LONE STAR HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE
Full Managing Board Meeting
Meeting Minutes
November 7, 2025, 0900
Houston Pilots Offices

A. Opening Remarks by Committee Chair - Greg DeLong

1) This is a more intimate meeting due to the government shutdown; however, we thank participants for attending and Coast Guard representatives that are able to participate.
2) Mentions the impact of recent changes in the port.
3) Announces recognition for prudent mariners, port efficiency efforts, and the end of hurricane season.
4) Notes that this is the last meeting as chair, with Nate Hough taking over the next meeting.
5) Eric Casey introduced as new COO of Port Houston; shared experience and goals for port development and safety.

B. Safety Briefing - Houston Pilots - Capt. Clint Winegar

1) No scheduled drills or alarm tests

C. Invocation - Darren Shelton

D. Welcoming Remarks by Sector Commander - Captain Nicole Rodriguez

1) Captain Rodriguez thanks everyone for attending and acknowledges the impact of furloughs on Coast Guard presence.
2) Explains the Coast Guard's continued participation in subcommittee meetings due to the committee's safety work. Assures continued participation and safety efforts despite the lapse in appropriations.
3) Mentions the Coast Guard's role in maritime governance, safety, security, and environmental protection.

E. Confirmation of Committee Quorum - Kathleen Sanders

1) Confirmed

F. Approval of Minutes from August 8, 2025 meeting

1) First: D. Clark
2) Second: D. Foret

G. Award Presentation: Captain Rodriguez recognizing the crew of CARESSA K.

1) Captain Rodriguez presents an award to Eric Cox, Christopher Gonzales, Nicholas Rodriguez, and Anthony Wheatley for a life-saving rescue on June 29, 2025.

H. US Customs & Border Protection - Officer John Landry

1) Comments on Port Fees by Darren Shelton

a) The USTR opened up yesterday a comment period for the suspension of fees. And that comment period ends today, at like five o'clock. So you have something to say, you have a few hours to go online and say it.
b) At this moment, there is nothing that says they shall stop collecting the fee yet. So anybody that has a ship coming should assume that they will have to pay those fees until there's something official from some DC government office that says otherwise. So for right now, you should assume you're going to pay.

I. Port Efficiency efforts by Greater Houston Port Bureau - Corrina Ott

1) Director of Operations Corrina Ott updated on the port efficiency initiative: streamlining communications, standardizing data, and digitizing processes for improved vessel transit. We are progressing on a data dictionary and generic forms to create consistency across terminals

J. Subcommittee Reports and Working Group Updates:

1) Navigation Operations Subcommittee and Working Groups - Capt. David Foret

a) Increased currents at Bolivar / TXDOT
b) USACE - evaluation of the Bolivar Flare, HSC wye/turnout
c) Working Groups

- Safe Access Group; Ship Pilot Ladders

d) David A. Foret, Jr. discusses increased traffic at Bolivar and the need for current meters. Ray Newby expresses efforts being made currently for this to happen.
e) Alberto and his team are evaluating the Bolivar flare and restricted bunkering areas.
f) Jim Reardon provides an update on Kirby's dredging efforts at the Old River Port, expected to be completed by the end of November.
g) Discussions on the safe access ship ladder and the need for continued education and communication.
h) Upcoming navigation operations meeting (Thursday) to address Bolivar, restricted bunkering areas, and Texas Terminal modeling.

2) Waterways Utilization Subcommittee and Working Groups – Andrew Cook/JJ Plunkett

a) Heavy Weather w/g - James Prazak

- Potentially needing to update the mariners guide specifically aligning with Heavy Weather group

b) Technology w/g - Mike Warner
c) Facility w/g - John Taylor / Captain Matt Glass
d) Anchorage w/g - Mark Nokelby
e) COC w/g - Jeff Milstein / Denise Schaefer

- Positive update on legislative progress: Recent meetings held in Washington, DC with members of the Senate Commerce Committee, OMB, and White House staff.
- The relevant bill, previously passed by the House but not the Senate, had to be reintroduced in 2025; awaiting Senate approval, which is expected since the committee is fully supportive.
- Implementation approach is a primary concern; emphasis placed on industry participation and use of the subcommittee's white paper as a central guiding document.
- OMB has also expressed support, and the issue was raised proactively by White House staff.

- If the government reopens soon, the bill is expected to be among the first passed through the Coast Guard Reauthorization Act and could be implemented quickly—possibly by the end of the first quarter next year.
- Should the shutdown persist, reintroduction would be required in 2026, though consensus and familiarity are expected to expedite progress.
- The Senate committee is especially supportive of a swift, six-month implementation timeline, avoiding drawn-out annual reviews.

f) Seafarers - David Clark

- Its busy season with prepping for Christmas with the shoeboxes and the program is in fact still going on.
- We are seeing delays and issues with getting U.S. Visa's. So if you have nay sway, please use it.

g) Fleet week has been rescheduled (potentially late March/early April)
h) ATON damage at an all-time low.

3) Dredging & Marine Construction Subcommittee - Jim Elliott

a) U.S.A.C.E. update - Sara Knoll

- Maintenance dredging at container terminals to finish by early December, followed by larger contracts.

b) Project 11 update - Amanda Hamrick

- Dredging and channel widening complete; ecosystem improvements underway (bird island, marsh construction).

4) Maritime Education, Training and Outreach Subcommittee - Adam Reeves

a) Recreational Boater w/g - David Clark

- We are finally getting help with these abandoned/derelict vessels needing attention
- We are working on placement of the Big Waves, Small Boats signs for Kemah bridge and others. I have checked and they look great.

b) Fishing Vessel w/g - Todd Whitecotton

5) Freeport Subcommittee - Kody Andrews

a) Busy traffic, improvements, successful crane deliveries, ongoing channel completion slated for April 2026.

6) GalTex Subcommittee - Darren Shelton

a) Pollution issues being resolved; infrastructure upgrades and berth development discussed.

K. Remarks by USCG Sector Houston-Galveston Personnel

1) Waterways Management and ATON - LCDR Alex Mostrom / LTJG Nelson

a) Received a brief update on ongoing maintenance, dredging, and navigation aids/ATONs.

2) Vessel Traffic Service - Albert Hernandez/Randy Scott

a) Emphasis on safety/security overlap, recent cyber threats, and need for facility preparedness, especially ahead of major events like the World Cup.
b) Planned MARSEC level 2 drill – facilities need to improve response rates.
c) VTS system overhaul is on hold due to shut down; plans to resume vendor engagement once able.

3) Area Maritime Security Committee - Tyson Muniz/Keiton Moore

a) Cybersecurity - Keiton Moore

4) National Harbor Safety Committee - James Prazak

L. Old Business:

M. New Business:

N. Other Business

1) Government furlough impacts discussed; encouragement of donations to support affected Coast Guard staff.
2) Announcement of a golf tournament fundraiser.
3) Recognition of outgoing members and upcoming retirements.

O. Roundtable Comments

1) LSHSC Managing Board - General Comments and Discussion
2) Public Attendees

P. Upcoming Schedule: (Check www.LoneStarHSC.org for details & updates)

1) COC working group - TBD
2) Waterway Utilization subcommittee - TBD
3) Dredging & Salvage subcommittee - TBD
4) Freeport subcommittee - TBD
5) Maritime Education, Training, & Outreach (Virtual) - TBD
6) Navigation Operations subcommittee - TBD
7) Next LSHSC Full Committee - USCG Sector - **2/7/2026**
Future Full Committee dates 2026: 5/1 Houston Pilots, 8/14 Coast Guard Sector, 11/6 Houston Pilots

Q. Adjourn –

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