DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
GALVESTON DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P. O. BOX 1229
GALVESTON, TEXAS 77553-1229

April 11, 2017

Mr. Bryant Celestine
Historic Preservation Officer
Alabama Coushatta Tribe of Texas
571 State Park Road 56
Livingston, Texas 77351

Dear Mr. Celestine,

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (USACE) has prepared a draft report on the feasibility and environmental suitability of a channel widening project on the Freeport Harbor Channel (FHC) in Brazoria County, Texas (Figure 1). The non-Federal sponsor for this study is Port Freeport. We have prepared a Draft Integrated General Reevaluation Report-Environmental Assessment (DIGRR-EA) on the proposed selective widening that is provided on the enclosed CD. We request your comments on the proposed undertaking and the potential to affect historic properties in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

The DIGRR-EA evaluates changes to the 2012 Freeport Harbor Channel Improvement Project (FHCIP) Final Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement. The FHIP was authorized for construction in Section 7002 of the Water Resource Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA 2014 Project). The FHCIP proposes to deepen and selectively widen the FHC and associated turning basins (except Brazos Harbor Turning Basin), up to and including the Stauffer Turning Basin. The DIGRR-EA is proposing selective channel widening and bend easing as a modification to the FHCIP to allow Panamax sized vessels to use the channel. Construction of the previously authorized FHCIP has not yet begun. As the first segment of construction, minor channel widening modifications proposed by this project would be constructed before the improvements identified in the FHCIP. All of the construction elements described below comprise the Area of Potential Effects (APE) (Figure 2).

The tentatively selected plan (TSP) would include three areas of construction along the existing channel in the inner harbor: widening of the channel at the Dow thumb, bend easing, and the addition of an approach notch to the upper turning basin. Channel widening would occur on the east side of the existing channel for a distance of 4,298 feet or about 0.82 mile. The widening would occur entirely within the banks of the channel, affecting about 9.9 acres of river bottom. The bend easing would be constructed on the west side of the channel, just southwest of the widening area. It would result in the dredging of about 7.5 acres of river

bottom and the excavation of about 16.4 acres of upland. This upland is comprised primarily of a section of wave barrier associated with the existing Freeport Hurricane Flood Protection Project (HFPP). The remainder of the area has been heavily impacted by construction of nearby roads and industrial development. The turning notch is located west of the channel and just northwest of the widening area. It would impact approximately 8.3 acres of river bottom. All dredged material from construction is designated for placement at existing Placement Area 1. All maintenance dredged material is designated for placement at the existing maintenance ocean dredged material disposal site. The APE for this project are all areas of direct impacts under the TSP.

Prior to channel widening, an approximately 3,110-foot long stability wall would be constructed to reinforce the Freeport HFPP levee that is located close to the Dow Thumb river bank. It would be constructed on the outside levee slope, between the levee and eastern Old Brazos River bank. This wall would provide stability for the HFPP levee, replacing stability currently provided by a submerged bench. In addition, a portion of the HFPP wave barrier, located in the area to be removed by bend easing, would need to be removed and a portion of the Old Quintana Highway designated to replace it. It is currently anticipated that no modifications to the highway would be needed to make this designation.

The Texas Historic Commission's (THC) Archeological Sites Atlas (Atlas) was consulted to identify any previous cultural resources surveys or recorded cultural resources within the APE. The review indicates that, within the APE, there have been three previous cultural resources surveys conducted (Table 1). Two of these surveys cover the entire APE (survey IDs 1179 and 1183). No cultural resources were identified within the APE as a result of these previous investigations. Only one archaeological site (41BO175) is recorded within the APE. No other cultural resources have been identified within the APE.

Table 1. Previous Cultural Resources Surveys Conducted within the APE.

ID	Agency	Report Title	Contractor	Year	Comments / Recommendations
1179	USACE-Galveston District	Not listed	-	1976	Project area within previous survey area
1183	USACE-Galveston District	Not listed	-	1976	Project area within previous survey area
91	USACE-Galveston District	Not listed	PBS&J	2006	Marine project; project area within previous survey area

There are no historic properties within the APE and based on the results of the previous investigations we have determined that the proposed FHCIP project has no potential to affect historic properties. We request your comments by email, phone, or mail within 30 days of the date of this letter. Thank you for your cooperation in this review process. If you have any questions concerning the proposed project or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Janelle Stokes by phone 409-766-3039 or by email at janelle.s.stokes@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

Kelly. A. Burks-Copes

Kelly Burks-Copes
Chief, Coastal Section
Environmental Compliance Branch

Enclosures

Identical letters sent to the following:

