

EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUMMARY REPORT
May 14, 2014

ITEM: 6

SUBJECT: Information Item: Update on the Cleanup of the A-8 Anchorage, San Diego Bay. (*Eric Becker*)

PURPOSE: This is an information item to provide the San Diego Water Board with an update on the successful completion of a cleanup project that utilized funding from the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) Cleanup and Abatement Account (CAA).

RECOMMENDATION: There is no recommendation as this is an information item and the Board will take no action

KEY ISSUES: Historic marine debris is removed from San Diego Bay to protect water quality and beneficial uses of the Bay.

DISCUSSION: This item provides an opportunity for Eileen Maher, San Diego Unified Port District (Port District), to present information pertaining to the completion of a \$1 million project to remove almost 400 tons of marine debris from the former A-8 Anchorage located in San Diego Bay waters off of 24th Street in the City of National City. The marine debris was placed on barges, transported to shore, and recycled or disposed of at a local landfill.

The now closed A-8 Anchorage was an unlimited, free, 130 acre anchorage in San Diego Bay established in the 1980s to accommodate up to 150 vessels at any one time. The A-8 Anchorage was historically a location where irresponsible owners of anchored vessels caused discharges of marine debris waste, including willful acts such as the sinking of vessels after abandonment. The A-8 Anchorage was located adjacent to wildlife and endangered species habitats including salt marshes, eelgrass beds, and the Sweetwater Marsh and South San Diego Bay Units of the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge. The marine debris posed both a navigational hazard and an environmental threat to endangered species and wildlife living in the area.

In June 2006, the Port District embarked on a multi-year effort to cleanup marine debris left in the A-8 Anchorage including sunken batteries, engines, fuel tanks, engine blocks, and vessels. An initial pilot study was completed in which 3,800 pounds of debris were removed. The follow-up first phase of cleanup was completed in December 2007 and removed an additional 3,750 pounds of debris. On October 1, 2008, the Port District authorized closure of the A-8 Anchorage to vessels for long-term free anchoring due to the high annual costs of removing abandoned or derelict vessels from the anchorage.

In March 2009, the San Diego Water Board secured \$200,000 from the State Water Board's CAA to assist the Port District's cleanup efforts. The CAA receives funding from Regional Water Board monetary assessment of administrative civil liabilities and settlements from enforcement actions. (The San Diego Water Board and other Regional Water Boards can request CAA funds for qualified cleanup projects within the regions.) The Port District also obtained \$100,000 from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service and \$50,000 from the Port District's Environmental Fund to help fund the cleanup work. The Port District utilized these funds in completing a second phase of cleanup in September 2011 to remove over 310 tons of marine debris, including 79 derelict vessels and two barges.

In June 2011, the Port District conducted another marine survey and found that over 900 items of marine debris, including 11 more vessels, still remained in the area. The San Diego Water Board assisted the Port District in obtaining an additional \$99,500 from the CAA to support cleanup of the remaining marine debris. The Port District also obtained \$120,000 from NOAA's Marine Debris Removal Program.

The latest phase of A-8 Anchorage cleanup work conducted in the summer months of 2013 was initiated using a side-scan sonar survey to identify the location of the remaining items of debris. Once the debris locations were identified, divers were utilized to conduct the debris removal operations. This phase of the cleanup work was completed in September 2013 and removed 58 additional tons of marine debris. Twenty-three tons of debris were disposed of in a landfill and over 34 tons were recycled. Discussions with Port District staff indicate that no additional marine debris removal will be conducted since most of the debris has now been removed. The Port District is also

evaluating potential restoration opportunities for the area. A Final Report detailing the work completed in 2013 and the volume of marine debris removed is attached (Supporting Document No. 1).

The completion of marine debris removal from the former A-8 Anchorage improves water quality in San Diego Bay, and eliminates a navigational hazard as well as an environmental threat to wildlife and endangered species in the Bay. Moreover the Port District has demonstrated its ability to implement a highly successful project that effectively used CAA funds to improve the water quality and beneficial uses of San Diego Bay.

LEGAL CONCERNS: None.

SUPPORTING
DOCUMENTS:

1. San Diego Unified Port District Final Report, *Debris Removal in the A-8 Anchorage and 350-Acre Surrounds, South San Diego Bay, California*, dated March 31, 2014.

SIGNIFICANT
CHANGES:

None.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

This item was noticed in the Meeting Notice and Agenda for the May 14, 2014 Board meeting.