

As mayor of Baytown for nearly 11 years, I have been quite impressed with the Port Authority's commitment to good environmental stewardship. The port authority's programs have benefited Baytown and were the foundation of some of the most significant milestones Baytown has achieved.

For decades, Goat Island was an important and historic part of the Baytown community. Once accessible by foot, Goat Island was a recreational area for fishing and duck hunting. However, over time, the island subsided into Galveston Bay.

Today, the Port of Houston Authority, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Beneficial Uses Group are turning back time in Baytown. Along with improving the Galveston Bay area, this team is restoring Goat Island. I consider this project a great gift to the citizens of Baytown.

Another important environmental project is the Upper Texas Coast Water-Bourne Education Center. This non-profit group serves fifth graders through high school seniors. It offers biology and chemistry lessons such as testing water salinity, fishing and trawling for marine life and identifying birds.

Since the program began four years ago, 6,000 people have taken part in the water-bourne education center. The Port of Houston Authority has assured that the program will continue to be successful by providing \$50,000 over two years. This funding has enabled WBEC to expand its services plus purchase necessary equipment such as engine oil for the boats.

Clearly, Baytown benefits from these great environmental programs of the port authority, and I applaud the port authority for its diligence to our community.

MAYOR PETE ALFARO
City of Baytown