



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10**

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OFFICE OF
ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANUP

August 1, 2018

Ms. Sarah Greenfield
Department of Environmental Quality
Northwest Region
700 NE Multnomah Street, Suite 600
Portland, Oregon 97232

Sent via email only

Re: Potential CERCLA Comments on Clean Water Act 404 permits related to the Portland Harbor Superfund Site

Dear Ms. Greenfield:

I am responding to your request for clarity regarding comments and concerns EPA's cleanup program may have about maintenance dredging and other Willamette River projects permitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ). U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued its Record of Decision for the in-river portion of the Portland Harbor Superfund Site (Site) in January 2017. The ROD selected a remedy for the reach of the Willamette River from River Mile (RM) 1.9 to 11.8.¹ In carrying forward the coordination contemplated by the 2002 Letter of Agreement between EPA, USACE, and ODEQ, I am happy to provide my thoughts on issues that should be considered and addressed regarding dredged materials management in the Lower Willamette River from RM 0 to 26.

The ROD established cleanup levels to protect human health and the environment. It also selected target tissue levels protective for consuming fish and shell fish that live and feed primarily within the Site. The ROD selected monitored natural recovery for the vast majority of the Site, while selecting dredging and capping of approximately 394 acres of contaminated sediment to remove higher concentration sediment to facilitate the natural recovery of the remainder of the Site along with ongoing source control efforts. The ROD also selected upland disposal in a permitted landfill as the appropriate disposal method for contaminated sediment. The selected remedy is anticipated to reduce loadings migrating downstream also.

Dredging projects conducted inside and upstream of the Site could impact achieving the ROD cleanup objectives if the materials to be dredged are not adequately characterized, managed and properly disposed of. Likewise, dredged materials from the ROD Area should be disposed of consistent with the ROD so as to protect human health and the environment. In EPA's review and coordination on dredging projects, we likely will be looking at the following issues and commenting accordingly.

¹ Record of Decision, Portland Harbor Superfund Site, Portland, Oregon, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, January 2017

For projects upstream (>RM 11.8) of the ROD Area, comments will be made regarding BMPs during dredging activities in many cases to ensure that the cleanups downstream are not recontaminated. Also, for projects upstream of the ROD Area, in water placement (disposal) upstream of the Site will be scrutinized to ensure that it does not cause recontamination of downstream cleanup areas or impact projected natural recovery.

For projects within the Site, comments will focus on consistency with the ROD and ensuring BMPs are used to minimize suspended contaminated sediments and leave surfaces do not exceed RALs such that ongoing exposure is minimized, recontamination potential is managed, and that overall impact to the water body through cleanup and permit actions are minimized. Disposal of any dredged materials from within the Site must be evaluated using Table 17 from the ROD and disposed of uplands if the sediment exceed the cleanup levels.

For projects downstream (e.g. RM 0 to 1.8, Multnomah Channel) of the Site in the Willamette River, to ensure that bioaccumulative contamination is considered, ROD Table 17 should be used to evaluate whether in water disposal is appropriate until the Sediment Evaluation Framework includes consideration of such values in tandem with a reliable hydrodynamic model to ensure that material comes to be located at various locations at concentrations that are protective.

Upland disposal for any project upstream (>RM 11.8) or downstream (RM 0 to 1.8) of the ROD Area is regulated under ODEQ authority.

As EPA implements its remedy and further experience is learned, other issues may be identified and we will coordinate on them with ODEQ, USACE, and the Technical Coordination Team on the Portland Harbor project.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns at (206) 553-1220 or via email at sheldrake.sean@epa.gov.

Sincerely,



Sean Sheldrake, RPM

Cc: James Holm, USACE
Melody White, USACE
Lance Peterson, CDM
TCT

via email only