APPENDIX F

AGENCY AND TRIBAL COORDINATION

NOVEMBER 2019
APPENDIX F

AGENCY AND TRIBAL COORDINATION:
Attachment 1: Agency Coordination Invitation Letters
Attachment 2: Tribal Coordination Invitation Letters
Attachment 3: Responses/Comments Received
Attachment 4: Responses/Comments Received

NOVEMBER 2019
ATTACHMENT 1

AGENCY COORDINATION INVITATION LETTERS
Ms. Maria Martinez  
Section Chief, Wetland Section  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 6  
1445 Ross Avenue  
Dallas, TX 75202-2733

Dear Ms. Martinez:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (Corps) intends to prepare an Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (IFR-EIS) for the Houston Ship Channel (HSC) Expansion Channel Improvement Project (ECIP) Feasibility Study. The Corps and the non-federal sponsor, the Port of Houston Authority, would like to invite your agency to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the development of the IFR-EIS. The IFR-EIS will identify and evaluate the feasibility of developing a plan for improving deep draft navigation along the HSC. The study will focus on opportunities to deepen and widen the upper reach of the HSC (Boggy Bayou to the Main Turning Basin), improvements to the HSC side channels Bayport Ship Channel (BSC) and Barbour's Cut Channel (BCC), and safety and efficiency enhancements in the Galveston Bay Reach of the HSC such as anchorages and meeting lanes.

We are inviting the participation of your agency as a Cooperating Agency pursuant to Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR §1501.6 and §1508.5), the Water Resources Council principles and guidelines (42 U.S.C. §1962–3), and USACE Engineer Regulation (ER) 1105-2-100 (Paragraph 2-5.a.). The purpose of this request is to formalize, via designation as a Cooperating Agency, the continuing coordination and active participation by resource agencies in the study for the HSC ECIP. Furthermore, we would like to coordinate our review schedule for study completion so that all reviews and approvals will, to the maximum extent practicable, be conducted concurrently. This concurrent coordination is required by Section 2045 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 and Section 1001 of the Water Resources Reform Development Act of 2014. The following review periods for the IFR-EIS have been established in accordance with the current project schedule:

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May 3, 2016 – 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM  
USACE Galveston District Headquarters  
2000 Fort Point Road  
Galveston, Texas 77550  
Conference Room 120

The purpose of the meeting is to also gain early key agency stakeholder input as recommended by ER 1105-2-100 on the problems and opportunities related to improving deep draft navigation in the planned reaches of the HSC. We appreciate this opportunity to invite your participation as a Cooperating Agency and request that you advise us as to whether the report review periods shown above are acceptable. In addition, please let us know if you plan to attend the Interagency Meeting, either remotely or in person. The meeting will be available by teleconference and web meeting (webinar address http://www.webmeeting.att.com, call-in and web meeting number 888-204-5984, access code 8149390, security code 2016). If you plan to attend in person, please advise my staff so we can facilitate your entry into the Galveston District facility. Please contact Andrea Catanzaro at (409) 766-6346, andrea.catanzaro@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Eric W. Verwers  
Director, Regional Planning and Environmental Center
Mr. Chuck Ardizzone  
Project Leader  
US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Texas Coastal Ecological Services Field Office  
17629 El Camino Real, Suite 211  
Houston, Texas 77058

Dear Mr. Ardizzone:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (Corps) intends to prepare an Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (IFR-EIS) for the Houston Ship Channel (HSC) Expansion Channel Improvement Project (ECIP) Feasibility Study. The Corps and the non-federal sponsor, the Port of Houston Authority, would like to invite your agency to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the development of the IFR-EIS. The IFR-EIS will identify and evaluate the feasibility of developing a plan for improving deep draft navigation along the HSC. The study will focus on opportunities to deepen and widen the upper reach of the HSC (Boggy Bayou to the Main Turning Basin), improvements to the HSC side channels Bayport Ship Channel (BSC) and Barbour’s Cut Channel (BCC), and safety and efficiency enhancements in the Galveston Bay Reach of the HSC such as anchorages and meeting lanes.

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Sincerely,

Eric W. Verwers
Director, Regional Planning and Environmental Center
Mr. Rusty Swafford  
Branch Supervisor  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Habitat Conservation Division  
4700 Avenue U  
Galveston, TX 77551

Dear Mr. Swafford:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (Corps) intends to prepare an Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (IFR-EIS) for the Houston Ship Channel (HSC) Expansion Channel Improvement Project (ECIP) Feasibility Study. The Corps and the non-federal sponsor, the Port of Houston Authority, would like to invite your agency to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the development of the IFR-EIS. The IFR-EIS will identify and evaluate the feasibility of developing a plan for improving deep draft navigation along the HSC. The study will focus on opportunities to deepen and widen the upper reach of the HSC (Boggy Bayou to the Main Turning Basin), improvements to the HSC side channels Bayport Ship Channel (BSC) and Barbour’s Cut Channel (BCC), and safety and efficiency enhancements in the Galveston Bay Reach of the HSC such as anchorages and meeting lanes.