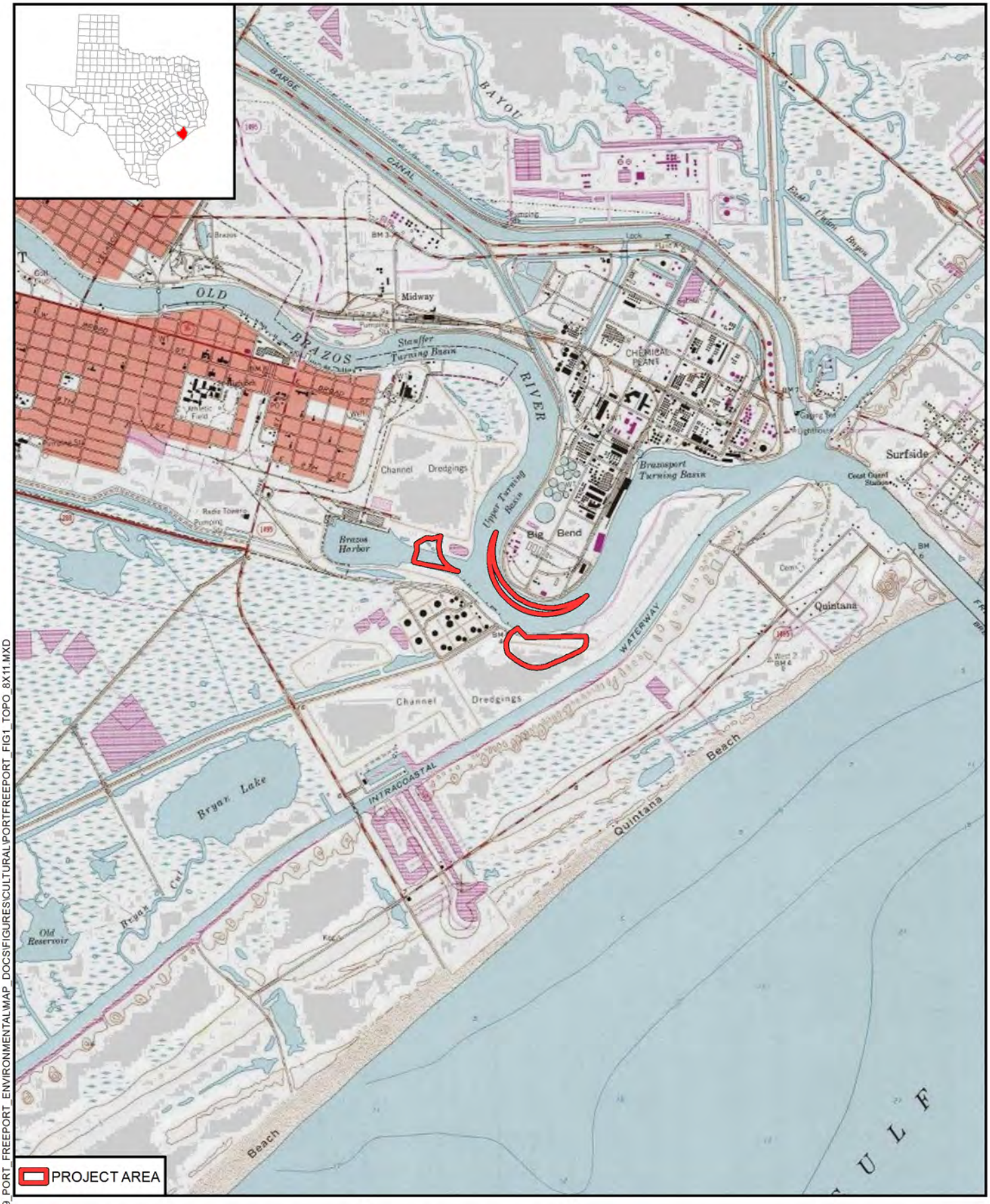
Dr. Linda Langley
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana
P.O. Box 818
Elton, Louisiana 70532

Ms. Susan Nahwooksy
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
The Comanche Nation
#6 SW "D" Avenue, Suite A
Lawton, Oklahoma 73507

Ms. Holly Houghton
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
Mescalero Apache Tribe
P.O. Box 227
Mescalero, New Mexico 88340

Ms. Amie Tah-Bone
Acting Historic Preservation Officer
Kiowa Indian Tribe of Oklahoma
P.O. Box 369
Carnegie, Oklahoma 73015

Ms. Miranda Meyer
Acting Historic Preservation Officer
Tonkawa Tribe of Oklahoma
1 Rush Buffalo Road
Tonkawa, OK 74653



