

- NEWS RELEASE -
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Port of Corpus Christi Receives EPA Grant for Waterborne Trash Collection

Corpus Christi, TX, USA – Continuing its commitment to environmental stewardship, the Port of Corpus Christi Authority was tentatively awarded a grant from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to procure and deploy trash skimming technology for collecting fugitive refuse in the Salt Flats Ditch near Nueces Bay. The grant, in the amount of \$471,324, includes both equipment and annual maintenance costs.

The Port of Corpus Christi plans to use the funds to reduce and prevent pollution, as well as raise community awareness and education of how trash makes it into U.S. waterways and the negative impacts on bays and estuaries. The Salt Flats Ditch cleanup will help protect nearly eight miles of shoreline from contamination.

The EPA's "Trash Free Waters" grant program notified the Port Authority of the award on Earth Day 2020. Other states have been recipients of the Trash Free Waters Program funds, including cleanups of California's San Francisco Bay and Monterrey Bay.

"The variety of missions represented in our grantee organizations shows the breadth of partnerships needed to keep trash out of our waterways," said **EPA Region 6 Administrator Ken McQueen**. "EPA is proud to maintain our commitment to working with these groups and others to meet this challenge and protect the Gulf of Mexico."

The Port of Corpus Christi intends to purchase an autonomous, solar-powered marine debris collector capable of collecting up to 1,000 pounds of refuse in a single gathering. The volume and type of waste will be analyzed to determine migration trends and types of materials. The resulting research will be shared with academia and coastal conservation groups to raise awareness and continue to build a healthy ecosystem.

"Environmental stewardship is a responsibility the Port of Corpus Christi takes great pride and seriousness in," said **Sean Strawbridge, Chief Executive Officer for the Port of Corpus Christi**. "Our coastal bays and estuaries are national treasures and must be safeguarded. This EPA grant will certainly help protect the health of our local ecosystem which makes the South Texas Coastal Bend naturally picturesque."

The Salt Flats Ditch provides drainage for an urbanized watershed in the City of Corpus Christi but regularly becomes polluted with trash after rain events. Because the ditch empties into the Corpus Christi Ship Channel, the Port Authority sought grant funds to protect the region's water quality and habitat.

"Our role as the Energy Port of the Americas is one that also includes a duty to be environmentally responsible in all that we do," said **Charles W. Zahn, Chairman of the Port of Corpus Christi Commission**. "From being 100 percent reliant on renewable energy for Port operations to community cleanups and recycling initiatives, the Port of Corpus Christi Commission has shown its unwavering commitment to that responsibility."

About the Port of Corpus Christi Authority

As a leader in energy exports and a major economic engine of Texas and the nation, Port Corpus Christi is the 3rd largest port in the United States in total tonnage. Strategically located on the western Gulf of Mexico with a 36-mile, 54 foot (MLLW authorized) channel depth, Port Corpus Christi is a major gateway to international and domestic maritime commerce. The Port Corpus Christi is "Moving America's Energy."

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