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Sincerely,

[Signature]

Eric W. Verwers
Director, Regional Planning and
Environmental Center
Mr. Scott Alford  
District Conservationist  
US Department of Agriculture  
National Resources Conservation Service  
7705 West Bay Road  
Baytown, TX 77523

Dear Mr. Alford:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (Corps) intends to prepare an Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (IFR-EIS) for the Houston Ship Channel (HSC) Expansion Channel Improvement Project (ECIP) Feasibility Study. The Corps and the non-federal sponsor, the Port of Houston Authority, would like to invite your agency to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the development of the IFR-EIS. The IFR-EIS will identify and evaluate the feasibility of developing a plan for improving deep draft navigation along the HSC. The study will focus on opportunities to deepen and widen the upper reach of the HSC (Boggy Bayou to the Main Turning Basin), improvements to the HSC side channels Bayport Ship Channel (BSC) and Barbour’s Cut Channel (BCC), and safety and efficiency enhancements in the Galveston Bay Reach of the HSC such as anchorages and meeting lanes.

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Sincerely,

[Signature]

Eric W. Ververns  
Director, Regional Planning and  
Environmental Center
Ms. Rebecca Hensley  
Regional Director, Ecosystem Resources Program  
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
1502 FM 517 East  
Dickinson, TX 77539

Dear Ms. Hensley:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (Corps) intends to prepare an Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (IFR-EIS) for the Houston Ship Channel (HSC) Expansion Channel Improvement Project (ECIP) Feasibility Study. The Corps and the non-federal sponsor, the Port of Houston Authority, would like to invite your agency to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the development of the IFR-EIS. The IFR-EIS will identify and evaluate the feasibility of developing a plan for improving deep draft navigation along the HSC. The study will focus on opportunities to deepen and widen the upper reach of the HSC (Boggy Bayou to the Main Turning Basin), improvements to the HSC side channels Bayport Ship Channel (BSC) and Barbours Cut Channel (BCC), and safety and efficiency enhancements in the Galveston Bay Reach of the HSC such as anchorages and meeting lanes.

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Sincerely,

[Signature]

Eric W. Verwers
Director, Regional Planning and
Environmental Center
Mr. Matthew Mahoney  
Waterways Program Coordinator  
Texas Department of Transportation, Maritime Division  
118 E. Riverside Drive  
Austin, Texas 78704  

Dear Mr. Mahoney:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (Corps) intends to prepare an Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (IFR-EIS) for the Houston Ship Channel (HSC) Expansion Channel Improvement Project (ECIP) Feasibility Study. The Corps and the non-federal sponsor, the Port of Houston Authority, would like to invite your agency to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the development of the IFR-EIS. The IFR-EIS will identify and evaluate the feasibility of developing a plan for improving deep draft navigation along the HSC. The study will focus on opportunities to deepen and widen the upper reach of the HSC (Boggy Bayou to the Main Turning Basin), improvements to the HSC side channels Bayport Ship Channel (BSC) and Barbour’s Cut Channel (BCC), and safety and efficiency enhancements in the Galveston Bay Reach of the HSC such as anchorages and meeting lanes.

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Sincerely,

[Signature]

Eric W. Verwes  
Director, Regional Planning and Environmental Center
Mr. Kevin Cauble
Manager, Emissions Assessment Section
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 13087, MC-164
Austin, TX 78711-3087

Dear Mr. Cauble:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (Corps) intends to prepare an Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (IFR-EIS) for the Houston Ship Channel (HSC) Expansion Channel Improvement Project (ECIP) Feasibility Study. The Corps and the non-federal sponsor, the Port of Houston Authority, would like to invite your agency to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the development of the IFR-EIS. The IFR-EIS will identify and evaluate the feasibility of developing a plan for improving deep draft navigation along the HSC. The study will focus on opportunities to deepen and widen the upper reach of the HSC (Boggy Bayou to the Main Turning Basin), improvements to the HSC side channels Bayport Ship Channel (BSC) and Barbour's Cut Channel (BCC), and safety and efficiency enhancements in the Galveston Bay Reach of the HSC such as anchorages and meeting lanes.

