



## Lone Star Harbor Safety Committee

### Freeport Sub-Committee

3 January 2019

Christopher C. Frabotta  
Deputy Chief of Operations Division/Chief of Navigation Branch  
USACE Galveston District  
P.O. Box 1229  
Galveston, TX 77553-1229

Subj: Spoil Areas and Dump Sites Around Freeport Entrance Channel

Dear Mr. Frabotta,

The Lone Star Harbor Safety Committee (HSC) provides a public forum to address Marine Transportation System (MTS) issues with particular emphasis on navigation safety-related matters involving the ports of Houston, Galveston, Texas City, and Freeport including the associated waterways of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway and offshore lightering zones. As a vehicle facilitating communications between and among public and private sector entities, the Committee draws upon regional expertise and insight to address such issues as vessel traffic management, anchorage management, communications, security, significant/heavy weather preparations, maritime traffic disruption/restoration, process improvements, and any other related topics dealing with the MTS. The Freeport Sub-Committee is dedicated to maximizing safety, security and efficiency, while balancing the competing needs and uses of the waterways in and around the Port of Freeport. The committee focuses on improving the safety of operations and identifying areas of concern. Freeport Harbor has recently been named one of the fastest growing ports in the United States which is only forecasted to continue. With this in mind; the Freeport Subcommittee, with unanimous support of the Full LSHSC, respectfully requests USACEs support in updating the current chart and developing, in conjunction with NOAA, the new Navigation Chart for Freeport Harbor and its approaches (NOAA Chart 11324) to meet the needs of the Harbor.

For years vessels have called on Freeport and the Masters of these vessels have questioned the depth of water present in the now obsolete "Spoil Areas" that exist to the northeast and southwest of the Freeport Entrance Channel. The northeast spoil area stretches from north of lighted buoy number 6 to south of the lighted buoy number 4 on the northeast side of the channel. The southwest spoil area stretches from north of lighted buoy number 5 to north of lighted buoy number 3. The spoil areas extend 0.5nm to the northeast and southwest of the channel respectively.

These spoil areas have been not used for years and the Freeport Subcommittee of LSHSC would like to see them removed or re-located. When the pilots are coordinating traffic, to expedite movements in and out of Freeport Harbor, these areas are used to clear traffic out of the channel for incoming vessels. With one-way traffic as our standard operating procedure, we utilize the available water present in these areas for light draft vessels to allow deep draft vessels to have full access to the channel. Although, with many vessel operator's inspection guidelines and standards, movement through these uncharted areas are not advisable.

The Dump Site located near and directly south of lighted buoy number 3 has over time become more burdensome to traffic. Much like spoil areas, vessels are reluctant to transit through these areas. We would like to see this site's northeastern edge moved 1.5nm to the southwest. The whole area may be moved that distance as an alternative. Dump sites are important to the development and maintenance of the channel, but so is their distance from the traffic.

The Subcommittee's Navigation Workgroup is working to develop recommended anchor circles with identification tags on the new Harbor Chart that is under development, to direct traffic to a specific anchor position while awaiting a pilot. The Dump Site located 1.25nm to the SW of the "FP" Buoy will limit the anchor circles in this fairway anchorage. We are requesting that this dump site to be relocated 4.0nm to the WSW to permit additional anchor circles.

We also ask that these spoil areas and dump sites are accurately surveyed using the latest means available and the results are used to update the chart, providing valuable soundings which are useful to the mariner.

We understand and appreciate the work Mr. Aron Edwards has already undertaken to remove some of spoil and dump sites from the chart. The Navigation Workgroup would like to continue working with USACE to improve the waterway off Freeport.

We thank you for your attention to these needs to ensure continued safe and efficient navigation in Freeport as the Harbor grows. We look forward to working with you and NOAA for a finished product to achieve this goal. The Brazos Pilots and the Freeport Sub-Committee Navigation Workgroup are available to assist the process and continue to review for updates. Going forward, Colleen Kallestad ([CKallestad@freeportlng.com](mailto:CKallestad@freeportlng.com)) will take over as the Freeport Sub-Committee Chair and will be the Point of Contact for this issue.

Best regards,



Captain Ann Marie Poninski, USMM

Chairman, Lone Star Harbor Safety Freeport Sub-Committee

O: (+1) 832.765.3171 | M: (+1) 713.438.5744