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PORT FREEPORT AWARDED $9.4 MILLION FEDERAL GRANT TO MODERNIZE BULK RICE OPERATIONS

FREEPORT, TX (November 04, 2026) – Port Freeport has been awarded a $9,412,500 grant through the U.S. Maritime Administration's (MARAD) Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) to modernize its bulk rice-handling facilities, enhance operational efficiency, and modernize infrastructure supporting agricultural cargo operations.

The grant will help fund the replacement of a 25-year-old bulk rice loader, installation of a new rack system within the existing rice storage shed, and relocation of the shed's southern wall to expand available berthing space. These improvements will modernize aging infrastructure, enhance cargo-handling capabilities, and support more efficient vessel operations

"This investment strengthens Port Freeport's ability to support agricultural imports and exports while maintaining the infrastructure necessary to serve our customers and regional industries," said Rob Giesecke, Chairman of the Port Freeport Commission. "We appreciate the support of Senator Ted Cruz, Senator John Cornyn, and Congressman Randy Weber in securing federal funding that supports continued economic growth and strengthens our region's position in global trade."

The project represents another strategic investment in Port Freeport's cargo-handling infrastructure, supporting reliable operations and the efficient movement of agricultural commodities to international markets.

“Investing in modern infrastructure is essential to meeting the evolving needs of our customers and maintaining Port Freeport’s competitive advantage,” said Phyllis Saathoff, Executive Director and CEO of Port Freeport. “These upgrades will improve the reliability and efficiency of existing cargo handling operations while positioning the port for future growth.”

The award is part of a nearly $498 million federal investment announced by U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy to support 35 port infrastructure projects across 19 states. Administered by MARAD, the PIDP funds infrastructure improvements that strengthen supply chains, enhance port operations, and support the efficient movement of goods through the nation’s maritime transportation system.

Port Freeport is a leading port in the export of crude oil and natural gas liquids and ranks 6th nationally in chemicals, 13th in total foreign waterborne tonnage, and 4th in the State of Texas by the same measure. A 2022 Economic Impact Study by Texas A&M Transportation Institute revealed that, nationally, the Freeport Harbor Channel generates 266,300 jobs and has a total economic output of $157.3 billion. Port Freeport serves Alliera, Atlantic Container Lines, AMPORTS, BASF, Chiquita Fresh N.A., Dole Fresh Fruit, The Dow Chemical Company, Enterprise Products Partners, ExxonMobil, Freeport LNG, Fresh Del Monte Produce Inc., Ford Motor Company, General Motors, Glovis, Grimaldi Lines, Höegh Autoliners, “K” Line, Kirby Marine, Liberty Global Logistics, Linde, Maersk, Mediterranean Shipping Company, MEGlobal, Mitsubishi Motors, NYK RORO, Phillips 66, Riviana Foods, Inc., Sallaum Lines, Tenaris, U.S Department of Energy, Volkswagen Group of America, and Vulcan Materials Company.

Port Freeport is committed to keeping the local community informed of our operation and results. If you have questions or comments about this article, please email or call Amanda Veliz, Public Affairs Manager.

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