

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ON THE FLOATING DRY DOCK PROJECT AT NAVAL BASE SAN DIEGO, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508), Navy Regulations for Implementing NEPA (32 CFR Part 775), and Chief of Naval Operations Environmental Readiness Program Manual 5090.1E, the Department of the Navy (Navy) gives notice that an Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required for the Floating Dry Dock (FDD) Project at Naval Base San Diego (NBSD), San Diego, California.

A Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Draft EA was published in the San Diego Union Tribune on 10 October 2019 initiating a 15-day public comment period, which ended on 25 October 2019. The Draft EA was made available to the public at three local public libraries and on the Navy Region Southwest website:

<https://www.cnic.navy.mil/navysouthwestprojects>.

No public comments were received on the Draft EA.

A NOA for the Final EA and the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will also be published in the San Diego Union Tribune and copies of the documents will be made available to the public upon request and published on the Navy Region Southwest website.

Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action: The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide dry dock space necessary to support the U.S. Pacific Fleet's forecasted surface ship maintenance requirement identified by the Commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet. The need for emplacement and operation of dry dock space is to ensure NBSD's capability to conduct berth-side repair and maintenance of vessels, furthering the Navy's ability to provide training and equipping of combat-capable Naval forces ready to deploy worldwide.

The Proposed Action would include emplacement and operation of up to two floating dry docks, including all required dredging and sediment disposal as well as all required demolition and construction activities, necessary to support the forecasted surface ship maintenance requirement at NBSD.

Existing Conditions: NBSD is located approximately 3 miles southeast of the City of San Diego's Central Business District and 10 miles north of the U.S./Mexico border on the eastern shore of San Diego Bay. NBSD is bordered to the north by the community of Barrio Logan, to the east by Interstate 5 (I-5), and to the south by the cities of National City and Chula Vista.

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East Harbor Drive divides NBSD into two main parts: the mainly industrial bay front area west of East Harbor Drive and the community support complex east of East Harbor Drive. There are approximately 977 acres of land and 326 acres of water that extend to the U.S. pier headline in San Diego Bay. NBSD contains 12 piers (including a Mole Pier), two channels, and various quay walls that extend along approximately 5.6 miles of shoreline.

Alternatives Analyzed: The following action alternatives were evaluated against the screening factors and carried forward for further analysis:

- Alternative 1 - Emplacement of a floating dry dock at the south berth of the Mole Pier;
- Alternative 2 (Selected Alternative) - Emplacement of a Commercial Out Lease (COL) floating dry dock near the MGBW maintenance piers; and,
- Alternative 3 - Emplacement of floating dry docks at both the south berth of the Mole Pier and near the MGBW maintenance piers.

Three options for dredged sediment disposal were identified for each of the three action alternatives and have been evaluated in the EA:

- Option 1: Nearshore Replenishment - Beneficial Reuse;
- Option 2: Ocean Disposal; and,
- Option 3: Upland Disposal.

Pursuant to CEQ Regulations for Implementing NEPA (Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 1500 - 1508), the No Action Alternative was also analyzed in the EA. Under this alternative, the proposed emplacement and operation of the floating dry dock(s), including all required dredging and sediment disposal as well as all required demolition and construction activities, would not be implemented at NBSD. Under this alternative, it is likely that repair and maintenance of vessels would be deferred and/or would be addressed at offsite commercial or Navy shipyards (e.g., along the East Coast) at significantly increased costs, thereby reducing the Navy's overall ability to maintain mission-ready vessels.

Alternative 2 is the Selected Alternative as it best addresses the purpose and need for the Proposed Action in the immediate term. Alternative 2 includes the following primary project elements:

- The Navy would lease approximately 2.72 acres of water and 0.88 acre of land to MGBW for a period of 30 to 66 years to support emplacement and operation of a COL floating dry dock at the southern edge of the NBSD property boundary near the existing MGBW maintenance piers.

