



## **Water Resources Development Act of 2022 signed into law, authorizing advancement of Coastal Texas Program**

**GALVESTON, Texas** – President Biden signed the Water Resources Development Act of 2022 into law on Dec. 23, 2022, which includes authorization of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) Coastal Texas Program. This legislative action officially authorizes USACE to begin implementation activities for this large-scale coastal storm risk management and ecosystem restoration program, pending appropriation of funding.

After Hurricane Ike devastated the upper Texas coast in 2008, USACE and its non-federal sponsor, the Texas General Land Office (GLO), embarked on the Coastal Texas Protection and Restoration Feasibility Study. This six-year, \$20 million comprehensive study sought to reduce risks to public health and the economy, restore critical ecosystems, and advance coastal resiliency.

These efforts culminated in Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon, USACE commanding general, signing the Chief's Report on Sept. 16, 2021, representing the largest single investment recommendation to Congress in USACE history. The Galveston District (SWG), along with its non-Federal partners, the Gulf Coast Protection District (GCPD) and the GLO, will lead the delivery of the approximately \$34 billion, in today's dollars, program through design, construction, and subsequent operation.

"This is one of the largest programs in the history of the Corps of Engineers," said SWG's District Commander, Col. Rhett A. Blackmon. "More than 300 individuals from across 11 USACE districts and two USACE labs—including the best scientists and engineers—worked with four contracting firms, 12 different colleges and universities, multiple community working groups, and experts from countries around the world to build the framework for this project."

"The Coastal Texas Program is critically important to the nation," said Mike Braden, SWG's Mega Projects Division chief. "This program reduces significant risk to vulnerable populations, environment, and infrastructure which—to put it simply—are irreplaceable. Each year there is a probability of another Hurricane Ike, or worse, impacting the coast of Texas," Braden said. "Over time, these probabilities become a certainty. Our job is to expedite delivery before that time comes."

"Federal authorization of the Coastal Texas Program represents a momentous step forward for this critical effort, over a decade in the making, to protect the communities, economy, and vital ecosystems of the Texas coast from the devastating effects of coastal storm surge," said Michel Bechtel, Board President of the GCPD. "As the local partner working alongside the Corps of Engineers and the GLO to deliver this transformative project, we stand ready and are eager to move forward together with this visionary resiliency improvement program."

For more information about the Coastal Texas Program, visit [www.coastaltexasprogram.com](http://www.coastaltexasprogram.com).

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The Gulf Coast Protection District (GCPD) was created in 2021 by the 87th Texas Legislature to oversee the implementation of an integrated and comprehensive coastal resilience strategy for the upper Texas coast. Specifically, this includes assuming the role of non-Federal sponsor for major portions of the Federally funded and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers led Coastal Texas Program and Sabine Pass to Galveston Bay Program. The GCPD contains approximately 5,220 square miles of land covering Chambers, Galveston, Harris, Jefferson, and Orange counties. For more information about the GCPD, visit <https://www.gcpdtexas.com/>.

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