

**Chairman Rouzer, Ranking Member Napolitano, thank you for having me back for Member Day!**

**My home city of Houston sits at the epicenter of global trade. In 2023, it was named the top U.S. city for international business by the Financial Times. That reputation is due, in no small part, to the continued success of Port Houston, the nation's busiest deep-water port.**

**Every year, Port Houston has as many "ship calls" as the next three largest U.S. ports combined, and it accounts for over \$900 billion in national economic value.**

**In the years since the pandemic, the port has rebounded with explosive growth in trade – both in imports and exports.**

**But the port can't rest on their laurels. To keep the United States competitive in the global supply chain, the Port must accept larger and larger vessels. And for that, they're gonna need to dig deep — literally.**

**That's why I am here today.**

**I come before you today, to request that the Committee take up an item with clear bipartisan support across the Houston region –**

**for the Army Corps to assume maintenance of Project 12.**

**This project would widen, deepen, and dredge the port, so that it may continue to safely accept vessels as they transit along the Buffalo Bayou.**

**Doing so would continue a legacy of cost sharing that has defined the Port from the very start.**

**Fun fact, Mr. Chairman: Port Houston was the first port in the nation to be federally cost-shared with local buy-in, and in the decades since, the port has grown to be a shining**

**example of the benefits such an agreement can have.**

**Additionally, to ensure safe transit in this new age of shipping, the port must also look beyond the bayou into the barge channels of Galveston Bay, which I hope will be the focus of a new feasibility study, to secure an additional 12 feet of draft for larger barges.**

**These project priorities garner enormous benefits, not only for my district, but for the entire nation.**

**The port is a keystone of American critical infrastructure, as it is quite literally fueling America.**

**Additionally, we must keep pushing for support of the Gulf Coast's seawall barrier, which many know fondly as the Ike Dike.**

**Barriers like the Ike Dike are lifesaving engineering projects. They protect against the loss of life from a deadly storm surge and the loss of livelihoods from a flood – something that communities in the Houston region know all too well. Hurricane Harvey caused nearly \$125 billion in damages, and before that, Hurricane Ike caused \$38 billion damages across several states, including Texas.**

**Studies show similar barrier systems to have a near-immediate return-on-investment. Those are words that are hard to come by in government! I've seen them firsthand, from New Orleans to the Netherlands.**

**We must ensure our area has the resources it needs to protect the manufacturing, retail, farming, business, and military supply chains in the Houston and Galveston region. Doing so is important, not just for our local community, but also for supporting these important sectors in Texas and throughout the country.**

**I urge my colleagues to include these priorities in the passage of the Water Resources Development Act of 2024.**

**I thank this subcommittee and the full committee for their work on these critical issues and I would be glad to take any questions.**