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Sincerely,

Eric W. Verwors
Director, Regional Planning and Environmental Center
Ms. Karla Guthrie, Ph.D.
Team Lead, Bays and Estuaries Program
Texas Water Development Board
P.O. Box 13231
Austin, TX 78711-3231

Dear Ms. Guthrie:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (Corps) intends to prepare an Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (IFR-EIS) for the Houston Ship Channel (HSC) Expansion Channel Improvement Project (ECIP) Feasibility Study. The Corps and the non-federal sponsor, the Port of Houston Authority, would like to invite your agency to participate as a Coordinating Agency in the development of the IFR-EIS. The IFR-EIS will identify and evaluate the feasibility of developing a plan for improving deep draft navigation along the HSC. The study will focus on opportunities to deepen and widen the upper reach of the HSC (Boggy Bayou to the Main Turning Basin), improvements to the HSC side channels Bayport Ship Channel (BSC) and Barbour's Cut Channel (BCC), and safety and efficiency enhancements in the Galveston Bay Reach of the HSC such as anchorages and meeting lanes.

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Sincerely,

[Signature]

Eric W. Verwers  
Director, Regional Planning and  
Environmental Center
Mr. Peter Schaefer  
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality  
Water Quality Division  
P.O. Box 13087, MC-150  
Austin, TX 78711-3087  

Dear Mr. Schaefer:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (Corps) intends to prepare an Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (IFR-EIS) for the Houston Ship Channel (HSC) Expansion Channel Improvement Project (ECIP) Feasibility Study. The Corps and the non-federal sponsor, the Port of Houston Authority, would like to invite your agency to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the development of the IFR-EIS. The IFR-EIS will identify and evaluate the feasibility of developing a plan for improving deep draft navigation along the HSC. The study will focus on opportunities to deepen and widen the upper reach of the HSC (Boggy Bayou to the Main Turning Basin), improvements to the HSC side channels Bayport Ship Channel (BSC) and Barbour’s Cut Channel (BCC), and safety and efficiency enhancements in the Galveston Bay Reach of the HSC such as anchorages and meeting lanes.

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Sincerely,

Eric W. Verwers
Director, Regional Planning and Environmental Center
Dear Rear Admiral Callahan:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (Corps) intends to prepare an Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (IFR-EIS) for the Houston Ship Channel (HSC) Expansion Channel Improvement Project (ECIP) Feasibility Study. The Corps and the non-federal sponsor, the Port of Houston Authority, would like to invite your agency to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the development of the IFR-EIS. The IFR-EIS will identify and evaluate the feasibility of developing a plan for improving deep draft navigation along the HSC. The study will focus on opportunities to deepen and widen the upper reach of the HSC (Boggy Bayou to the Main Turning Basin), improvements to the HSC side channels Bayport Ship Channel (BSC) and Barbour's Cut Channel (BCC), and safety and efficiency enhancements in the Galveston Bay Reach of the HSC such as anchorages and meeting lanes.

We are inviting the participation of your agency as a Cooperating Agency pursuant to Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR §1501.6 and §1508.5), the Water Resources Council principles and guidelines (42 U.S.C. §1962–3), and USACE Engineer Regulation (ER) 1105-2-100 (Paragraph 2-5.a.). The purpose of this request is to formalize, via designation as a Cooperating Agency, the continuing coordination and active participation by resource agencies in the study for the HSC ECIP. Furthermore, we would like to coordinate our review schedule for study completion so that all reviews and approvals will, to the maximum extent practicable, be conducted concurrently. This concurrent coordination is required by Section 2045 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 and Section 1001 of the Water Resources Reform Development Act of 2014. The following review periods for the IFR-EIS have been established in accordance with the current project schedule:

Review of Draft IFR-EIS – 45-day review period begins May 2017
State & Agency Review of Final IFR-EIS – 30-day review begins July 2019
We are also inviting you to participate in an Interagency Meeting of Federal, tribal, and State agencies that may be interested or required by law to review the Federal proposal to be developed by this study. The Interagency Meeting is scheduled to be held at the following date, time and location:

May 3, 2016 – 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM  
USACE Galveston District Headquarters  
2000 Fort Point Road  
Galveston, Texas 77550  
Conference Room 120

The purpose of the meeting is to also gain early key agency stakeholder input as recommended by ER 1105-2-100 on the problems and opportunities related to improving deep draft navigation in the planned reaches of the HSC. We appreciate this opportunity to invite your participation as a Cooperating Agency and request that you advise us as to whether the report review periods shown above are acceptable. In addition, please let us know if you plan to attend the Interagency Meeting, either remotely or in person. The meeting will be available by teleconference and web meeting (webinar address http://www.webmeeting.att.com, call-in and web meeting number 888-204-5984, access code 8149390, security code 2016). If you plan to attend in person, please advise my staff so we can facilitate your entry into the Galveston District facility. Please contact Andrea Catanzaro at (409) 766-6346, andrea.catanzaro@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Eric W. Verwers  
Director, Regional Planning and  
Environmental Center
Mr. Ray Newby  
Texas General Land Office  
P.O. Box 12873  
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Mr. Newby:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (Corps) intends to prepare an Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (IFR-EIS) for the Houston Ship Channel (HSC) Expansion Channel Improvement Project (ECIP) Feasibility Study. The Corps and the non-federal sponsor, the Port of Houston Authority, would like to invite your agency to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the development of the IFR-EIS. The IFR-EIS will identify and evaluate the feasibility of developing a plan for improving deep draft navigation along the HSC. The study will focus on opportunities to deepen and widen the upper reach of the HSC (Boggy Bayou to the Main Turning Basin), improvements to the HSC side channels Bayport Ship Channel (BSC) and Barbour’s Cut Channel (BCC), and safety and efficiency enhancements in the Galveston Bay Reach of the HSC such as anchorages and meeting lanes.

