



HOUSTON PILOTS
8150 SOUTH LOOP EAST / HOUSTON, TEXAS 77017-1747



March 6, 2009

Congressman Pete Olson
U.S. Representative
514 Cannon House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Olson,

The Houston Ship Channel is vital to the economy of the State of Texas, the nation, and the world. The Port of Houston is ranked first in the United States in foreign waterborne tonnage, second in total tonnage and is one of the largest Ports in the world. It is responsible for \$118 billion in annual economic benefit to Texas and generates 785,000 jobs. It is also a critical component of America's energy security, serving as one of the country's main connections to the global energy market, a center for the manufacturing of energy products, and a hub of distribution to key markets.

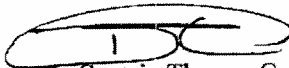
To keep this important economic engine for America running, the Houston Pilots are requesting your support of the Energy and Water Appropriations of \$58.350 million in Construction General and \$30.905 million for Operations and Maintenance accounts for the Houston Ship Channel in the Fiscal Year 2010.

In recent years the federal government affirmed the Houston Ship Channel is an essential waterway by authorizing \$700 million (with a B/C ration of 2.3 to 1) in a widening and deepening project so this essential waterway could accommodate modern tankers and other vessels to better serve America's energy and economic needs. However, without sufficient operations and maintenance resources, this investment is jeopardized and the Channel will diminish in capacity, restricting the flow of energy to the nation and shrinking the economy.

But more significant is the importance of protecting the government's investment in the Houston Ship Channel so that it can continue to produce a valuable benefit to the nation's economy. Failing to maintain the Houston Ship Channel thus allowing shoaling will reduce the volume of cargo that vessels can move through the channel. This will damage the nation's economy and further increase prices for products moved into and out of the port.

It is for these reasons and others that I urge you to support the necessary \$58.350 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. The Houston Pilots appreciate your continued efforts to ensure the safe, secure and efficient flow of commerce through the Port of Houston. If you have any questions, or require additional information, please feel free to contact me at 713-645 9620 or via email at po@houston-pilots.com.

Sincerely,



Captain Thomas C. Pace
Presiding Officer, Houston Pilots