



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE
GEORGE P. BUSH, COMMISSIONER

March 16, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write today to urge you to include in your national infrastructure plans a coastal barrier system for the Houston/Galveston bay area. The Texas coast possesses an extensive port system that is crucial not only to the United States' economy but also to our national security. **The coastal barrier system will require \$15 billion in federal funds to protect this vital area. We are currently working with the Texas state legislature to ensure Texas will financially support the operations and maintenance cost for the coastal barrier system.**

The key component of the Texas coast is the Houston/Galveston bay area. Comprised of six counties that run from Freeport, Texas in the west to the eastern Texas border in Orange and Jefferson counties, the Houston/Galveston system is responsible for 428 million tons of cargo annually.

This vast, complex area is home to the Port of Houston, the country's second busiest port, providing over \$600 billion a year in direct output to the U.S. economy; the Port of Beaumont, the country's fourth largest port, handling more military cargo than any other port in the U.S.; and Freeport, which is home to the nation's largest Strategic Petroleum Reserve. The area is responsible for over half of the country's jet fuel, is home to 29% of the country's oil-refining capacity and is the number one supplier of energy products (aviation fuel, gas, etc.) to the U.S. military. **The Houston/Galveston bay area is a national treasure. Its port systems produce over 3 million direct and indirect jobs nationwide, and it is largely unprotected from hurricane related storm surge.**

In 2008, Hurricane Ike devastated the upper coast of Texas. The storm surge killed 74 people and caused \$29.5 billion in damages, becoming the third most devastating hurricane in U.S. history. The deadly storm missed the Port of Houston; however, a direct hit from the hurricane would have resulted in over \$100 billion in damages.

Since Hurricane Ike, multiple entities have been working towards a barrier system that would protect the 6 million people that live in the region, as well as the industry that is critical to the national economy. Through the work of the Gulf Coast Community Protection and Recovery District, Texas A&M Galveston, the Greater Houston Partnership, Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership and the Texas General Land Office, multiple studies have all led to the same conclusion: a forward line of defense that has been termed the "coastal barrier system." **This system, beginning in Orange County and ending in Brazoria County, would provide protection to the six counties at an estimated construction cost of \$15 billion.**

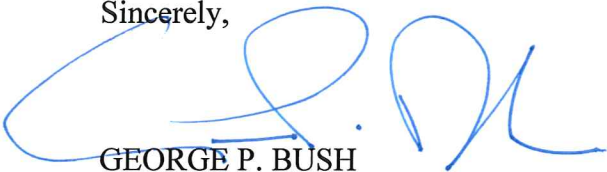
The coastal barrier system proposed would be built to a 100-year event standard, and modeling has concluded that it would have prevented 87% of the damages incurred by Hurricane Ike. Many scientists today believe that Hurricane Ike was a "good miss," meaning we were fortunate that it did not cause more damage. Hurricane Ike was a large Category 2 hurricane that changed course at the last minute thus avoiding a direct hit to the Port of Houston. That was nearly 10 years ago, and little has been done to protect the area's critical infrastructure. Should the Houston/Galveston bay area sustain a similar or even larger storm, the economic damages to the state and the country would be catastrophic.

As a dedicated team, we have spent the past two years building support for this protection system among our federal Congressional delegation, state senators and representatives, industry, local officials and their communities. The Texas General Land Office is currently working with the Army Corps of Engineers on the development of a barrier system for the region and other large-scale projects across the entire Texas coast. **These projects are in an excellent position to "turn dirt" as early as next year and start the process of finally protecting the coast of Texas.**

We believe we have all the support necessary; what we need is the \$15 billion in funds to protect this crucial part of the nation's economy.

Building the proposed coastal barrier system is an historic opportunity to safeguard our nation's economy, our national security and millions of citizens' lives and livelihood.

Sincerely,



GEORGE P. BUSH

Commissioner, Texas General Land Office