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- Emplacement of the proposed COL floating dry dock would require MGBW to dredge a 5.55-acre area, including a 2.14-acre base dredged to a depth up to -39 feet mean lower low water (MLLW). It is anticipated that dredging would involve removal of approximately 165,000 cubic yards (cy) of sediment, which would be disposed using one or more of the three disposal options on the basis of the results of sampling and laboratory testing pursuant to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Green Book (1991) and Inland Testing Manual (1998).
- Two pedestrian bridges and a vehicle bridge would be constructed to provide landside access and servicing to the COL floating dry dock.
- The proposed COL floating dry dock would require installation of two mooring dolphins.
- MGBW would provide all power services and would tie into existing sanitary sewer, storm water, and domestic water supply lines as well as the steam distribution and return condensate system on or near the site.
- MGBW would be responsible for required security improvements including removal and replacement of the installation's secure perimeter fence, and installation of their own water barrier system.
- The proposed floating dry dock would be procured by MGBW, constructed at a shipyard outside of San Diego, and then barged to the MGBW maintenance piers location.
- Following all required construction activities and emplacement of the proposed COL floating dry dock at this location, MGBW would be responsible for all operations and maintenance activities associated with the facility.
- Future maintenance dredging may be necessary to maintain the operational depth requirements.

Environmental Effects: The following is a summary of the environmental impacts associated with Alternative 2, the Selected Alternative, including all required dredging and sediment disposal, as well as construction and operational activities:

Air Quality/Climate Change: Potential short-term construction-related emissions would result from dredging, transportation, and sediment disposal activities as well as construction activities. The use of tugboats, heavy trucks, and heavy equipment would generate exhaust emissions. However, as the total duration of the dredging and construction activities is likely to be approximately 8 months, these

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emissions would be minor and would not exceed any federal, state, or local *de minimis* thresholds. Therefore, implementation of Alternative 2 would not result in significant impacts to air quality.

Water Resources: Implementation of Alternative 2 would include dredging underwater sediments of the Bay bottom at the southern NBSD boundary near the existing MGBW maintenance piers, loading of dredged material onto barge(s), transport of dredged material to disposal locations via barge, and direct underwater disposal at one of three nearshore locations for beneficial reuse, as well as the installation of piles for access structures and mooring dolphins to support the emplacement of the floating dry dock. In-water work, including dredging at the existing MGBW maintenance piers, disposal of dredged material at the beneficial reuse sites or ocean disposal site, and installation of piles with vibratory and impact pile drivers would increase water turbidity associated with suspension of bottom sediments. However, increases in water turbidity would be short-term in duration as sediments would settle back to the bay floor following the cessation of dredging and construction activities. Best Management Practices (BMPs) implemented as part of Alternative 2 would reduce, minimize, or avoid increases in water turbidity or improper sediment disposal and would include: turbidity curtains, vessel speed limits, a prohibition on hydraulic dredging, spill control and GPS monitoring of sediment transport barge(s), and controls and limits on dredge volumes and rate of production.

Following emplacement, sediment resuspension would be minimal. Dry docking evolutions (i.e., lowering and raising the floating dry dock) are slow and do not substantially disturb underlying sediments. Ballast water pumps would be powered from existing land-side electrical power sources and operated in compliance with applicable National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requirements.

The Navy prepared a Coastal Consistency Negative Determination, with which the California Coastal Commission provided concurrence on 31 December 2020, concluding that there would be no adverse effects on coastal resources or uses. Additionally, prior to construction, MGBW would obtain Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board and a Clean Water Act Section 404/Rivers and Harbors Act Section 10 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Therefore, the Proposed Action would not have significant impacts to water resources.

Therefore, implementation of Alternative 2 would not result in significant impacts to water resources.

Marine Biological Resources: Potential impacts to biological resources would result from dredging and sediment disposal as well as

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construction activities, including installation of piles with a vibratory or impact pile drivers. The proposed dredge footprint parallels the southern property boundary of NBSD.

Physical disturbance during dredging and sediment disposal (27 weeks) and construction activities (10 weeks) under Alternative 2 would result in the short-term loss of marine benthic organisms. Turbidity would persist throughout these activities; however, it would vary spatially based on currents and sediment grain size. Most sediments suspended by dredging would resettle within several hours, and only a small fraction would take longer to resettle. Following emplacement, operation of the floating dry dock could result in potential water quality impacts. However, sediment resuspension would be minimal. As previously described dry docking evolutions (i.e., lowering and raising the floating dry dock) are slow and do not substantially disturb underlying sediments.

