

PRESS RELEASE

Bush crafts coastal partnership to protect Texas

Unprecedented cooperation focused on better storm protection, recovery

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 31, 2015

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AUSTIN — Texas and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are teaming up for the first time ever to develop a plan to better protect the Texas coast from storms, and to speed recovery afterward.

Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush and Brigadier General David C. Hill, commander of the Army Corps of Engineers Southwestern Division in Dallas, today signed Texas' first-ever agreement with the federal government to begin work in this context.

"It has been seven years since hurricanes Ike and Dolly. We are still just as vulnerable now as we were then," Bush said. "It is time to take action and move forward -- and that's what we're doing with this agreement."

The agreement between the General Land Office and the Corps begins the process of developing the Coastal Texas Protection and Restoration Feasibility Study. The study will investigate the feasibility of projects for flood reduction, hurricane and storm damage mitigation and ecosystem restoration along the entire Texas coast.

"The Memorandum of Understanding is a great first step to help us shape our relationship as we work together towards a common goal," said Brig. Gen. Hill. "The Texas coast is not only a Texas treasure, but also an economic, environmental and cultural powerhouse that has great significance for our nation. Texas coastal protection has been a key Army Corps of Engineers focus for 135 years, since our first Engineer Office was established on Galveston Island in 1880. This MOU underscores the importance of that focus as well as the immeasurable value of our relationship with the Texas General Land Office."

The cost of further delay is unacceptable, Bush said. More than 7.1 million Texans live along the coast, and the unreimbursed damages from the 2008 hurricane season are estimated to be more than \$29 billion.

Texas also hosts more than one-quarter of the nation's total refining capacity. "The Texas coast powers the nation," Bush said. "Its vulnerability should be considered a national security issue."

Bush said it's important to pool county, state and federal resources, and begin prioritizing efforts to build a resilient Texas coast. "By working together as a region -- combining and coordinating local, state and federal resources -- we will directly address ongoing threats to the Texas coast for future generations."

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