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Sincerely,

[Signature]

Eric W. Verwers
Director, Regional Planning and
Environmental Center
Mr. Mark Wolfe  
Texas Historical Commission  
Executive Director  
PO BOX 12276  
Austin, TX 78711  

Dear Mr. Wolfe:  

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (Corps) intends to prepare an Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (IFR-EIS) for the Houston Ship Channel (HSC) Expansion Channel Improvement Project (ECIP) Feasibility Study. The Corps and the non-federal sponsor, the Port of Houston Authority, would like to invite your agency to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the development of the IFR-EIS. The IFR-EIS will identify and evaluate the feasibility of developing a plan for improving deep draft navigation along the HSC. The study will focus on opportunities to deepen and widen the upper reach of the HSC (Boggy Bayou to the Main Turning Basin), improvements to the HSC side channels Bayport Ship Channel (BSC) and Barbour’s Cut Channel (BCC), and safety and efficiency enhancements in the Galveston Bay Reach of the HSC such as anchorages and meeting lanes.  

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Sincerely,

[Signature]

Eric W. Verwers  
Director, Regional Planning and  
Environmental Center
Ms. Sarah P. Bernhardt, Ph.D.
Galveston Bay Estuary Program
Program Manager
17041 El Camino Real, Ste. 210
Houston, TX 77058

Dear Ms. Bernhardt:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (Corps) intends to prepare an Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (IFR-EIS) for the Houston Ship Channel (HSC) Expansion Channel Improvement Project (ECIP) Feasibility Study. The Corps and the non-federal sponsor, the Port of Houston Authority, would like to invite your agency to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the development of the IFR-EIS. The IFR-EIS will identify and evaluate the feasibility of developing a plan for improving deep draft navigation along the HSC. The study will focus on opportunities to deepen and widen the upper reach of the HSC (Boggy Bayou to the Main Turning Basin), improvements to the HSC side channels Bayport Ship Channel (BSC) and Barbour’s Cut Channel (BCC), and safety and efficiency enhancements in the Galveston Bay Reach of the HSC such as anchorages and meeting lanes.

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Sincerely,

Eric W. Verwers  
Director, Regional Planning and Environmental Center
ATTACHMENT 2

TRIBAL COORDINATION INVITATION LETTERS
Mr. Kevin Stickney  
Chairman  
Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana  
1940 C.C. Bel Road  
Elton, Louisiana 70532  

Dear Chairman Stickney:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (Corps) intends to prepare an Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (IFR-EIS) for the Houston Ship Channel (HSC) Expansion Channel Improvement Project (ECIP) Feasibility Study. The Corps and the non-federal sponsor, the Texas General Land Office, would like to invite your agency to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the development of the IFR-EIS. The IFR-EIS will identify and evaluate the feasibility of developing a plan for improving deep draft navigation along the HSC. The study will focus on opportunities to deepen and widen the upper reach of the HSC (Boggy Bayou to the Main Turning Basin), improvements to the HSC side channels Bayport Ship Channel (BSC) and Barbour's Cut Channel (BCC), and safety and efficiency enhancements in the Galveston Bay Reach of the HSC such as anchorages and meeting lanes.

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Sincerely,

[Signature]

Eric W. Verwers
Director, Regional Planning and Environmental Center
Ms. Nina Battise  
Chairperson  
Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas  
571 State Park Road 56  
Livingston, Texas 77351

Dear Chairperson Battise:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (Corps) intends to prepare an Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (IFR-EIS) for the Houston Ship Channel (HSC) Expansion Channel Improvement Project (ECIP) Feasibility Study. The Corps and the non-federal sponsor, the Texas General Land Office, would like to invite your agency to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the development of the IFR-EIS. The IFR-EIS will identify and evaluate the feasibility of developing a plan for improving deep draft navigation along the HSC. The study will focus on opportunities to deepen and widen the upper reach of the HSC (Boggy Bayou to the Main Turning Basin), improvements to the HSC side channels Bayport Ship Channel (BSC) and Barbour’s Cut Channel (BCC), and safety and efficiency enhancements in the Galveston Bay Reach of the HSC such as anchorages and meeting lanes.

