



26 January 2005

INFORMATION PAPER

SUBJECT: Hilo Deep Draft Harbor, Hilo, Hawaii

1. Purpose: To provide information on the subject project.
2. Points of Major Interest and Facts.

a. The Hilo Deep Draft Harbor project was initially authorized under the River and Harbor Act of 1907. Subsequent work was authorized under the River and Harbor Act of 1912 and 1925 and completed in 1930. The existing project is in the operation and maintenance phase. The Federal government is responsible for the maintenance of the entrance channel and turning basin at the authorized depths. The last maintenance dredging was in April 1990. Condition surveys were performed in April 2003. The harbor does not presently require maintenance dredging. The breakwater structure was inspected in May 2004 and was found to be in stable condition.

b. The project consists of a 10,080-foot long breakwater protecting a 35-foot deep basin. The local sponsor is the State of Hawaii, Department of Transportation (DOT), Harbors Division. Section 102 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986 (Public Law 99-662) authorizes dredging the existing 35-foot basin, creating a 39-foot deep entrance channel and 38-foot deep turning basin to allow bulk sugar carriers to load to their maximum safe drafts at Hilo Harbor prior to departing for mainland sugar refineries. The estimated project cost for dredging the federal basin was \$6,100,000 (Federal: \$4,570,000; non-Federal: \$1,530,000). However, based on the lack of economic justification (terminated in 1991), further action was indefinitely deferred.

c. The DOT is interested in modifying the limits of the Federal dredging to permit a local extension of Piers 2 and 3. The proposed extension would accommodate the docking of larger cruise ships. The Honolulu District issued a provisional nation-wide Department of the Army permit for the pier extension in May 2004. A Federal permit is dependent on the State obtaining a water quality certification.

d. In June 2004, DOT requested the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to investigate the enlargement of the turning basin. The Honolulu District planned to submit this request as a new start reconnaissance study in FY06. However, budgetary restrictions will restrict any new starts.

e. The County of Hawaii expressed interest in December 2004 for a technical study on wave and water quality effects in the harbor interior. The study would be conducted under the Planning Assistance to States Program, depending on funds availability.