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October 13, 2021

The Honorable Craig Brown  
Mayor's Office  
City of Galveston  
823 Rosenberg  
Galveston, Texas 77550

RE: Pelican Island Causeway Bridge Replacement

Dear Mayor Brown,

We recently learned of a revised proposal under consideration by TXDOT and others to lower the height of the to-be-constructed replacement Pelican Island Causeway from the original 75-foot clearance to a 45-foot fixed-span clearance.

Newport Marine Terminal is located to the West of the current Pelican Island bridge and has historically relied on marine access for tugboats, barges and other vessels calling on our facility. Unfortunately, the aged design of the current bridge has limited our ability to grow and receive additional types/categories of vessels. A decision to reduce to the height and/or width of the bridge span that would further restrict the ability of vessels and barges arriving from the east (Galveston) side of our facility will have a severe detrimental impact on the viability of both maintaining historical levels of operation, as well as future expansion and development of the Newport Marine Terminal.

In reviewing other spans along the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW), it appears that most designs incorporate the increased clearance requirements of modern vessels, including tugs and barge tows, with the "standard" being a vertical clearance of ~75 feet and width clearances of ~300 feet. Incorporating these more modern design elements will benefit not only the stakeholders to the West of the existing Pelican Island causeway, but also those stakeholders on the east side of the Galveston Channel.

As we evaluate future development of this property and consider additional significant investment to increase marine traffic, jobs, and commerce in the Galveston area, we implore all to carefully consider the permanent impediments to growth and future activity that will flow from continuing restrictions to waterway traffic to the West End tenants.

Data was recently presented in support of the proposed design of the Pelican Island replacement bridge. Unfortunately, it seems that the studies failed to take into account the fact that current traffic is limited due to the existing structure, yielding fewer commercial vessel transits than could otherwise be expected with a more commercially viable design and clearance parameters.

Access to the Galveston Ship Channel via Pelican Island Bridge is critical to the operation and growth of Newport Marine Terminal and to the operation and growth of the many facilities located along the Galveston Ship Channel and the GIWW west of the Pelican Island bridge. These businesses employ hundreds of workers and bridge a significant financial benefit to the City as a result. Vessels, barges, and tows being forced to transit around Pelican Island will negatively affect our business model, as well as those of our neighboring owners and customers.

In closing, any re-design of the bridge that fails to recognize modern intracoastal waterway maritime vessel size standards and requirements will limit future potential and expansion within the west end of the Galveston Ship Channel, substantially devalue properties all along the waterfront, and eliminate jobs and other economic drivers upon which our local economy is founded. We respectfully request that you reconsider the proposed design for the to-be-constructed Pelican Island bridge in order to enhance commerce all along the Galveston Ship Channel and the GIWW and help local businesses along the waterfront remain competitive in our economic region.

Sincerely,



Todd Sullivan  
President