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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board

PUBLIC NOTICE OF INTENT TO RELY ON NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) DOCUMENT

Project Applicant: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District

Project Title: South San Diego Harbor Maintenance Dredging Project

Project Location: South San Diego Bay, San Diego County, California

Project Description. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District (USACE or applicant) as part of its continuing program of regular maintenance dredging, proposes to dredge shoaled sediment along the federal navigation channel (Federal Channel) of south San Diego Bay in San Diego County, California to restore the channel to its authorized design depth. The dredged material would be disposed in nearshore ocean waters to nourish Silver Strand State Beach and at the LA-5 Ocean Dredge Material Disposal Site (ODMDS). The proposed project would (1) restore the Federal Channel in south San Diego Bay to authorized design depth(s); (2) assure continued navigation for marine vessel traffic within San Diego Bay; and (3) provide beach nourishment material for beaches on the Coronado Peninsula severely eroded by littoral processes.

The proposed dredge footprint is a portion of the Federal Channel in south San Diego Bay situated adjacent to the National City Marine Terminal and Sweetwater Channel along the bay shoreline of the City of National City in San Diego County. The portion of the Federal Channel requiring dredging spans approximately 5,700 linear feet and approximate 96 acres adjacent to the National City Marine Terminal and Sweetwater Channel. The estimated volume of sediments to be dredged from the Federal Channel in south San Diego Bay could reach 300,000 cubic yards (cy). Approximately 225,000cy will be disposed at the LA-5 ODMDS and approximately 75,000cy will be placed in the Coronado Nearshore Placement Site to nourish the adjacent Silver Strand State Beach. LA-5 ODMDS is located in open ocean waters approximately five nautical miles southwest of the entrance to San Diego Bay at a depth of 460 feet (ft) to 660 ft. The Coronado Nearshore Placement Site is a part of the Strand littoral cell, located on the Pacific Ocean side of the Coronado Peninsula in the nearshore environment approximately 1,300 to 2,300 feet offshore. The footprint of the nearshore placement site is approximately 146 acres. Dredging of the Federal Channel in south San Diego Bay would be performed by a clamshell dredge, over a period of approximately 3 to 4 months.

Regulatory Requirements The discharge of dredged or fill material to aquatic or marine environments is regulated by the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972, as amended (Clean Water Act) (33 U.S.C. section 1251 et seq.) The USACE is required to complete the proposed project in compliance with Clean Water Act (CWA) sections 401 and 404. CWA section 401 requires the project applicant to obtain a state certification (401 Certification) that the resulting discharge from the proposed project will comply with state water

HENRY ABARBANEL, PH.D., CHAIR | DAVID GIBSON, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

quality standards. CWA section 404(b)(1) establishes guidelines for discharge of dredged or fill materials into an aquatic ecosystem.

The USACE applied for a 401 Certification from the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region (San Diego Water Board). The Board's issuance of the 401 Certification is subject to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

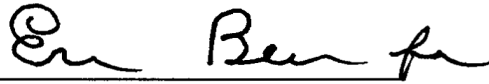
The USACE, as Lead Agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), prepared a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and circulated the document for a 30-day public comment period. Based on the draft EA and comments received, the USACE will issue a Final EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) (collectively, NEPA Documents). Pursuant to the NEPA Documents, the proposed project will not have a significant impact upon the existing environment or the quality of the human environment. Furthermore, while the USACE does not permit itself under CWA section 404, a 404(b)(1) analysis in Appendix A of the EA demonstrates substantive compliance with CWA section 404.

The NEPA Documents will be prepared before a CEQA document would otherwise be completed for the project. The San Diego Water Board, as Lead Agency under CEQA, believes that the NEPA Documents for this project will meet the requirements of CEQA. The San Diego Water Board intends to use the NEPA Documents instead of preparing a separate CEQA document. This public notice is being circulated pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15225.

Document Availability. Information on this matter, including the NEPA Documents, is currently available and may be reviewed at the San Diego Water Board office (2375 Northside Drive, Suite 100, San Diego, California 92108), during normal business hours. Interested persons may also receive a copy of the NEPA Documents by contacting Eric Becker of the San Diego Water Board at the address below. This notice is also available on the San Diego Water Board webpage at: <https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/>.

Any person with questions or requests for additional information regarding this notice should contact Eric Becker at (619) 521-3364 or eric.becker@waterboards.ca.gov. Please bring this information to the attention of any person known to you who would be interested in this matter.

Dated: October 14, 2019

Signed: 

David T. Barker P.E.
Supervising WRC Engineer
San Diego Regional Water Quality
Control Board