FILE: O:\269649_209_PORT_FREEPORT_ENVIRONMENTAL\MAP_DOCS\FIGURES\CULTURAL\PORTFREEPORT_FIG1_TOPO_8X11.MXD

FREEPORT HABOR CHANNEL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

USGS FREEPORT QUAD

BRAZORIA COUNTY, TX

N

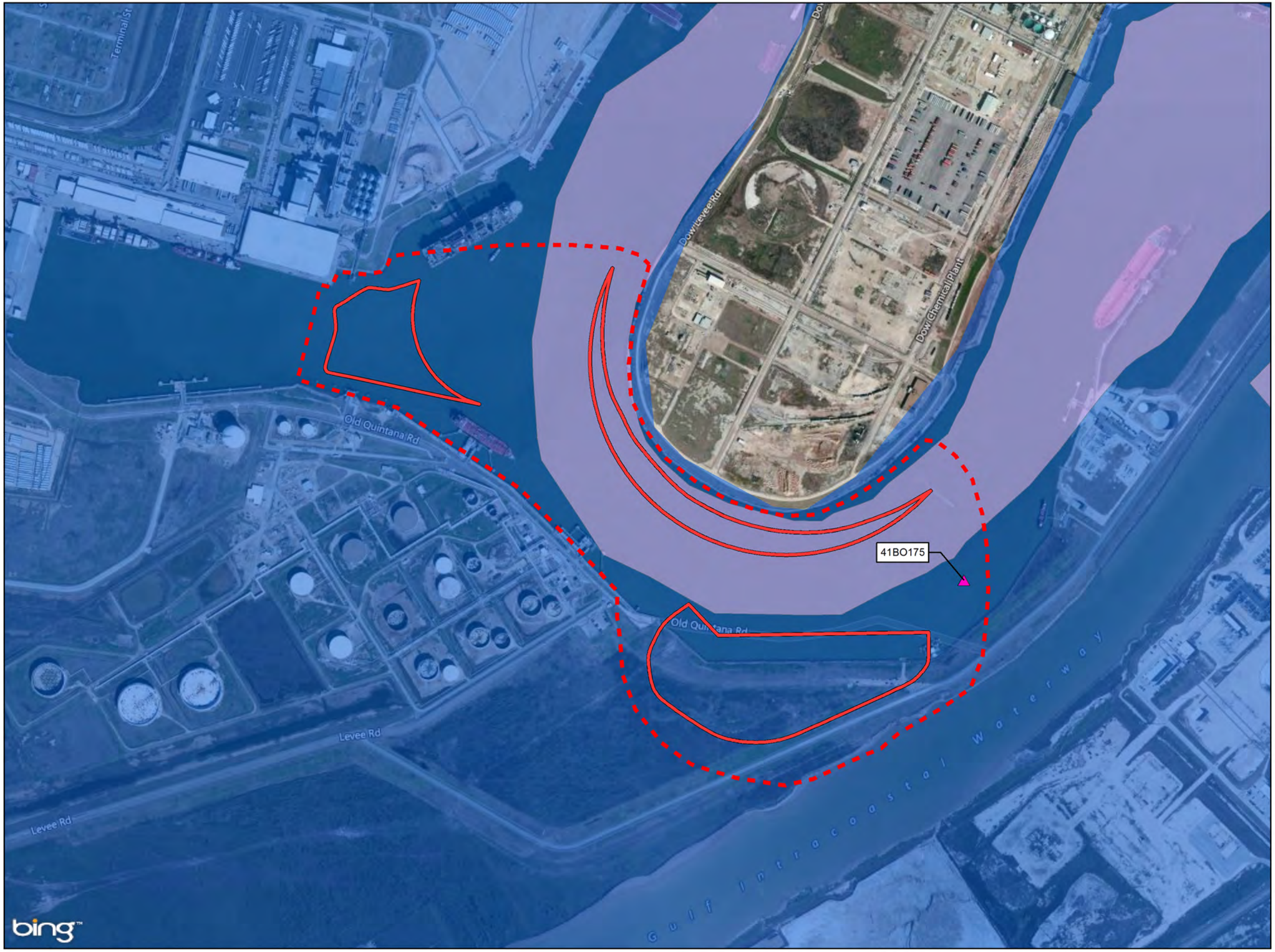
0 235 470 940 Meters

0 750 1,500 3,000 Feet

PORT FREEPORT

HDR

FIGURE 1



FREEPORT HABOR CHANNEL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

USGS FREEPORT QUAD
BRAZORIA COUNTY, TEXAS

- PROJECT AREA
- POTENTIAL IMPACT AREA
- ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE CENTROID
- PREVIOUSLY SURVEYED MARINE SURVEY AREA
- PREVIOUSLY SURVEYED AREA

N

0 220 440 880 1,320
Feet

200 100 0 200
Meters

PORT FREEPORT

HDR

FILE: O:\269649_209_PORT_FREEPORT_ENVIRONMENTAL\MAP_DOCS\FIGURES\CULTURAL\PORTFREEPORT_FIG2_AERIAL_11X17.MXD

FIGURE 2