



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE
GEORGE P. BUSH, COMMISSIONER

April 24, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write today to urge you to include in your national infrastructure plans a coastal barrier system for the Houston/Galveston bay area. The Texas coast possesses an extensive port system that is crucial not only to the United States' economy but also to our national security. **The coastal barrier system will require \$15 billion in federal funds to protect this vital area. We are currently working with the Texas state legislature to ensure Texas will financially support the operations and maintenance cost for the coastal barrier system.**

The key component of the Texas coast is the Houston/Galveston bay area. Comprised of six counties that run from Freeport, Texas in the west to the eastern Texas border in Orange and Jefferson counties, the Houston/Galveston system is responsible for 428 million tons of cargo annually.

This vast, complex area is home to the Port of Houston, the country's second busiest port, providing over \$600 billion a year in direct output to the U.S. economy; the Port of Beaumont, the country's fourth largest port, handling more military cargo than any other port in the U.S.; and Freeport, which is home to the nation's largest Strategic Petroleum Reserve. The area is responsible for over half of the country's jet fuel, is home to 29% of the country's oil-refining capacity and is the number one supplier of energy products (aviation fuel, gas, etc.) to the U.S. military. **The Houston/Galveston bay area is a national treasure. Its port systems produce over 3 million direct and indirect jobs nationwide, and it is largely unprotected from hurricane related storm surge.**

In 2008, Hurricane Ike devastated the upper coast of Texas. The storm surge killed 74 people and caused \$29.5 billion in damages, becoming the third most devastating hurricane in U.S. history. The deadly storm missed the Port of Houston; however, a direct hit from the hurricane would have resulted in over \$100 billion in damages.

Since Hurricane Ike, multiple entities have been working towards a barrier system that would protect the 6 million people that live in the region, as well as the industry that is critical to the national economy. Through the work of the Gulf Coast Community Protection and Recovery District, Texas A&M Galveston, the Greater Houston Partnership, Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership and the Texas General Land Office, multiple studies have all led to the same conclusion: a forward line of defense that has been termed the "coastal barrier system." **This system, beginning in Orange County and ending in Brazoria County, would provide protection to the six counties at an estimated construction cost of \$15 billion.**

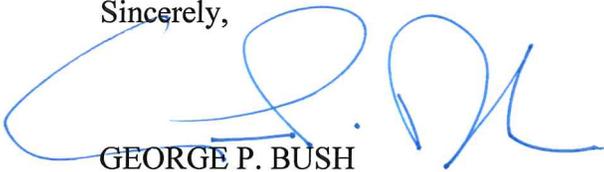
The coastal barrier system proposed would be built to a 100-year event standard, and modeling has concluded that it would have prevented 87% of the damages incurred by Hurricane Ike. Many scientists today believe that Hurricane Ike was a "good miss," meaning we were fortunate that it did not cause more damage. Hurricane Ike was a large Category 2 hurricane that changed course at the last minute thus avoiding a direct hit to the Port of Houston. That was nearly 10 years ago, and little has been done to protect the area's critical infrastructure. Should the Houston/Galveston bay area sustain a similar or even larger storm, the economic damages to the state and the country would be catastrophic.

As a dedicated team, we have spent the past two years building support for this protection system among our federal Congressional delegation, state senators and representatives, industry, local officials and their communities. The Texas General Land Office is currently working with the Army Corps of Engineers on the development of a barrier system for the region and other large-scale projects across the entire Texas coast. **These projects are in an excellent position to "turn dirt" as early as next year and start the process of finally protecting the coast of Texas.**

We believe we have all the support necessary; what we need is the \$15 billion in funds to protect this crucial part of the nation's economy.

Building the proposed coastal barrier system is an historic opportunity to safeguard our nation's economy, our national security and millions of citizens' lives and livelihood.

