



Hovensa L.L.C. reaches agreement for financing underwritten by Bank of America

February 11, 2000

St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, February 11, 2000.....Hovensa L.L.C. ("Hovensa") announced today that it had reached agreement for \$600 million in financing underwritten by Bank of America for the construction of a 58,000 barrel per day delayed coking unit and related facilities at its refinery and to repay existing bank debt. The financing includes a \$450 million term loan facility and a \$150 million reducing revolving credit facility.

Engineering for the coker and the procurement of equipment with long delivery time have been ongoing since late last year. Construction of the coker is expected to begin in the second quarter of this year. The target date for completion of the project is the second quarter of 2002. Bechtel Corporation will be the primary contractor for constructing the coker under a fixed price turnkey contract.

Hovensa President and Chief Operating Officer Rene L. Sagebien expressed his appreciation to Governor Charles W. Turnbull and Lieutenant Governor Gerard Luz James II for their assistance in moving the project forward. Sagebien noted that these officials were instrumental in obtaining the necessary governmental approvals to enable the scheduled closing on financing for the coker project.

The initial phase of the project will be the preparation of the construction site. This phase of construction will provide employment for about 200 workers. Manpower requirements for the coker construction project will increase over a period of about ten months to a peak of approximately 2000 workers. The coker project includes the construction of a coker, a petroleum coke storage facility and a dock for the shipment of coke as well as modifications to existing process units necessary to accommodate the operation of a coker at the refinery.

Early last year Hovensa retained Bechtel to establish and operate a construction-crafts training program at the St. Croix vocational school at Hovensa's expense. The program, which is being conducted in cooperation with the departments of labor and education, is designed to provide training for Virgin Islands residents in civil, electrical, instrument, millwright, pipefitting and welding crafts.

Hovensa is owned equally by subsidiaries of Amerada Hess Corporation and Petroleos de Venezuela S.A.

Contact: Hovensa L.L.C. Alex Moorhead (340) 692-3285