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JOHN CULBERSON
7TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

March 22, 2002

The Honorable Sonny Callahan
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
United States House of Representatives
2362 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515-6020

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I want to thank you for your leadership on the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee and want to express my support for the full funding of \$67 million for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' project to deepen the Houston Ship Channel from 40 feet to 45 feet and to widen the channel from 400 feet to 530 feet.

The Houston – Galveston Navigation Channels Project is fully authorized and is now in its final stage of completion. If fully funded, the Corps will complete the dredging portion of the project and allow commercial use of the channel at its authorized depth by December 2003.

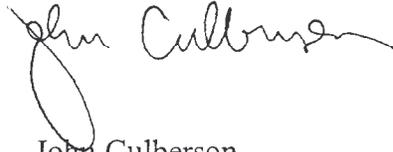
The widening and deepening project is critical to the continued success of the Port of Houston, as well as the regional and national economy that depends on it. The Corps' limited reevaluation report estimates an annual economic impact of \$87 million to the national economy from the expanded channel. Further, the remaining cost-benefit ratio for the project is estimated to be a \$3.60 benefit for every \$1 spent on the remaining portion of the project.

The Port of Houston is the largest in terms of foreign tonnage and is home to the country's largest petrochemical complex. The expanded ship capacity afforded by the completed channel project will decrease the consumer costs of gasoline, plastics and other petrochemicals and increase safety on the channel. In fact, nearly 49% of the nation's petrochemical capacity is at the Port of Houston. Some of the largest gasoline refineries in the world are at the Port of Houston, with a capacity of 2.2 million barrels of refined gasoline a day.

The Administration's FY2003 budget only included \$19.478 million for the project. This funding level will delay the project by at least one year and will drive up the cost of the project by several million dollars not to mention the many millions that will be lost in potential economic activity and job creation.

I strongly urge your support for full funding this year for this essential project that was supported by nearly a 2 to 1 margin in a 1989 election in Harris County. Your leadership to restore full funding to this project will benefit the national economy, save precious taxpayer funds, and expedite an important port project for our constituents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Culberson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

John Culberson
Member of Congress

JC:ps