**Water Resources Subcommittee Member Day Hearing; Remarks by Rep. Sylvia R. Garcia, TX-29**

Chair Napolitano, Ranking Member Rouzer, and Members of the Water Resources Subcommittee, thank you for having me here on Member Hearing Day.

Houston sits at the epicenter of global trade. Our nation’s supply chain is insourced by cities like Houston, home to the busiest deep-draft waterway in the nation, Port Houston. The Port has as many ship calls annually as the next three largest U.S. ports combined, and it provides $801.9 billion in national economic value. But it is imperative that the Port, like its counterparts in the world’s busiest trade routes, keep up with increased shipping activity, larger barges, and the need for deeper waterways.

I come before you to request that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers take up our delegation’s request for taking on the Assumption of Maintenance on Project 11, the port’s large-scale project to widen, deepen, and dredge the port, so that it remains a viable center of commercial trade for our nation.

We must also ensure that Port Houston is fully supported in project financing through Operations and Maintenance. This can be done through your support of the policy request that I – and several of my Houston colleagues – submitted, which modifies the O&M cost sharing for ports deeper than 50 feet.

These project priorities, which are made possible for consideration by this Act, garner enormous benefits. Not only for Texas residents, but for the entire nation. The port is a keystone of American critical infrastructure, whose value is especially critical during times of great national security threat and threats posed to our nation’s energy supply.

Additionally, it is imperative that we discuss the need for full-fledged support for the Gulf Coast’s seawall barrier.

Prior to this hearing, I led an effort with my colleagues in the Houston delegation to request support for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Coastal Texas Study Chief’s Report, to authorize the construction of a coastal seawall that would protect millions of families across the greater Houston and Galveston area. We must ensure that our area has the resources it needs to protect the greater Houston and Galveston region’s manufacturing, retail, agriculture, business, and military supply chains in Texas and the nation.

More importantly, we must also protect the millions of lives who depend on our full embrace of all forms of disaster prevention and resilience. Studies show similar barrier systems to the one we are requesting have an almost immediate return on investment. Hurricane Ida tested a similar barrier system in New Orleans. The system prevented a Hurricane Katrina-level surge, but it also more than paid for itself in prevented damages. I personally know far too well the devastating effects that hurricanes and large-scale flooding have on local economies and communities.

These project priorities requested by myself, and equally supported across the aisle by my colleagues in the greater Houston Congressional delegation, benefit Texans in our home state and deliver major improvements to our nation. I thank the subcommittee and the full committee for their work on these critical issues.

I urge my colleagues on the committee to include these priorities in the passage of the Water Resources Development Act of 2022.

Thank you for your time and consideration.