



Renewing Texas Infrastructure

2012 Texas Infrastructure Report Card

Texas Section – American Society of Civil Engineers



Navigable Waterways Fact Sheet

Key Infrastructure Facts: Existing Condition and Performance

- The Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) is a federally maintained shallow draft channel that links all of the Gulf Coast ports and connects with the inland waterway system. The GIWW is the nation's third busiest inland waterway, with the Texas portion handling over 72.3 percent of its traffic. The GIWW provides a valuable link between Texas deep draft port and a gateway to other ports along the Gulf of Mexico.
- In combination with ports, Texas ranked first in the nation in total waterborne tonnage moved in the United States.
- In Texas, the GIWW is 423 miles long and is an important component of the state's diversified multimodal transportation system.
- In 2010, 60.1 million short tons (one short ton equals 2,000 pounds) of goods were moved on the Texas GIWW. The estimated value of these goods was over \$34.5 billion. This was accomplished by over 79,000 barge trips.
- The GIWW serves as a transportation artery for recreational boating, sports fishing, and commercial trade. It is the commercial trade link that the waterway provides, and the subsequent economic prosperity for the Texas coastal region and the state as a whole, that accounts for much of the waterway's value.
- Many industries have concentrated in the coastal region of Texas to capitalize on the economic benefits of water transportation efficiency. Thousands of jobs are directly and indirectly linked to the waterway and much of the state's movement of domestic and international cargo is moved by water.
- Petroleum products, chemicals, crude petroleum, and fertilizers account for approximately 91 percent of the tonnage moved on the waterway.

Anticipated Growth and Other Future Needs

- Funding in FY12 will enable Galveston District to provide quality planning, design and construction services that benefit 28 ports handling more than 500 million tons of commerce annually and keep waterways open for navigation and commerce, as well as maintain four of the top 10 U.S. leading ports (in millions of short tons) that contribute to regional and national economic development.
- The Galveston District FY12 Operation and Maintenance budget for FY12 will continue to meet the high-priority study, construction, and operation and maintenance activities required to ensure the safe and efficient operations of the more than 1,000 miles of channels (including 270 miles of deep draft and 750 miles of shallow draft in the district), while providing employment opportunities that support our nation's economy.
- The Galveston District FY12 Operation and Maintenance budget continues operations and maintenance efforts to ensure the annual critical maintenance of deep and shallow draft channels; shoaling and levee damage; as well as jetty; incremental levee raising; new mooring

buoys/repairs to existing buoys systems; and erosion protection to levees are completed on time and on budget.

- Reduced funding in the FY12 Operations and Maintenance budget will ensure critical operation and maintenance requirements are adequately addressed and completed.
- The FY12 budget will continue funding the Galveston District's proactive emergency management initiatives that assist states and local sponsors with the identification of low-cost and low-impact solutions to flood and coastal storms, as well as build, sustain, and improve our capabilities to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, safeguard and mitigate natural and man-made hazards to protect our communities and prevent billions in damages.
- Funding in FY12 will allow Galveston District to identify and improve projects that promote and enhance port capabilities, encourage investment in inland and coastal waterway transportation (to reduce highway congestion), and promote vital economic activities throughout the U.S. that form an important linkage to the global community.
- The FY12 budget supports Corps regulatory work in the SWG's waters and wetlands, to provide responsible development while protecting the aquatic environment and ensuring no net loss of wetlands while continuing to issue hundreds of permits annually.

Adequacy of Current Funding and Need for Expanded Funding

- The USACE Galveston District acts as the federal sponsor for the GIWW in Texas. Cuts in discretionary spending have limited federal appropriations to fully fund Section 216 studies to address safety and inefficiency problems on the GIWW.
- To build, maintain and manage the GIWW in the future will require continued federal support.
- The GIWW historically is appropriated \$24 million - \$27 million annually which provides for dredging critical annual shoals, critical placement area capacity, operation and maintenance of the Brazos River Floodgates and Colorado River Locks, and maintenance of the mooring facilities.
- Improved efficiencies on the GIWW could be realized from dredging advanced maintenance, implementing disposal area management practices to increase long term placement area capacities and disposal levee erosion protection. These improved efficiencies would provide a higher level of service to the barge industry resulting in economic benefits to the nation. It is estimated that one foot of draft restriction is equal to \$1B of economic impact annually.
- Over the last several years, the Corps' decreased funding has resulted in a shortfall of about \$10 million - \$15 million a year to cover the minimum maintenance requirements for the GIWW in Texas.
- The Texas portion of the GIWW has an industry-imposed draft restriction of 9'6" due to the inability to maintain the project depth of the entire GIWW.
- Congress has provided other states such as Louisiana with increased funding for ecosystem restoration projects involving dredged material. The Texas House Committee on Land and Resources Management, Interim Report 2002, notes this difference in federal funding and strongly urges Congress to consider proportional funding for these types of projects in the USACE Galveston District.
- The Texas Department of Transportation, as the non-federal sponsor, desires the continuation of the USACE Section 216 Studies, which will address current and long-term needs of the GIWW in Texas. Funding issues will need to be addressed to continue these necessary and important studies.

Sources

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers website (www.usace.army.mil)
- Input provided by Galveston District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers staff, June 2012
- Input provided by Texas Department of Transportation staff, April 2012