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District awards \$15.4 Mil contract to dredge Freeport Lower Stauffer Reach channel

GALVESTON, Texas – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Galveston District awarded a contract in the amount of \$15,494,310 to Great Lakes Dredge & Dock, LLC for the first phase of the Freeport Harbor Channel Improvement Project.

“This contract is a huge milestone as it initiates the beginning of the first step to build this multi-million dollar project which will contribute to the economic efficiency of commercial navigation in the region” said Carlos Tate, project manager at USACE Galveston District. “This dredging operation will ensure the channel is clear for commercial navigation, something that is vital to the Port of Freeport.”

The Freeport Harbor Channel Improvement Project (FHCIP) will deepen and widen the channel to depths ranging from 51 to 56 feet Mean Lower Low Water. Deepening and widening the channel will offer many benefits to Port Freeport, including improved navigation and safety. Once complete, it will enable a safer, faster transit for larger ships than is currently possible—energizing the economy and adding value to the nation.

According to Tate, the contractor is required to remove approximately 1.4 million cubic yards of material from approximately 0.65 miles of channel using a pipeline dredge to excavate the material from the channel and dispose of it into the nearby upland placement area. Work is expected to begin in October 2020 with an estimated completion date of May 2021.

Authorized by Congress under the Water Resources Development Act of 2014, the Freeport Harbor Channel Improvement Project received \$19 million in funding in the USACE Fiscal Year Work Plan announced in February 2020. It was one of only two seaports nationwide to receive a “new start” designation for commencement of construction. The estimated total cost of the project is \$295 million, with the Federal Government providing \$165 million, and Port Freeport – as the local sponsor – providing \$130 million.

“The award of the first phase of the Freeport Harbor Channel Improvement Project is the result of the recognition by Congress and the Administration that there is substantial national interest in supporting the continued economic development of the Texas Coast” said Col. Timothy Vail, USACE Galveston District commander. “It is a testament to our partnership that together the Port of Freeport and the Army Corps of Engineers went from a new start approval, to design completion and construction award in only eight months. We will continue to work together to meet the incredible economic demand for an improved navigation channel in Freeport, while honoring the value proposition the Corps of Engineers has with its partners, the State of Texas and the Nation.”

“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, Port

Freeport executive director. “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.”

Freeport Harbor is located on the Texas Gulf Coast approximately 50 miles south of Houston. The deep-draft navigation project consists of an 8.5 mile, 47-foot MLLW deep channel that extends from the Gulf of Mexico, through a jettied inlet, to a turning basin at the Freeport Port facilities. The Port of Freeport Stauffer Channel Reach No. 3 of the channel system was dredged originally by local interests to a depth of 25 feet over a bottom width of 300 feet, with a 500-foot square basin area. The Rivers and Harbors Act of 1935 incorporated the Stauffer channel into the Federal project. This Freeport Stauffer Channel segment was de-authorization in 1974 and was not federally dredged since. This current dredge construction project will encompass a re-authorized channel improvement to the current Congressional authorized dimensions, which is -51 Mean Lower Low Water (MLLW) by 300 ft., to meet port navigation needs.

USACE Galveston was established in 1880 as the first USACE district in Texas. Originally tasked with overseeing river and harbor improvements, the Galveston District is currently responsible for maintaining more than 1,000 miles of channel, as well as the Colorado River Locks and Brazos River Floodgates. Galveston District is growing with the region to manage the multi-billion dollar water programs that will enable economic growth, while protecting the people and environment along America’s Energy Coast.

For more news and information, visit <https://www.swd.usace.army.mil/Missions/SWD-Hurricane-Harvey-Supplemental-Program/> and www.swg.usace.army.mil. Find us on Facebook, www.facebook.com/GalvestonDistrict.

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TAGS: USACE Galveston District, Freeport Lower Stauffer Reach channel, Port Freeport, dredging

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS – GALVESTON DISTRICT

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