



Houston Ship Channel Operations & Maintenance

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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AUTHORIZATION:

- House Document 257, 89th Congress, First Session and Section 819, P.L. 99-662

P2#s:

- 510218, 510220

LOCATION: Galveston, Chambers, and Harris Counties, Texas



Port of Houston Facilities Terminal

Congressional Member Interest	Key Stakeholder Interest
Senators: TX Representatives: TX-2, TX-7, TX-8, TX-9, TX-10, TX-14, TX-18, TX-22, TX-29, TX- 36, TX-38	Port of Houston Authority

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND:

- The Houston Ship Channel (HSC) is a deep-draft navigation project generally 530 feet wide with authorized depths ranging from 46 feet to 37.5 feet, extending approximately 52 miles from Bolivar Roads through Galveston Bay, the San Jacinto River, and Buffalo Bayou to port facilities in Houston, Texas. The project also provides navigation access to major container terminals at Bayport and Barbours Cut, as well as numerous industrial and petrochemical facilities along the channel.
- The Port of Houston is ranked 1st in the nation with respect to commercial tonnage (309.5 million tons total in 2023). The principal imports and exports through HSC include crude fertilizers, petroleum, organic chemicals, cereal, iron and steel, machinery, plastics, vehicles, and containerized cargo.

As of: 03/04/2026

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2000 Ft Point, Galveston, TX, 77550

- The HSC supports 115 private and public facilities, including more than 160 deep-draft berths, as well as numerous barge docks and industrial facilities. Port Houston is designated as an Energy Transfer Port under the Donor & Energy Transfer Port Program. As the highest-tonnage port in the United States, maintaining reliable navigation on the HSC is essential to national economy.
- All deep-draft vessel traffic accessing the Houston Ship Channel system transits through the Galveston Entrance Channel, which serves as the primary gateway connecting the Gulf of America to Galveston Bay and the Houston-Galveston-Texas City complex.

BUDGET INFORMATION:

FY26 President's Budget	\$	53,608,000
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CURRENT STATUS:

- The Houston Ship Channel currently has no navigation restrictions.
- The HSC Expansion Channel Improvement Project (ECIP) is currently ongoing and routine maintenance dredging continues to sustain authorized channel depths outside the improvement footprint and ensure uninterrupted navigation.
- One maintenance dredging contract is currently active. Adjustments to the dredging sequencing have been required to accommodate pipeline removals associated with the HSC ECIP.
- Five additional maintenance actions are in design, including 3 maintenance dredging efforts and two placement area improvements

OUTSTANDING ISSUES / CONCERNS:

- There is currently no mechanism in place to provide flexible dredging to address unanticipated shoaling. Contracting approaches are being developed to allow for this operational flexibility.
- Increased shoaling is anticipated following the completion of the HSC ECIP, which may increase future maintenance requirements.
- Placement area maintenance and capacity management remain essential to support the maintenance of the HSC and avoid future navigation restrictions.

UPCOMING ACTIONS:

- Award and Execute the FY26 maintenance dredging, subject to available funding, to maintain authorized channel depths and preserve navigational reliability of all reaches of the Houston Ship Channel.
- Award and Execute the FY26 placement area improvement contracts, subject to available funding, to maintain sufficient capacity and ensure continuity of the maintenance dredging cycles.

STRATEGIC MESSAGES:

The nation's navigation channels depend on consistent Operations and Maintenance to remain reliable and fully operational. Channel restrictions reduce vessel efficiency, increase transportation costs, and create bottlenecks across critical manufacturing, energy, and agricultural supply chains that support the U.S. economy.

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