

Testimony of Representative Randy K. Weber (TX-14)

Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies

House Committee on Appropriations

“Member Day”—March 25, 2026

Good morning, Chairman Cole, Chairman Fleischmann, Ranking Member DeLauro, Ranking Member Kaptur, and distinguished members of the Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Subcommittee. My name is Congressman Randy Weber, and I proudly represent Texas' Fourteenth Congressional District, located along the Gulf Coast. My District is home to some of the largest refineries in the United States, three liquefied natural gas (LNG) export terminals, numerous petrochemical facilities, and critical energy infrastructure. The energy produced in my District is delivered by pipelines, trains, trucks, and boats to the rest of the country and to our international trading partners. To ensure the continued, uninterrupted flow of this critical energy and other essential products, it is imperative that Congress funds the following key projects: the Galveston Harbor and Channel Dredging Project, the Coastal Texas Protection and Restoration Project, and the Sabine-Neches Waterway Channel Improvement Project. Each of these projects plays an essential role in achieving American energy independence, and the federal investments placed in each of these projects represent a commitment to the missions established by these critical assets for our national infrastructure.

### **Galveston Harbor and Channel Dredging Project**

The Galveston Harbor and Channel (GHC) serves as a focal point for American energy production, economic prosperity, and national security. The GHC is a key corridor for U.S. exports, supporting the nation's largest ethanol export terminal and significant oil exports.

The GHC has seen limited unrestricted navigation over the past decade, with only 1 year of full access in the last 13 years. The Galveston Entrance Channel is the busiest navigation channel in the nation, with nearly 10,000 deep-water movements per year. The ongoing issue of restricted depths and narrow widths threatens the safe navigation of vessels, disrupts the supply chain, and hampers economic growth. Texas International Terminals, the Port of Galveston, and other key stakeholders in the region have made, and continue to make, significant investments in the Channel's infrastructure. In just three years, Texas International Terminals has quadrupled its tonnage and expects to handle 10 million tons in 2025, with projections of 20 million tons by 2027.

Significant commercial investments are being made within the corridor of the GHC. Davie Defense, a Finnish shipbuilding company, is constructing two shipbuilding facilities in Port Arthur, Texas, and on Galveston Island, a facility that will be served directly by the GHC. Davie Defense's commitment to advancing American shipbuilding represents a near \$1 billion investment into the American economy and the creation of more than 2,400 new jobs in my Congressional District. This investment directly correlates with President Donald Trump's mission to onshore American manufacturing capabilities and to bolster Arctic security to counter our adversaries in an increasingly volatile global landscape.

The Galveston Harbor and Channel are crucial not only for the region's economic health but also for national defense and global trade. To ensure the GHC remains a reliable, safe, and efficient channel for both economic and defense purposes, I am requesting \$60,000,000 for immediate Operations and Maintenance dredging efforts. Consistent Operations and Maintenance funding

for the GHC will help maintain this critical infrastructure, support continued growth, and solidify its place as a key asset in the global economy.

### **Coastal Texas Protection and Restoration Project**

Storm resiliency is one of the most significant concerns of my constituents and other Gulf Coast community residents. Throughout the Summer of 2024, the Gulf Coast and communities in my District were impacted by multiple tropical storms and hurricanes that damaged structures and, unfortunately, resulted in the loss of dozens of lives. One of the most significant storms in recent history occurred in 2008 when Hurricane Ike made landfall along the Gulf Coast. The impact of the storm resulted in over \$30 billion in storm-related damages, and FEMA estimates of the economic disruption from this hurricane exceeded \$150 billion.

The Coastal Texas Protection and Restoration Project, born from the impact Hurricane Ike left on our coastal communities, is designed to protect the communities and industries along the upper Gulf Coast. This project would directly impact communities in my District and consists of focus areas that prioritize coastal storm risk management and ecosystem restoration. The project benefits can be separated into three distinct construction facets: flood damage reduction, environmental enhancement, and economic resiliency. Estimates suggest that the project would result in \$2.31 billion in annual economic savings from reducing flood damage. The subsequent reductions in flood damage would result in over 6,000 acres of improved coastal habitat, a major component in reducing storm surge impacts. Additionally, this project would protect a wide range of our nation's essential sectors, including energy, agriculture, and defense. The project

would serve as a safeguard for 30 percent of the nation's refining capacity, 42 percent of the nation's specialty chemical feedstock, and 80 percent of the nation's military-grade fuel. In Fiscal Year 2026, the Coastal Texas Project was granted \$5,000,000 in the Energy and Water Appropriations Bill, reflecting a significant federal interest in this project's vision. To ensure that this project achieves its ultimate objectives of protecting Texas coastal ecosystems and defending critical industries from future storms and ensuing surges, I am requesting \$25,000,000 for the Coastal Texas Protection and Restoration Project to enable the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to support the design and environmental compliance efforts for the Bolivar Roads Gate System, and the West Galveston and Bolivar Peninsula Beach and Dune Systems in Fiscal Year 2027.

### **Sabine-Neches Waterway Channel Improvement Project**

Well-maintained ports and complementary infrastructure, such as navigable waterways, are critical to ensuring the consistent flow of American energy across our country and to our allies. This movement of petrochemical products keeps energy prices low, critical infrastructure operating effectively, and the lights on for families worldwide. One of the most significant pieces of the energy production process is located in my Congressional District, the Sabine-Neches Waterway (SNWW). The SNWW is an essential nexus for American energy independence, military prowess, and economic prosperity. The SNWW is the second-largest inland waterway along the Gulf Coast and receives over 100 million tons of cargo annually. Because the SNWW is a highly valued asset for the American energy and military sectors, the waterway requires navigation improvements to meet growing demands. The proposed project, known as the SNWW

Channel Improvement Project, would deepen the channel from 40 to 48 feet and add critical safety features to improve logistical capabilities. By 2028, the SNWW's liquefied natural gas (LNG) export volumes are expected to match those of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. As a result of this incredible growth, the SNWW requires significant capacity improvements to meet growing energy and logistical demands.

The SNWW is a linchpin of the American energy sector, serving as the nation's largest crude oil and LNG exporter. Additionally, the SNWW serves as a vital component of military readiness, service provision, and transportation infrastructure. The waterway is home to two of the U.S.

Military's Strategic Commercial Seaports: The Port of Beaumont and the Port of Port

Arthur. The SNWW currently boasts approximately 288,000 permanent jobs and is expected to create nearly 465,000 new permanent jobs when the project reaches maturity. To ensure that the SNWW remains the leading exporter of LNG and a critical service point for improving military readiness, I am requesting \$319,000,000 for the SNWW Channel Improvement Project. In Fiscal Year 2026, the SNWW was included in the Energy and Water Appropriations Bill with an investment of over \$9,000,000. We hope this previous federal investment signals the potential for continued partnership as we work to realize President Trump's vision for our great nation. The SNWW is essential to fulfilling President Trump's agenda of energy dominance, ensuring economic growth in my District and across the country, and maintaining energy independence and military readiness as energy markets and the global threat landscape grow increasingly volatile.