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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **PORT FREEPORT SIGNS PROJECT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS FOR THE FREEPORT HARBOR CHANNEL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

**FREEPORT, TX (June 25, 2020)** – The Port Freeport Commission is pleased to announce the signing of a Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), effective June 25, 2020, for the Freeport Harbor Channel Improvement Project (FHCIP). The FHCIP will deepen the channel to depths ranging from 51 to 56 feet Mean Lower Low Water and widen one channel section making way for larger, deeper-draft vessels to call Port Freeport.

“The signing of this Project Partnership Agreement for the FHCIP is a critical step for the channel project that will provide significant benefits to this region, the state and nation for decades to come,” said Port Chairman, Shane Pirtle. “We appreciate the hard work and cooperation of the USACE in the prompt execution of the PPA and look forward to the commencement of construction of this vital project.”

Authorized by Congress under the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2014, the FHCIP received \$19 million in funding in the USACE FY 2020 Work Plan that was announced in February 2020 and was one of two seaports nationwide to receive a “new start” designation for commencement of construction. The estimated total cost of the project is \$295 million, of which the federal government share is \$165 million and Port Freeport as the local sponsor is responsible for the remaining \$130 million to be funded by the 2018 voter-approved bond package.

“Our partnership with Port Freeport is key to the success of this project,” said Col. Timothy R. Vail, commander at the USACE Galveston District. “The Freeport Harbor Channel

Improvement Project offers economic benefits that will have an impact far beyond the Texas Coast. Improving the channel will encourage additional investment in southern Brazoria County, which will create more jobs and expand economic opportunities for local communities."

The signing of the Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) with the USACE moves the project into the construction phase with the advertisement of the first increment to occur in July with contract award in September and commencement of dredging soon thereafter. Construction of the total FHCIP will take approximately five years to complete.

"A deeper channel will enable Port Freeport to serve a wider range of global vessels which will expand our capacity, facilitate additional economic growth and support job opportunities for the entire region," said Phyllis Saathoff. "As Port Freeport continues expanding its role in regional and global commerce, we look forward to working in partnership towards a strong, prosperous future for all."

Port Freeport is a leading port in the export of crude oil and natural gas liquids and is ranked 10th in chemicals, 19<sup>th</sup> in total tonnage, and 26th in containers. A 2019 Economic Impact Study by Texas A&M Transportation Institution revealed that nationally the Freeport Harbor Channel generates 279,780 jobs and has a total economic output of \$149 billion. The Freeport Harbor Channel serves BASF, Chiquita Fresh N.A., CMA CGM, Dole Fresh Fruit, The Dow Chemical Company, Freeport LNG, Glovis, Grimaldi Lines, Hoegh Autoliners, Horizon Auto Logistics, Liberty Global Logistics, Wallenius Wilhelmsen Ocean, Mammoet, Phillips 66, Riviana Foods, Inc., Sallalum Lines, Seaway Crude Pipeline Company, Tenaris, and Vulcan Materials Company.

Port Freeport is committed to keeping the local community informed of our operation and results. If you have questions or comments about this article, please email or call Marilyn Miller, Public Affairs Assistant.

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**PHOTO CUTLINE:** Port Freeport Chairman Shane Pirtle; Col. Timothy R. Vail, Galveston District Commander; Phyllis Saathoff, Executive Director/CEO Port Freeport; Dr. Edmond J. Russo, Deputy District Engineer, Programs and Project Management, Galveston District; Brig. Gen Paul E. Owen, Commander and Division Engineer of the Southwest Division; Byron Williams, Chief Project Management, Galveston District