



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS AWARDS FIRST CONTRACT FOR THE FREEPORT HARBOR CHANNEL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

**FREEPORT, TX (September 16, 2020)** – The Port Freeport Commission is pleased to announce that on September 14<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) awarded a \$15.4 million dollar contract to Great Lakes Dredge and Dock Corporation (Great Lakes) for the first phase of the Freeport Harbor Channel Improvement Project (Project). Construction will commence in the fall of 2020 with expected completion in May 2021.

“Port Freeport is excited to reach this momentous milestone in constructing the Freeport Harbor Channel Improvement Project,” said Port Chairman Shane Pirtle. “The swift award of the first contract recognizes the importance of this project for our region, state and nation, and we appreciate the continued cooperation and partnership of Congress, the Administration, and USACE in all aspects of the project’s progress.”

The Project will deepen the Freeport Harbor Channel to depths ranging from 51 to 56 feet Mean Lower Low Water and widen one channel section making way for larger, deeper-draft vessels to call Port Freeport. Authorized by Congress under the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2014, the Project received \$19 million in funding in the USACE FY 2020 Work Plan that was announced in February 2020 and was one of two seaports nationwide to receive a “new start” designation for commencement of construction. Port Freeport is a leading port in the export of crude oil and natural gas liquids and nationally ranked 6th in chemicals and 17th in foreign waterborne tonnage.

"The award of the first phase of the Freeport Harbor Channel Improvement Project is the result of the recognition by Congress and the Administration that there is substantial national

interest in supporting the continued economic development of the Texas Coast" said Col. Timothy Vail, USACE Galveston District commander. "It is a testament to our partnership that together the Port of Freeport and the Army Corps of Engineers went from a new start approval to design completion and construction award in only eight months. We will continue to work together to meet the incredible economic demand for an improved navigation channel in Freeport, while honoring the value proposition the Corps of Engineers has with its partners, the State of Texas and the Nation."

The estimated total cost of the project is \$295 million, of which the federal government share is \$165 million and Port Freeport as the local sponsor is responsible for the remaining \$130 million to be funded by the 2018 voter-approved bond package. The Project is broken into five phases and is expected to take several years to complete.

"A deeper channel will enable Port Freeport to serve a wider range of global vessels which will expand our capacity, facilitate additional economic growth and support job opportunities for the entire region," said Phyllis Saathoff. "As Port Freeport continues expanding its role in regional and global commerce, we look forward to working in partnership towards a strong, prosperous future for all."

Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Corporation is the largest provider of dredging services in the United States. Great Lakes owns and operates the largest and most diverse fleet in the U.S. dredging industry, comprised of over 200 specialized vessels.

"Great Lakes looks forward to working on this significant project which supports our commitment to ongoing infrastructure improvements in the Texas region, and will provide new opportunities to address the growing demand for energy in the region," said David Simonelli, Great Lakes Chief Operating Officer.

A 2019 Economic Impact Study by Texas A&M Transportation Institution revealed that, nationally, the Freeport Harbor Channel generates 279,780 jobs and has a total economic output of \$149 billion. The Freeport Harbor Channel serves BASF, Chiquita Fresh N.A., CMA CGM, Dole Fresh Fruit, The Dow Chemical Company, Freeport LNG, Glovis, Grimaldi Lines, Hoegh Autoliners, Horizon Auto Logistics, Liberty Global Logistics, Wallenius Wilhelmsen Ocean,

Mammoet, Phillips 66, Riviana Foods, Inc., Sallaum Lines, Seaway Crude Pipeline Company, Tenaris, and Vulcan Materials Company.

Port Freeport is committed to keeping the local community informed of our operation and results. If you have questions or comments about this article, please email or call Jessica Follett, Public Affairs Manager.

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