Dredging, as well as required construction activities, would result in the temporary displacement of marine birds and minimal alterations to foraging conditions and/or prey availability. These impacts would not be significant because of their limited scale and duration.

Underwater noise generated during dredging and pile-driving activities would disturb fish and marine mammals within the vicinity. As a result, fish and marine mammals may temporarily leave or avoid the project area. The implementation of this Alternative 2 would result in up to 240 Level B (Behavior) takes of California sea lion (*Zalophus californianus*); however, with the imposition of an 82-foot (25-meter) buffered shutdown zone Level A (Injury) take would be avoided. The Navy submitted an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) application to National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and notice from NMFS was published in the *Federal Register* on 16 April 2020. In late April 2020, NMFS received public comments regarding potential inconsistencies between sections of the IHA. In response, the Navy provided NMFS with revised IHA support documentation that was accepted by the NMFS. No other public comments regarding the IHA were received, and on 19 May 2020 NMFS issued an IHA for the project.

Potential impacts on green sea turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) from implementation of Alternative 2 would primarily be from impact pile driving. However, with the imposition of an 82-foot (25-meter) buffered shutdown zone, the potential for acoustic injury would be avoided. The Navy submitted a consultation letter to NMFS on 11 February 2020 pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). On 25 March 2020, NMFS provided concurrence with the determination that the proposed installation and operation of the COL floating dry dock is not likely to adversely affected species listed as threatened or endangered or critical habitats designated under the ESA.

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Under Alternative 2, dredging would convert approximately 5 acres of shallow subtidal habitat to moderately deep and deep subtidal habitat. Additionally, dredging would remove an eelgrass bed estimated to occupy 0.83 acres according to surveys conducted in 2017. The actual area of impact for eelgrass would be determined by pre- and post-dredging surveys. Subsequent to dredging, the floating dry dock and accessory structures would shade approximately 2.1 acres that have been converted to deep subtidal habitat. These impacts would be mitigated by providing offsetting ecological lift equivalent to the quantified loss with 1.084 acres of eelgrass habitat credits through the Navy Eelgrass Mitigation Bank.

The Navy submitted an EFH Assessment and began consultation with NMFS. On 14 April 2020, NMFS stated that they had no objection to the Navy's proposed compensatory mitigation and NMFS has no additional EFH Conservation Recommendations at this time.

Noise: Airborne noise associated with implementation of Alternative 2 would be generally consistent with existing noise levels within NBSD, which is a military working waterfront. The nearest noise sensitive receptor to the dredging area under Alternative 2 is the residential community near West 20th Street & Wilson Avenue, located approximately 0.8 mile from the existing MGBW maintenance piers.

Dredging activities would produce noise from the dredging equipment, tugboats and barges, and human activity associated with the estimated 20 workers onsite. Dominant noise sources associated with dredging may include dredge engine and exhaust noise, crane engine and exhaust noise, rope noise and bucket water splash, and various noises associated with the boom and grab, the bucket hitting the bottom during dredge, and the bucket closing and opening during dredging operations. No blasting would take place. Dredging operations would take place between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., Monday through Friday, for a duration of approximately 27 weeks. Construction activities required under Alternative 2 would generally occur on weekdays during daylight hours and would involve the use of standard construction equipment ranging from trucks and cranes to pile drivers, all of which would create noise. Sediment barges would be an additional source of noise generation. However, sediment barges would leave NBSD waters to join existing vessel transportation in the San Diego Harbor Channel and become indistinguishable from the existing vessel noise environment.

While the maximum airborne sound level of a piece of construction equipment may vary considerably depending on factors such as maintenance, age, activity, and load, most impact pile drivers generally produce a nominal peak noise level of approximately 105 A-weighted decibels (dBA) at a distance of 50 feet. Thus, when the impact pile driver is operating, it would be the predominant noise

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source, and it would determine the maximum noise levels in the project vicinity.

Dredging and construction operations, including overnight work, would not increase ambient outdoor noise levels at nearby sensitive receptors to greater than 65 dBA and noise-related impacts would be less than significant. Therefore, implementation of Alternative 2 would not result in significant airborne noise-related impacts to sensitive receptors.

