

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

November 22, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The global supply chain crisis is wreaking havoc all across the country. Whether it is empty shelves at the store or the increasing prices of consumer goods, Americans are experiencing the damaging effects firsthand. This problem is exacerbated in the U.S. due to the shipping and transportation bottlenecks at ports, particularly along the coast of California where record numbers of container ships are waiting to enter the Los Angeles-Long Beach port complex. Fortunately, ports in Texas can help alleviate some of these supply chain challenges both now and in the future.

With 270 miles of deep-draft channels, Texas leads the nation in maritime commerce by tonnage, as it is home to six of the top 20 ports by total tonnage and three of the top five. Texas also has two container ports, one of which is the top five busiest container ports in the country that handles millions of containers a year. Texas ports not only play an important role in helping provide energy security at home and for our allies abroad, but they are also responsible for transporting the goods and products that are part of everyday life, such as: cars and trucks, steel for construction projects, electric machinery, medical equipment, and furniture, as well as military equipment and even windmill turbines for wind energy projects.

Texas ports also have access to a vast multimodal freight network that allows for the transportation of goods to markets all across the country. This includes not only an expansive highway freight and railroad network, but also a waterway network that reaches markets throughout the Midwest.

The state is also better prepared to address workforce issues as Texas has around 80,000 trucking companies and employs more truck drivers than any other state in the nation. Driving schools in Texas stayed open during the pandemic and these schools are helping educate and license a record number of new applicants.

Some market analysts project that supply chain disruptions could extend into 2023, and changes to consumer purchasing habits that occurred during the pandemic—particularly online purchasing—are here to stay. E-commerce increased 32.4% year over year in 2020, more than double the 15.1% growth in 2019. While Texas ports can help address the current supply chain crisis as they are open 24/7 and ready to move more cargo, it's critical that the federal government make the necessary investments now in channel deepening projects to strengthen the supply chain in the future.

Congress has authorized the construction of six deep draft navigation projects in Texas,¹ four of which have received past federal funding and are currently under construction. Combined, these projects will greatly expand America's import and export capacity, allow larger ships to more safely and efficiently access U.S. ports, lower supply chain costs for importers and exporters, and support tens of thousands of jobs. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Budget for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, however, did not include construction funding for navigation projects in Texas. Without federal support, completion of these projects will be delayed, which only increases the overall cost of the projects.

Texas ports remain a vital gateway to international trade for the nation, and we strongly urge you to give serious and full consideration to these critical federal navigation projects in Texas in order to address current and future supply chain disruptions and further expand American trade competitiveness.

As Members of Congress representing communities that are supported by these port projects, we look forward to working with you to address these important issues.

Sincerely,


JOHN CORNYN
United States Senator


TED CRUZ
United States Senator


SHEILA JACKSON LEE
Member of Congress


KEVIN BRADY
Member of Congress


HENRY CUELLAR
Member of Congress


MICHAEL T. MCCAUL
Member of Congress


RANDY K. WEBER
Member of Congress


BRIAN BABIN, D.D.S.
Member of Congress

¹ Corpus Christi Ship Channel, Channel Improvement Project; Sabine Neches Waterway Channel Improvement Project; Freeport Harbor Channel Improvement Project; Brazos Island Harbor Channel Improvement Project; Galveston Harbor Channel Extension; Houston Ship Channel Expansion Channel Improvement Project



VICENTE GONZALEZ
Member of Congress



MICHAEL CLOUD
Member of Congress



DAN CRENSHAW
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Shalanda Young, Acting Director, OMB
Jaime A. Pinkham, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), USACE