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andrea.catanzaro@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

Eric W. Verwers
Director, Regional Planning and
Environmental Center
Ms. Amber Toppah  
Chairperson  
Kiowa Indian Tribe of Oklahoma  
P.O. Box 370  
Carnegie, Oklahoma 73016

Dear Chairperson Toppah:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (Corps) intends to prepare an Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (IFR-EIS) for the Houston Ship Channel (HSC) Expansion Channel Improvement Project (ECIP) Feasibility Study. The Corps and the non-federal sponsor, the Texas General Land Office, would like to invite your agency to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the development of the IFR-EIS. The IFR-EIS will identify and evaluate the feasibility of developing a plan for improving deep draft navigation along the HSC. The study will focus on opportunities to deepen and widen the upper reach of the HSC (Boggy Bayou to the Main Turning Basin), improvements to the HSC side channels Bayport Ship Channel (BSC) and Barbour’s Cut Channel (BCC), and safety and efficiency enhancements in the Galveston Bay Reach of the HSC such as anchorages and meeting lanes.

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Sincerely,

[Signature]

Eric W. Verwers
Director, Regional Planning and Environmental Center
Mr. William Owens  
Tribal Administrator  
The Comanche Nation  
584 NW Bingo Road  
Lawton, Oklahoma 73507  

Dear Administrator Owens:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (Corps) intends to prepare an Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (IFR-EIS) for the Houston Ship Channel (HSC) Expansion Channel Improvement Project (ECIP) Feasibility Study. The Corps and the non-federal sponsor, the Texas General Land Office, would like to invite your agency to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the development of the IFR-EIS. The IFR-EIS will identify and evaluate the feasibility of developing a plan for improving deep draft navigation along the HSC. The study will focus on opportunities to deepen and widen the upper reach of the HSC (Boggy Bayou to the Main Turning Basin), improvements to the HSC side channels Bayport Ship Channel (BSC) and Barbour’s Cut Channel (BCC), and safety and efficiency enhancements in the Galveston Bay Reach of the HSC such as anchorages and meeting lanes.

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Sincerely,

Eric W. Verwers
Director, Regional Planning and Environmental Center
Mr. Danny Breuninger, Jr.
President
Mescalero Apache Tribe
P.O. Box 227
Mescalero, New Mexico 88340

Dear President Breuninger:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (Corps) intends to prepare an Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (IFR-EIS) for the Houston Ship Channel (HSC) Expansion Channel Improvement Project (ECIP) Feasibility Study. The Corps and the non-federal sponsor, the Texas General Land Office, would like to invite your agency to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the development of the IFR-EIS. The IFR-EIS will identify and evaluate the feasibility of developing a plan for improving deep draft navigation along the HSC. The study will focus on opportunities to deepen and widen the upper reach of the HSC (Boggy Bayou to the Main Turning Basin), improvements to the HSC side channels Bayport Ship Channel (BSC) and Barbour's Cut Channel (BCC), and safety and efficiency enhancements in the Galveston Bay Reach of the HSC such as anchorages and meeting lanes.

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to attend in person, please advise my staff so we can facilitate your entry into the

Galveston District facility. Please contact Andrea Catanzaro at (409) 766-6346,
andrea.catanzaro@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

Eric W. Verwers
Director, Regional Planning and
Environmental Center
Mr. Russell Martin
President
Tonkawa Tribe of Oklahoma
1 Rush Buffalo Road
Tonkawa, Oklahoma 74654

Dear President Martin:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (Corps) intends to prepare an Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (IFR-EIS) for the Houston Ship Channel (HSC) Expansion Channel Improvement Project (ECIP) Feasibility Study. The Corps and the non-federal sponsor, the Texas General Land Office, would like to invite your agency to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the development of the IFR-EIS. The IFR-EIS will identify and evaluate the feasibility of developing a plan for improving deep draft navigation along the HSC. The study will focus on opportunities to deepen and widen the upper reach of the HSC (Boggy Bayou to the Main Turning Basin), improvements to the HSC side channels Bayport Ship Channel (BSC) and Barbour’s Cut Channel (BCC), and safety and efficiency enhancements in the Galveston Bay Reach of the HSC such as anchorages and meeting lanes.

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Sincerely,

[Signature]

Eric W. Verwers
Director, Regional Planning and Environmental Center
ATTACHMENT 3

AGENCY AND TRIBAL RESPONSES/COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING SCOPING PHASE
Eric W. Verwers  
Galveston District  
Corps of Engineers  
P.O. Box 1229  
Galveston, TX 77553-1229

Dear Mr. Verwers:

This letter is in response to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (COE) letter, dated April 19, 2016, requesting the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to become a cooperating agency in the development of a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (IFR-EIS) for the Houston Ship Channel Expansion Channel Improvement Project Feasibility Study, Texas. The EIS will analyze the impacts of the proposed project to the human and natural environment.