Transportation: Under Alternative 2, landside transportation impacts would include construction worker commutes and construction equipment/materials deliveries that do not arrive via barge on the water-side of the existing MGBW maintenance piers. Construction workers would arrive at the West 19th Street Gate 53 entrance and proceed via West 19th Street and Womble Street to parking adjacent to the southern edge of the NBSD property boundary near the existing MGBW maintenance piers. Additional parking exists along Harbor Drive near the entrance gate. The estimated 20 construction workers (conservatively assumed to be arriving via single occupancy personal vehicle) would likely commute during peak hour traffic periods (i.e., typically between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9 a.m. as well as 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.); however, these commutes add a negligible amount of daily trips to Harbor Drive, totaling to less than 1 percent of the existing average daily trips (ADT) along that roadway. Additionally, these construction worker trips would be temporary, lasting for a period of approximately 8 months.

Marine Traffic. An additional source of traffic from Alternative 2 would be sediment transport barges transiting between the southern boundary of NBSD near the existing MGBW maintenance piers and beneficial reuse or ocean disposal sites (depending on sediment qualification). Vessel transportation in and around Bay would abide by existing charts and buoyed navigation channels and would be comparatively negligible in volume relative to the existing vessel traffic in and around the Bay.

Land Traffic. An additional source of traffic from Alternative 2 would be upland sediment disposal truck trips from the designated confined drying facility (CDF) at NBSD and Otay Landfill. In the case of upland disposal, it is expected that daily truck transportation would represent less than 1 percent of the existing ADT on all road segments between the CDF at NBSD and Otay Landfill and would not adversely impact the level of service of any of these road segments. Therefore, implementation of the Alternative 2 would not result in significant transportation-related impacts.

Hazardous Materials and Wastes: Alternative 2 would involve dredging at the southern edge of the NBSD property boundary near the existing MGBW maintenance piers to an operational depth of -39 feet MLLW.

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Given the existing water depth at this site - ranging from approximately -9 to -17 feet MLLW - the total estimated volume of dredged sediment would be 165,000 cy.

Sediment samples from the MGBW dredging footprint are currently being collected and tested in accordance with regulations in 40 CFR Parts 220-228. A sampling analysis plan has been prepared by Mission Environmental LLC on behalf of MGBW and was reviewed and was approved by the USACE and the USEPA on 9 January 2020. An Accident Prevention Plan would be required if triggered by hazardous substances in the sediment analysis, and all dredged sediment disposal operations would comply with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), a dredging permit issued by USACE, and a CWA Section 401 water quality certification from the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board. Any hazardous materials and wastes generated during construction and operational activities would also be subject to installation-wide Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act 312 and 313 reporting requirements.

Contractors would be subject to all federal, state, and San Diego County requirements for hazardous materials and hazardous waste management and would be required to follow the Hazardous Waste Management Plan (HWMP). Operationally, contractors working on the COL floating dry dock would be permitted to store hazardous materials and wastes associated maintenance activities, subject to the conditions in the HWMP and all applicable federal, state, and County of San Diego requirements. Operations-related hazardous materials would be used during standard dry dock vessel servicing and to maintain the dry dock, including fuel, solvents, paints, oils, and grease. All operational activities would be required to comply with federal, state, and local regulations for the routine transport, use, and disposal of any hazardous materials. Any accidental releases of these materials due to spills or leaks would be addressed and reported, consistent with the relevant regulations. Through the implementation of the HWMP, there would be no increase in human health risk or environmental exposure to hazardous materials or hazardous wastes.

Overall, implementation of Alternative 2 would not result in increased human health risk or environmental exposure. Alternative 2 would not result in significant impacts to hazardous materials and wastes.

Finding: Based on the analysis presented in the Final EA, and in coordination with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) NMFS Southwest Region, and California Coastal Commission, implementation of Alternative 2, the Selected Alternative, would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, preparation of an EIS is not necessary.

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The Final EA is on file and interested parties may obtain a copy from:
Department of the Navy, Naval Facilities Engineering Command,
Southwest, Coastal EV, 937 North Harbor Drive, Building 1, San Diego,
California 92123.

26 May 20

Date

/s/

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