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TEXAS CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS DELIVER FUNDING PRIORITIES FOR SECURITY AT PORT OF HOUSTON, U.S. PORTS

HOUSTON – Democratic members of the House Committee on Homeland Security held a press conference today at the Port of Houston Authority, announcing new initiatives addressing security at U.S. ports. The press conference included the announcement by Congressman Chris Bell (D-TX) of the creation of a congressional port security legislative caucus. In addition, members of the U.S. Customs Service demonstrated the VACIS gamma ray container screening device. Representatives of the U.S. Coast Guard and several other federal, state, and local level security partners were in attendance.

The PHA has applied for approximately \$13 million in port security grant funds. Congress has approved an additional \$150 million in port security grants for FY 2003. These funds will be available after the \$105 million in supplemental congressional funds for FY 2002 have been awarded. Grants are expected to be awarded in May.

Under the leadership of House Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-TX) and with bipartisan support from the Texas congressional delegation, congress has approved a total of \$655 million in supplemental funds to the Transportation Security Administration. The amount includes \$20 million for port security grants. Additionally, \$400 million was appropriated for the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) initiatives related to Operation Iraqi

Freedom. Another \$228 million was allocated for homeland security activities related to Operation Liberty Shield, \$57.6 million for research and development, and \$25 million for counter-terrorism training for USCG personnel.

Also contained in the supplemental appropriations legislation was \$170 million for U.S. Customs Service enforcement related to Operation Liberty Shield. The amount included \$15 million for additional special agents and intelligence analysts and \$60 million for additional inspectors. Another \$90 million was appropriated for portal radiation detection equipment, and \$35 million for the container security initiative.

“The Port of Houston Authority is fortunate to have friends like Congressmen Tom DeLay and the other members of the Texas congressional delegation,” stated Jim Edmonds, Chairman of the PHA. “I hope a significant amount of the funding resulting from their hard work to fund port security will make it to Houston. Our congressional leaders are to be commended for their outstanding efforts to raise the importance of port security as a national priority.”

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The Port of Houston Authority

The Port of Houston Authority owns and operates the public facilities located along the Port of Houston, the 25-mile long complex of diversified public and private facilities designed for handling general cargo, containers, grain and other dry bulk materials, project and heavy lift cargo, and other types of cargo. Each year, more than 6,600 vessels call at the port, which ranks first in the U.S. in foreign waterborne tonnage, second in overall total tonnage, and sixth largest in the world. The Port Authority plays a vital role in ensuring navigational safety along the Houston Ship Channel, which has been instrumental in Houston’s development as a center of international trade. The Barbours Cut Container Terminal and Central Maintenance Facility are the first of any U.S. port facilities to develop and implement an innovative Environmental Management System that meets the rigorous standards of ISO 14001. Additionally, the port is an approved delivery point for Coffee “C” futures contracts traded on the New York Board of Trade’s Coffee, Sugar & Cocoa Exchange. For more information, please visit www.portofhouston.com