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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Multi-day water monitoring samples indicate presence of benzene in Houston Ship Channel

Galveston Bay Foundation collects water samples in response to Deer Park Fire

(HOUSTON, TX – March 25, 2019) Galveston Bay Foundation collected 14 samples over four days starting on Friday, March 22, from areas both upstream and downstream from the ITC fire. All the samples showed less than one part per billion of benzene in the water, other than one sample from Saturday, March 23, which showed a spike of 46.8 parts per billion of benzene.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality surface water quality standard for fish and shellfish is 581 parts per billion. However, the EPA recommends a National Water Quality standard of 16 parts per billion for fish and shellfish exposure. Therefore, this sample comes in below TCEQ's standards, but above the recommended EPA level. Benzene volatilizes in the water column, which means it evaporates to the air. By Monday, all sample levels were back down to less than one part per billion.

Galveston Bay Foundation intends to continue its independent water sampling in the coming weeks and will coordinate with agency partners to communicate those results. Galveston Bay Foundation's water sampling data has been published in partnership with Environmental Defense Fund:

[Results from Friday, March 22nd](#)

[Results from Saturday, March 23rd](#)

Results will be formatted in an interactive map as soon as Monday evening.

"We began taking these samples to ensure there was good data available to help in the overall response and cleanup effort from the ITC fire," said Bob Stokes, Galveston Bay Foundation President. "In addition to our data, we know the State of Texas and contractors from ITC are now taking water quality samples in the area. We are hopeful these collective efforts will provide a good road map for continued response and cleanup of the discharge of product and firewater into the Houston Ship Channel."

About the Galveston Bay Foundation

Established in 1987, Galveston Bay Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Its mission is to preserve and enhance Galveston Bay as a healthy and productive place for generations to come. For more information, call (281) 332-3381, visit www.galvbay.org, like us on Facebook, or follow us on Twitter @GBayFoundation

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