Sincerely,



GEORGE P. BUSH

Commissioner, Texas General Land Office



Dr. William J. Merrell, Texas A&M Galveston,
Ike Dike Founder



Robert Eckels, President, Gulf Coast Community
Protection and Recovery District



Scott Joslove, President & CEO, Texas Hotel &
Lodging Association



James F. Thompson, Chief Executive, Global
Programs, AECOM



James D. Dannenbaum, President & CEO,
Dannenbaum Engineering



William L. Raba, President, Raba Kistner



David C. Fisher, Director & CEO,
Port of Beaumont



Floyd Gaspard, Port Director, Port of Port
Arthur



Bob Mitchell, President, Bay Area Houston
Economic Partnership



Dr. Samuel D. Brody, Director, Center for Texas
Beaches and Shores



Bob Harvey, President & CEO, Greater Houston
Partnership



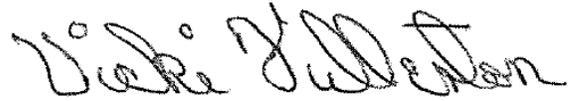
Earl Shipp, Vice President of Gulf Coast
Operations, Dow Chemical



Hector Rivero, President & CEO, Texas Chemical
Council



Todd Staples, President, Texas Oil and Gas
Association



Vicki Fullerton, Chairman of the Board, Texas
Association of Realtors



L.M. "Matt" Sebesta, Jr., County Judge, Brazoria
County, Texas



Jimmy Sylvia, County Judge, Chambers County



Mark Henry, County Judge, Galveston County,
Texas



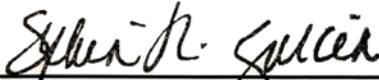
Ed Emmett, County Judge, Harris County, Texas



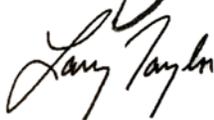
Jeff Branick, County Judge, Jefferson County,
Texas



Stephen Brint Carlton, County Judge,
Orange County



Sylvia Garcia, State Senator, District 6



Larry Taylor, State Senator, District 11



Dr. Greg Bonnen, State Representative,
District 24



John P. Cyrier, State Representative, District 17



Joe Deshotel, State Representative, District 22



Wayne Faircloth, State Representative, District
23



Dennis Paul, State Representative, District 129



Dade Phelan, State Representative, District 21



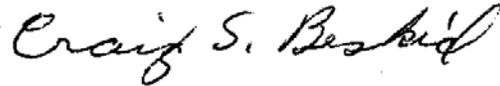
Theresa Rodriguez, President, Bay Area Houston
Transportation Partnership



Mike Shields, Executive Director, Baytown /
West Chambers County Economic Development
Foundation



Cindy H. DeWease, President & CEO,
Clear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce



Craig S. Beskid, Executive Director, East Harris
County Manufacturers Association



David S. Murphy, Chairman, Galveston County
Economic Development Alliance



Bobby Hocking, President, Galveston County
Mayor and Council Members Association



Jeff Sjostrom, President, Galveston Economic
Development Partnership



Joyce Calver McLean, Chair, Galveston Island
Park Board of Trustees



Gina M. Spagnola, President and CEO,
Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce



Colleen Hicks, President, La Porte-Bayshore
Chamber of Commerce



Cheryl Sanders, Mayor, Anahuac, Texas



Stephen DonCarlos, Mayor, Baytown, Texas



Billy Combs, Mayor, Beach City, Texas



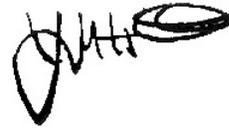
Jerry Mouton, Mayor, Deer Park, Texas



Julie Masters, Mayor, Dickinson, Texas



Robert White, Mayor, El Lago, Texas



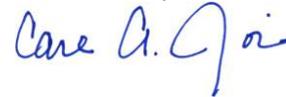
Kevin M. Holland, Mayor, Friendswood, Texas



James D. Yarbrough, Mayor, Galveston, Texas



Sylvester Turner, Mayor, Houston, Texas



Carl Joiner, Mayor, Kemah, Texas



Bobby Hocking, Mayor, La Marque, Texas



Louis R. Rigby, Mayor, La Porte, Texas



Pat Hallisey, Mayor, League City, Texas



Nick Dixon, Mayor, Mont Belvieu, Texas



Michel J. Bechtel, Mayor, Morgan's Point, Texas



Mark Denman, Mayor, Nassau Bay, Texas



Johnny Isbell, Mayor, Pasadena, Texas



Jeff Tambrella, Mayor, City of Santa Fe, Texas



Glenn Royal, Mayor, Seabrook, Texas



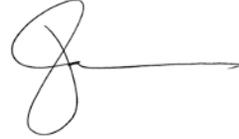
Jon Keeney, Mayor, Taylor Lake Village, Texas



Donna Rogers, Mayor, Webster, Texas



Greg Smith, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools,
Clear Creek Independent School District, Texas



Lloyd W. Graham, Superintendent of Schools,
La Porte, Texas, Independent School District