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**PROPOSED FEDERAL FUNDS WOULD EXPAND SECURITY MANPOWER,  
EQUIPMENT & COMMUNICATIONS AT PORT OF HOUSTON**

HOUSTON, January 11, 2002 – Although security at the Port of Houston is tighter than ever before, pending federal legislation to fund additional manpower, more equipment and better communications would ramp-up protection to a new level, the Port Authority Chairman James T. Edmonds told visiting Senators in a briefing today.

“This port, like others around the nation, is an important financial center of commerce, not only for Houston but for the entire region,” Edmonds said. “Protecting this vital economic engine, and even more importantly the thousands of people who work or live near the Port, is a responsibility we don’t take lightly,” Edmonds testified before members of the U.S.

Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine.

“I believe the Port of Houston is a safe port. However, we will always look for and embrace new and better ways of protection and prevention,” Edmonds said. “This hearing is another step toward maintaining and increasing the safety of the Port.”

Additional funding, such as the \$390 million in grants proposed in the Port and Maritime Security Act of 2001, passed by the U.S. Senate and now to be considered by the House of Representatives, and the \$93 million added to the Homeland Security package to fund security assessments and infrastructure, will help ports in this effort, Edmonds said. He identified four specific areas of need at the Port of Houston:

- Clear communications between the Port, local government officials and policing units, the Coast Guard and the businesses along the Houston Ship Channel.
- Additional security measures at Port terminals, such as more security cameras and greater utilization of available technology, like X-ray machines for Customs.
- More people for the Coast Guard to be more effective.
- Additional vapor detection equipment to help detect hazardous materials.

“It is a testament to this Port that since Sept. 11, our business has not slowed. To use a familiar phrase, we’re moving full steam ahead. The events of this time, however, have been sobering and we have redoubled our efforts to provide a safe and secure business environment for our customers and our employees.”

About the Port of Houston Authority

The Port of Houston Authority owns and operates the public facilities along the Port of Houston, a 25-mile-long complex of diversified public and private facilities that handle more than 175 million short tons of freight worth more than \$60 billion annually. The Port Authority plays a vital role in ensuring navigation safety along the Houston Ship Channel, a key economic catalyst for the city since the Port of Houston first opened to deep-water vessels in 1914. The Port is the source of more than 200,000 direct and related jobs and generates about \$525 million annually in state and local taxes. The Port of Houston ranks first in the U.S. in foreign waterborne commerce and second in total tonnage. Each year, more than 7,000 vessels from around the world call at the Port.

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