The EPA agrees to participate in this proposed project as a cooperating agency. As a cooperating agency, the EPA will

- provide expertise on NEPA compliance and other subject matter such as wetlands, water quality, air quality, and environmental justice, during EIS planning and development;

- provide timely technical reviews and comments on preliminary documents, reports, analyses, and sections of the Draft EIS;

- participate in meetings and provide information as requested by COE, as resources allow;

- provide sources for information or support in the analysis of such information, when known, during preparation of the Draft EIS in areas in which EPA has expertise;

- review and comment on the Draft EIS pursuant to our regulatory responsibilities under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.
The EPA anticipates that a cooperative team approach will streamline the environmental process and result in a high quality EIS. We look forward to continued involvement and cooperation in the environmental assessment phase of the project. If you have any questions, please contact Robert Houston of my staff at 214-665-8565 or houston.robert@epa.gov for assistance.

Sincerely,

John Blevins
Director
Compliance Assurance and Enforcement Division
June 1, 2016

Ms. Tammy Gilmore, CEMVN-PDN-CEP  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
P.O. Box 60267  
New Orleans, LA 70160-0267

RE: Houston Ship Channel Expansion Channel Improvement Project (HSC ECIP)

Dear Ms. Gilmore:

The Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) appreciates the opportunity to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the development of an Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement for the Houston Ship Channel Expansion Channel Improvement Project (HSC-ECIP) which is being conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Galveston District (USACE). The improvement plan includes the potential to deepen the upper, landlocked reaches of the Houston Ship Channel, including Boggy Bayou to Sims Bayou (deepening beyond 40 feet) and Sims Bayou to the Main Turning Basin (deepening beyond 36 feet).

The TWDB historically has developed, maintained, and utilized two-dimensional and three-dimensional hydrodynamic and salinity transport models which are capable of producing high-resolution, dynamic simulations of estuarine circulation and salinity patterns over periods covering a year or more. These models have been used to evaluate changes in bathymetry (e.g., dredging, reef building, storm impacts, etc.), water level, and freshwater inflow management. The TWDB has investigated salinity intrusion in the Salt Bayou/Keith Lake wetland system of the Sabine-Neches Estuary (Pothina and Guthrie 2009) and in the Brazos River Estuary (Negusse 2014). Impacts of salinity intrusion due to deep draft channel dredging also have been quantified in Matagorda Bay (Ward 1983).

Our primary concern with modifying the bathymetry of the upper Houston Ship Channel is the potential for increased salinity intrusion to the upper estuary. Because the planned deepening will occur in the confined (landlocked) portion of the Houston Ship Channel, dense saline water will have a pathway farther upstream in the absence of lateral, cross-channel exchange. Just below the planned area are shallow, intertidal areas such as Channelview and Scott Bay. Further downstream of the Houston Ship Channel are Tabbs Bay and upper Galveston Bay. While there is a good possibility that the influence of deepening the channel is minimal in these areas, it is sound practice to investigate whether channel alterations will facilitate greater salinity intrusion and the degree to which it may affect biota and water users (industrial and municipal) in the immediate vicinity. We therefore encourage the USACE to consider conducting a comprehensive, three-dimensional modeling study of the final project design to examine the
potential for salinity intrusion (including both in magnitude and spatial extent) in the upper reaches of the Houston Ship Channel and the Channelview area to upper Galveston Bay. We also encourage the USACE to develop a monitoring plan and/or a partnership to collect important salinity and water quality data in the vicinity of the channel improvements.

We appreciate the opportunity to be involved in the stakeholder process for this project. Please contact TWDB staff, Dr. Junji Matsumoto (junji.matsumoto@twdb.texas.gov or 512-936-0825) or Mr. Taylor Sansom (taylor.sansom@twdb.texas.gov or 512-463-5604), for further clarification or additional discussion of our comments.

Sincerely,

Carla G. Guthrie, Ph.D.
Director
Surface Water Division

References:


March 13, 2017

Colonel Lars Zetterstrom  
District Commander  
Attention: Andrea Catanzaro  
Galveston District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Post Office Box 1229  
Galveston, Texas 77553-1229

Dear Colonel Zetterstrom:

Thank you for your email dated of December 5, 2016 requesting Cooperating Agency status on behalf of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) for the Fish and Wildlife Service’s (Service) preparation of a Planning Aid Letter(s) and Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report(s) in conjunction with the Matagorda Ship Channel Improvement Project (MSCIP), located in Calhoun and Matagorda Counties, Texas. This study seeks to analyze alternatives aimed to improve ship movement throughout the entire 22-mile deep draft Matagorda Ship Channel system.

The regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) define a “Cooperating Agency” as “any Federal agency other than a lead agency which has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposal (or a reasonable alternative) for legislation or other major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment” (40 C.F.R. § 1508.5). A similarly qualified State or local agency may, by agreement with the lead agency, become a cooperating agency (40 C.F.R. 1508.5; see also 40 C.F.R. § 1501.6). The Corps and the Service have formally committed to work together to conserve, protect, and restore fish and wildlife resources while ensuring environmental sustainability of our Nation’s water resources under the January 22, 2003, Partnership Agreement for Water Resources and Fish and Wildlife. Accordingly, the Service would be pleased to serve as a cooperating agency in developing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed project in accordance with applicable NEPA/Council on Environmental Quality guidance. Our participation will be specifically limited to: (1) participating in meetings and field trips to obtain baseline information on project-area fish and wildlife resources; (2) evaluating the proposed project’s impacts to wetlands and associated fish and wildlife resources, and assisting in the development of measures to avoid, minimize, and/or compensate for those impacts (including project alternatives); and (3) providing technical
assistance in the development of a Biological Assessment describing the impacts of the proposed activity to federally listed threatened or endangered species and/or their critical habitat(s). Agreeing to be a cooperating agency does not preclude the Service from providing comments on the draft and final NEPA documents and does not ensure our support of the final selected plan.

Thank you for contacting the Service regarding the MSCIP. We look forward to enhancing our relationship with Corps and value your contribution to effective conservation of the natural resources found in the Galveston Bay complex. If you require further assistance, or if you have any questions, please contact staff biologist, Donna Anderson at 281-286-8282 or by email at donna_anderson@fws.gov.

Sincerely,

Charles Ardizzone
Field Supervisor
ATTACHMENT 4

AGENCY AND TRIBAL RESPONSES/COMMENTS RECEIVED ON DIFR-EIS
November 10, 2017

Dr. Kelly A. Burks-Copes
Coastal Section, Regional Planning & Environmental Center
Galveston District CESWG-PE-RE
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 1229
Galveston, Texas 77553-1229

Re: Houston Ship Channel Improvement Project EIS

Dear Dr. Burks:

As described in the Joint Notice of Availability, dated August 18, 2017, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District in partnership with the Port of Houston Authority, prepared a draft feasibility study and integrated environmental impact statement (EIS) for the proposed Houston Ship Channel 45-foot Expansion Channel Improvement Project (HSC ECIP) where different reaches of the channel will be widened and deepened to accommodate larger vessels and traffic volume. The project is located in Harris and Galveston counties, Texas.

The Houston Ship Channel (HSC) encompasses three separate classified water quality segments within Basin 10 of the San Jacinto River Basin: HSC/San Jacinto River Tidal (Segment 1005), HSC Tidal (Segment 1006), and HSC/Buffalo Bayou Tidal (Segment 1007). The study limits for the HSC ECIP also include several water quality segments in Basin 24 of the Bays and Estuaries including Segments 2421, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2436, 2438, and 2439.

According to the EIS, dredging would not be expected to degrade the long-term water quality within the project area. Minimal temporary impacts from increased turbidity and decreased dissolved oxygen could occur as a result of water column mixing during dredging and placement activities.

Sediment testing will continue to be conducted in accordance with the joint EPA/USACE Inland Testing Manual, with handling requirements and selection of placement areas to be further refined.

In addition to the information contained in the Joint Notice of Availability, the following information is needed for review of the proposed project. Responses to this letter may raise other questions that will need to be addressed before a water quality certification determination can be made.
1. According to the EIS, none of the segments listed above meet their fish consumption uses due to high levels of PCBs and/or dioxins in edible fish tissue, and sediment analyses throughout the HSC show the presence of constituents of concern. The EIS states that sediment quality has been assessed for the majority of dredging projects occurring within the HSC. These sampling events typically characterized both sediment chemistry and sediment elutriate, the latter of which simulates chemical leaching during dredging. Some of the parameters analyzed include numerous metals, polychlorinated biphenyls, volatile organic compounds, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, among others. Please explain how the bioavailability of the contaminants suspended during dredging will be mitigated so as not to contribute to the impairment of the fish consumption use and other uses.

2. Two basic types of wetlands are common in the study area: depressional and estuarine wetlands. Only 5.7 acres of potential wetland areas were identified along the shoreline adjacent to the HSC in the few areas noted upstream of Morgans Point. Please provide a complete and detailed mitigation plan for impacts to wetlands and other aquatic resources should they occur.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) appreciates the opportunity to comment and looks forward to receiving and evaluating other agency or public comments. Please provide any agency comments, public comments, as well as the applicant's comments, to Ms. Lili Murphy of the Water Quality Division MC-150, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, Texas 78711-3087. Ms. Murphy may also be contacted by e-mail at lili.murphy@tceq.texas.gov, or by telephone at (512) 239-4596.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
David W. Galindo, Director
Water Quality Division
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

DWG/LM/tc
Colonel Lars Zetterstrom  
District Commander  
Attention: Andrea Catanzaro  
Galveston District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Post Office Box 1229  
Galveston, Texas 77553-1229

