30 million tons of cargo through August, an increase of 7 percent over last year as both container volumes and steel have maintained their upward trends in 2019,” Guenther reported.

The number of twenty-foot equivalent units or container TEUs handled through August totaled nearly two million, an increase of 11 percent compared to this time last year. Guenther said he expects to approach three million by the end of this year.

Financially, operating revenues stand at \$260 million year-to-date, combined with favorable cash flow performance.

The ship channel expansion work approved by the Port Commission includes critical-path professional services for engineering, design and project coordination. The widening and deepening of the ship channel will allow for economic growth to continue.

Given significant demand from industry to take advantage of current economic conditions and facilitate future growth, the Port of Houston Authority has proposed an expedited schedule whereby dredging could begin by 2021 and the project be completed in 2024.

The channel widening, along with deepening in some sections, is the eleventh and next major ship channel expansion project. The last widening and deepening of the channel was completed in 2005.

The professional services contract approved by the commission was in an amount not to exceed \$5.5 million and was awarded to TC&B/GBA, a joint venture of Turner Collie & Braden Inc and Gahagan & Bryant Associates Inc.

The three new ship-to-shore cranes are expected to be operational in the summer of 2021 and will be the tallest to date for Port Houston, standing at 158 feet (or 48 meters) under the spreader and will be capable of handling 18,000 TEU-sized container ships. The three cranes will bring Port Houston's fleet of ship-to-shore cranes to 29 cranes in total.

Also Tuesday, a new Far East all-water service calling Bayport was highlighted during the meeting, branded "TP-88" by Maersk, "Pelican" by MSC and "ZGX" by ZIM calling at Xiamen, Yantian, Busan...(Panama Canal)...Houston, Mobile, Tampa, Manzanillo, Panama... (Panama Canal)...Balboa, Busan with 10 ships of 4,000 – 6,800 TEU nominal capacity. The M/V *Northern Guild* arrived at Port Houston's Bayport Terminal Sept. 15 and was the first vessel to call on the new 2M/ZIM Shipping service, bringing the total number of direct Trans Pacific services to call Houston to four. The 2M service is comprised of Maersk and Mediterranean Shipping (MSC), which together with ZIM, operates two Asia services. The Ocean Alliance, comprised of COSCO, CMA CGM, Evergreen, OOCL and APL, operate two Asia services as well, the PEX3 Service and GME.

Port Houston continues to be among the fastest-growing container ports in the country, fueled by an increasing number of import distribution centers in the Houston region and a robust manufacturing base in the State of Texas.

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 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 a total of \$801.9 billion in economic impact across the nation. For more information, visit PortHouston.com.

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