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March 20, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
H-305, the Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

I am requesting funding for the Galveston Bay Area, Texas Project in Fiscal Year 2027. The entity to receive funding for this project is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The funding would support the initiation of a feasibility study to deepen the Houston Ship Channel, authorized in Section 1201(b)(36) of PL 118-272 [138 STAT 3062]. Following WRDA 2024 project authorization, the Port of Houston Authority (Port Houston), in partnership with the Port of Galveston and Texas City, supports FY26 congressional appropriation to fund the feasibility study to deepen the ship channels (up to 60 feet) and barge lanes (up to 20 feet) in the full Galveston Bay area of Texas. The needed navigation improvements — in the Galveston Bay entrance, the Houston and Galveston Harbors, and the Texas City ship channels, harbors, and barge lanes — are critical to maintaining safety and to advancing the energy industry, the supply chain, and regional and national economic growth. The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because channel depths of 50 to 55 feet are emerging as the standard for ports supporting modern container, large liquid, and bulk vessel trades, and several ports are studying depths beyond 60 feet. Currently, the Galveston Bay channels are generally authorized for maintenance only to a depth of 46 feet. This depth is insufficient to support the nation's largest U.S. port for waterborne tonnage and to accommodate projected future growth in the area. Today's larger vessels draw more water as they pass through the channel, and they make Galveston Bay's current channel depth of 46 feet and barge lane depth of 12 feet insufficient to support safe and reliable traffic.

The project has a federal nexus because of Section 1201(b)(36) of PL 118-272 [138 STAT 3062]. Studies or permits to modify Federal shipping channels and waterways are under the jurisdiction of the Federal government through the US Army Corps of Engineers. Studies are cost-shared with the US Army Corps of Engineers and appropriate non-Federal sponsors (the Port of Houston in this case) to determine whether the channel modifications are in the Federal interest

and are economically justifiable, environmentally acceptable, and technically sound. I certify that I have no financial interest in this project, and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Babin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a vertical line to its right.

Brian Babin, D.D.S.
Member of Congress