



TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Protecting Texas by Reducing and Preventing Pollution

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING
401 Certification

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Permit Application No. 21520

APPLICATION. Port of Houston Authority, P.O. Box 2562, Galveston, Texas 77252-2562, has applied to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for a certification to develop a major marine terminal complex on approximately 1,043 acres, along the south side of the Bayport Ship Channel. This development would include facilities for docking, loading and unloading container and cruise ships, container storage areas, an intermodal yard, warehousing facilities, and properties available for light-industrial development. A total of 18.3 acres of jurisdictional wetlands exists within the project site. The applicant has revised their project plans to reduce the number of proposed cruise berths from five to three. This revision results in a reduction in the amount of area proposed to be dredged by 23.0 acres, a reduction in the amount of open water proposed to be filled by 21.3 acres and a reduction in the amount of dredged material proposed to be placed off-site by 1,045,965 cubic yards. Under this revision, 18.3 acres of jurisdictional wetlands would be filled, 127.3 acres of open water would be dredged, and 3.1 acres of open water would be filled. In addition, the applicant has revised the proposed wetland mitigation plan to include the creation of 66.8 acres of emergent wetlands, enhancement of 12.0 acres of existing wetlands, preservation of 23.7 acres of forested/scrub habitat, and restoration of 71.0 acres of coastal prairie habitat. The entire mitigation site would ultimately be placed under a conservation easement. The entire mitigation would be performed within a 173.5-acre tract of land located 2.4 miles southwest of the proposed project site and approximately 0.25 mile southeast of the intersection of Red Bluff road and Bay Area Boulevard. The project is located along the Bayport Ship Channel, approximately 30 miles southeast of downtown Houston, in the City of Pasadena, between the cities of Shoreacres and Seabrook, in Harris County, Texas.

Concurrent with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers process of this application, the TCEQ is reviewing the application under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act and in accordance with Title 30, Texas Administrative Code Section 279.1-13 to determine if the work complies with State water quality standards. The project is being reviewed for consistency with the Texas Coastal Management Program goals and policies and will be conducted in a manner consistent with the Program. This project would result in a direct impact of greater than three acres of waters of the state or 1500 linear feet of streams (or a combination of the two is above the threshold), and as such would not fulfill Tier I criteria for the project, therefore, the TCEQ certification is required.

PUBLIC COMMENT/PUBLIC MEETING. The TCEQ will conduct a public meeting on the 401 Certification for the proposed project. During the meeting, the public will be able to submit comments on whether the application meets State water quality standards. All timely submitted comments will be considered by the Executive Director before a decision is reached on compliance with state water quality standards.

The Public Meeting is to be held:
Thursday, April 3, 2003 at 7:00 p.m.
Bay Area Community Center
5002 Nasa Road One
Seabrook, Texas

INFORMATION. Citizens are encouraged to submit written comments anytime during the meeting or by mail any time before the end of the public meeting to the Office of the Chief Clerk, TCEQ, Mail Code MC-105, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, TX 78711-3087. If you need more information, please call the TCEQ Office of Public Assistance, Toll Free, at 1-800-687-4040. General information about the TCEQ can be found at our web site at www.tceq.state.tx.us.

The related 401 certification public notices, as well as the U. S. Corps of Engineers draft Environmental Impact Statement, are available for viewing and copying at the TCEQ Houston regional office located at 5425 Polk Avenue, Suite H, Houston, Texas 77023-1486.

Issued: March 4, 2003