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**TEXAS PORTS ASSOCIATION HONORS TEXAS HOUSE SPEAKER PHELAN AS 2021  
PORT PERSON OF THE YEAR**

**AUSTIN, TX (May 18, 2021)** – The Texas Ports Association (TPA) honored Texas House Speaker Dade Phelan as its 2021 Port Person of the Year at the State Capitol in Austin during the ongoing 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session.

Each year, TPA honors individuals for their work and support of Texas ports. Phyllis Saathoff, TPA President and Port Freeport Executive Director/CEO, presented Speaker Phelan with the award along with directors representing the ports of Beaumont, Galveston, Orange, Palacios, Port Arthur, and the Sabine Neches Navigation District.

“Texas is the busiest maritime state in the nation, and Texas ports are a diverse economic engine generating \$450 billion of annual total economic value – representing 25% of Texas gross domestic product – and impacting two million jobs in the Lone Star State,” Saathoff said. “Speaker Phelan, throughout his tenure in the Texas House and more recently as Speaker of the House, understands the importance of Texas ports to our state’s economy and has consistently striven to ensure the concerns of ports are heard at the legislative level. Speaker Phelan is extremely deserving of this honor, and we thank him for his partnership.”

Speaker Phelan serves House District 21 in the Texas Legislature, a Southeast Texas district encompassing the ports of Beaumont, Orange, Port Arthur, the Sabine Neches Navigation District, and the Sabine Pass Port Authority. In past sessions, he has served on the Select Committee on Ports,

Phyllis Saathoff  
TPA President  
Port Freeport

Victor Martinez  
TPA Vice President  
Port of Palacios

Nelda Olivo  
TPA Secretary  
Port of Corpus Christi

Rob Lowe  
TPA Treasurer  
Port Freeport

**Members**

Port of Bay City Authority  
Calhoun Port Authority  
Port Freeport  
Port of Houston Authority  
Port of Port Arthur Navigation District  
Sabine Neches Navigation District  
Port of West Calhoun

Port of Beaumont  
Cedar Bayou Navigation District  
Port of Galveston  
Matagorda County Nav. Dist. No. 1  
Port Isabel/San Benito Navigation District  
Port of Texas City

Port of Brownsville  
Port of Corpus Christi Authority  
Port of Harlingen Authority  
Port of Orange  
Port Mansfield/Willacy County Navigation District  
Port of Victoria

Innovation, and Infrastructure where he has been an advocate for ports and maritime policy issues. Additionally, Speaker Phelan has served on the House Appropriations Committee and helped secure funding for Lamar University's Marine & Terminal Management Program as well as Lamar State College Orange's Maritime Program. He led the charge on the reduction in tuition costs by 25% at the three two-year colleges in Southeast Texas: Lamar Institute of Technology, Lamar State College Orange, and Lamar State College Port Arthur. Many of these programs have ties to industry and maritime and have helped to develop the local workforce in his home district. Following the devastation left by Hurricane Harvey, during the 86<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session, Speaker Phelan added a provision to Senate Bill 7 that made navigation districts eligible to draw down funds if they were tied to flood mitigation efforts. Important for his coastal district, Speaker Phelan has never been afraid to roll up his sleeves during Hurricane Season to assist his constituency, including his constituent ports, in preparation and response and recovery efforts.

"I am pleased and honored to accept this award from the Texas Ports Association and am thankful I represent a district with multiple ports and maritime interests," Speaker Phelan said. "As Speaker, I have the opportunity of reaching a broader coalition of ports spanning from Brownsville up the Texas coast to my district in Orange, and I look forward to continuing to see our Texas ports be an economic driver for our state and nation."

The Texas Ports Association is an association comprised of the public port authorities and navigation districts of Texas. If you have questions or comments about this article, please email or call Jessica Follett, Texas Ports Association contact.

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**PHOTO CUTLINE: TPA member port directors traveled to the State Capitol to honor Speaker Phelan with the 2021 Port Person of the Year Award.**



**PHOTO CUTLINE: TPA President Phyllis Saathoff presents Speaker Phelan with the 2021 Port Person of the Year Award.**