

PRESS RELEASE

Texas General Land Office Celebrates Signing of SB 1160

Newly signed legislation creates “Gulf Coast Protection District” for future coastal projects

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GALVESTON — Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed Senate Bill 1160 into law yesterday which will create a Gulf Coast Protection District. This district will be authorized to receive and issue funds for future coastal projects identified in the Coastal Texas Protection and Restoration Feasibility Study. The “Coastal Texas Study,” as it is commonly called, is a 6-year, \$20.6 million comprehensive study led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in partnership with the Texas General Land Office. The purpose of the study is to identify feasible projects that reduce risks to public health and the economy, restore critical ecosystems, and advance resiliency along the Texas coast.

“The signing of this bill greatly improves Texas’s ability to defend itself against future hurricane events and advance much-needed coastal improvement projects,” said Deputy Land Commissioner Mark Havens. “The Texas coast remains one of our nation’s largest economic drivers, generating billions in tax revenue each year while also housing thousands of species of wildlife and delicate ecosystems. Protecting the coast remains a top priority for us at the GLO. I applaud the legislature for advancing this bill, and I look forward to our continued work together to ensure Texans have a resilient coast for generations to come.”

SB 1160 was introduced by State Senator Larry Taylor in March 2021 and was co-authored by State Representative Dennis Paul. The bill allows for the creation of a special multi-county district that would serve as a non-federal construction cost-share entity that can sign project partnership agreements (PPA) for projects listed in the Coastal Texas Study, including needed coastal improvements to increase resiliency from future hurricane events, erosion and expected population increases in coastal communities, and for the Sabine Pass to Galveston Bay Coastal Storm Risk Management project in Orange County. Currently, Texas does not have an entity that can partner with the Federal government to implement these storm surge protective measures.

The Coastal Texas Study is concluding the feasibility phase and is on track to deliver a signed USACE Engineers Chief’s Report to Congress in September of 2021. More information on the Coastal Texas Study can be found here: <https://coastalstudy.texas.gov>