Dear Colonel Zetterstrom:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Houston Ship Channel Expansion Channel Improvement Project (HSC ECIP), Harris, Chambers, and Galveston Counties, Texas Draft Integrated Feasibility Report (DIFR) – Environmental Impact Statement dated August 2017. The HSC ECIP aims to evaluate Federal interest in alternative planning for reducing transportation costs while providing for safe, reliable navigation on the HSC system. Previous HSC ECIP documented input from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) occurred on March 29, 2017 (Planning Aid Letter) and then on October 27, 2017 (Section 7 letter); however, the Service was involved in the planning and alternative process with the Corps since early 2016. The DIFR identifies the Corps’ Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) as:

- Four bend easings on main HSC channel with associated relocation of barge lanes;
- Widening (in whole or in part) the HSC main channel between Bolivar Roads and the Barbours Cut Channel (BCC) from the existing 530-foot width to between 650 and 820 feet with associated relocation of barge lanes;
- Addition of a new multipurpose mooring on the HSC near the San Jacinto Monument;
- Flare expansion on Bayport Ship Channel (BSC);
- Shoaling attenuation structure near the BSC Flare;
- Widen BSC from existing 300-400 feet to 455 feet;
- Widen BCC from existing 300 feet to 455 feet;
- Combination flare and turning basin on BCC;
- Deepen the HSC main channel from Boggy Bayou to Sims Bayou from the existing 41.5-foot depth up to 46.5 feet;
- Widen the HSC main channel from Boggy Bayou to Greens Bayou from the existing 400-foot wide channel up to 530 feet;
- Deepen the HSC main channel from Sims Bayou to I-610 Bridge from the existing 37.5-foot depth to 41.5 feet; and
• Deepen the HSC main channel from I-610 Bridge to Main Turning Basin from the existing 37.5-foot depth up to 41.5 feet deep

Additional features included in the TSP that are believed to be necessary for safe and efficient navigation in the HSC are:

• Minor widening of the channel in the bayou portion of the HSC main channel in the Hog Island stretch,
• The alleviation of a channel restriction in Segment 4 by widening from the existing 400-feet to 530-feet for a distance of approximately 1.3 miles from just west of the San Jacinto Monument and Boggy Bayou;
• A turning basin requested by the pilots to provide for additional turning opportunities at the BSC in Segment 2 at the mouth of the BSC land cut;
• Turning Basin at Station 775+00 would be the most upstream location for Aframax vessels to turn;
• Hunting Turning Basin to ensure continued Federal maintenance; and
• Improvement of and consideration of federalizing an existing turning basin located near Brady’s Landing

The Service coordinated with the Corps and Port of Houston (POH) (since the early 1990s) on previous deepening and widening efforts though the Beneficial Use Group (BUG) and more formally through the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act process. The BUG provided input on previous Dredge Material Management Plans (DMMP) for the POH recommending the beneficial use of dredge material creating thousands of acres of marsh habitat supporting foraging shorebirds, excellent estuarine habitat for recreational and commercially important fish species, sand and mudflats for the endangered piping plover, a bird rookery island supporting 10,000 pairs of colonial waterbirds yearly, and the creation of oyster reef habitat. The Service continues to provide input on project features and studies to minimize impacts to fish and wildlife resources along the Houston Ship Channel and the throughout the greater Galveston Bay complex.

The Service reviewed the Draft Integrated Feasibility Report and has the following general comments:

• The Corps expects to permanently impact between 469 and 538-acres of oyster reef. The Service recommends the Corps minimize project impacts to oyster and shell habitat to the greatest extent possible. Unavoidable oyster impacts should be compensated fully and oyster restoration or creation (reef design and location) should be coordinated with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.
• A comprehensive evaluation of the TSPs from both the HSC ECIP and the Texas Coastal Study should be conducted to assess impacts of the combined projects. Project features from both projects will impact the other and potential impacts to fish and wildlife resources are expected to be heightened with the implementation of both projects.
Colonel Zetterstrom

- Closely coordinate the development of the Dredge Material Placement Plan spanning the 50-year period of analysis (to be develop during the feasibility-level analysis and design phase) with the BUG to include beneficial use and marsh creation to the greatest extent practical.

Thank you for contacting the Service regarding the HSC ECIP. More specific comments and recommendations related to TSP measure impacts and mitigation will be addressed in the upcoming Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report. We look forward to enhancing our relationship with the Corps and value your contribution to effective conservation of the natural resources found in the Galveston Bay complex. If you require further assistance, or if you have any questions, please contact staff biologist, Donna Anderson at 281-286-8282 or by email at donna_anderson@fws.gov.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Charles Ardizzone
Field Supervisor

Cc:   Rusty Swafford, NOAA
      Barbara Keeler, EPA Dallas
      Rebecca Hensley, TPWD