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March 4, 2009

The Honorable Congressman Pete Olson  
514 Cannon House Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Olson:

Thank you for your continued support for the maintenance of the Houston Ship Channel. As you know, the Port of Houston is a critical economic engine for the Houston region, the State of Texas and the United States. The activity at the port is responsible for hundreds of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in economic impact. Maintaining this dynamic waterway system is imperative to protecting these economic benefits.

The Houston Ship Channel is also integral to our nation's energy security as host to some of the largest refineries in the United States and the second largest petrochemical complex in the world.

Federal funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to adequately maintain the ship channel has fallen to below half of the identified needs. In this time of tight budgets, it is imperative for the federal government to spend taxpayer dollars where they will do the most good. Maintaining the Houston Ship Channel is a worthwhile investment, with a return of \$2.30 for every federal dollar invested.

Our company, Vopak, has two bulk liquid storage and handling facilities on the Houston Ship Channel. We conduct import, export and domestic shipping of chemicals and fuels for major industrial customers like Exxon Mobil, LyondellBasell, Dow, Occidental, Bayer and Ineos. Our Deer Park Texas terminal is the largest and busiest chemical terminal in the world with over 700 ships calling on our facility annually, which is approximately 5% of the traffic in the Port of Houston. We contribute to jobs and the local economy tremendously with over \$100 million in local annual revenue, \$30 million annually in capital expansion and maintenance expenditures, 250 direct jobs and many local contractors employed through our operations and investments.

The Houston Ship Channel is critical to our operations. Any limitations on the waterway related to insufficient depth of the channel, like draft restrictions, directly impacts our ability to efficiently deliver goods and commerce. Ultimately, this is reflected in increased costs in the marketplace and lower economic activity and growth for our region and the United States.

Therefore, I urge you to support \$58.35 million in Construction General and \$30.905 million for Operations and Maintenance accounts for the Houston Ship Channel in the Fiscal Year 2010 Energy and Water Appropriations.

Your efforts in Congress, this year as in past years, to maintain the economic health of our region and the health of the Houston Ship Channel are greatly appreciated. Please let me know if you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lawrence Waldron". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Lawrence Waldron, General Manager Gulf Coast