

November 14, 2025

Charlie Jenkins, Chief Executive Officer  
Port Houston  
111 East Loop North  
Houston, Texas 77029  
*Via email to [cjenkins@porthouston.com](mailto:cjenkins@porthouston.com).*  
*CC: [Maria Aguirre, maguirre@porthouston.com](mailto:Maria Aguirre, maguirre@porthouston.com).*

Dear Mr. Jenkins,

As elected officials representing communities and people living near the Houston Ship Channel, we write to ask you not to dump dredge material from the Houston Ship Channel Expansion Project 11 in our communities.

Members of the Healthy Port Communities Coalition (HPCC) recently learned that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) sought and received approval from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to dump Project 11 dredge material in Galveston Bay. We understand that the Port of Houston Authority may be in a position to approve a plan for Project 11 that avoids dumping in the Glendale and Filterbed dredge material placement areas (DMPAs) in Pleasantville.

At the October 24 meeting of the Port Houston Commission, members of the HPCC spoke in favor of a plan to avoid dumping Project 11 dredge material in DMPAs located in communities. HPCC members and their representatives reiterated their specific concerns with the plan to dump Project 11 dredge material in communities.

Mr. Bill Empson, a retired geotechnical engineer from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Risk Management Center, spoke as a private consultant on behalf of the HPCC. Mr. Empson raised the following concerns:

- The proposal to use existing dredge material to raise placement area berms, known as “upstream construction” which can also lead to berm failures and was banned in Brazil after multiple failures.
- The proposed height of DMPAs qualifies them as dams that should comply with USACE dam safety regulations.
- Upstream construction could lead to contaminated soils and offsite runoff.
- DMPAs block natural drainage and could increase the risk of neighborhood flooding.

Dr. Paige Varner, a toxicological scientist at the Environmental Defense Fund, also spoke at the Commission meeting. Dr. Varner asserted that testing from USACE and communities show that the material from both Project 11 dredging and ongoing maintenance dredging contains

potentially hazardous concentrations of chemicals including dioxins, furans, PCBs, arsenic, and PAHs. Several samples taken from the dredge sites and the adjacent placement areas exceed EPA Regional Screening Levels. Dr. Varner also pointed out that the Pleasantville Community already faces some of the highest cancer and non-cancer health risks in the country from air pollution.

Several members of the HPCC, including Bridgette Murray with Achieving Community Tasks Successfully, Leticia Gutierrez with Air Alliance Houston, and Guadalupe Fernandez with Bayou City Waterkeeper, spoke as advocates and as residents of impacted communities. They asked Port Houston not to dump dredge material in their communities.

We write now with the same ask. Please support a plan for Project 11 that does not include the reopening of any DMPAs or the use of DMPAs in communities.

Sincerely,



Senator Carol Alvarado, SD-6



Senator Borris Miles, SD-13



Senator Molly Cook, SD-15



Representative Christina Morales, HD-145



Representative Harold V. Dutton, Jr., HD-142



Representative Penny Morales Shaw, HD-148



Council Member Tarsha Jackson, City of Houston District B



Council Member Letitia Plummer, DDS  
At-Large 4