

**Finding of No Significant Impact
Hilo Harbor Maintenance Dredging
Hawaii Island, Hawaii**

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, the Honolulu District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has selected the following action and assessed the environmental effects of said action:

**Maintenance Dredging within the Federal Project Limits of Hilo Harbor,
minus Excluded Areas.**

The Corps proposes to conduct maintenance dredging of the Federal entrance channel and harbor basin for the purpose of maintaining safe and efficient navigation within this harbor. The Federal project at Hilo Harbor was last dredged in 1990. Dredging would be limited to areas where the current depth of the Federal project is shallower than the design depth.

Areas within the Federal project that would be excluded from the proposed dredging include areas within 30 feet of the aggregate reef/hard bottom along the southern portion of the dredge footprint that supports greater than 50 percent coral cover, as identified and recommended by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Dredging would be carried out by the Corps trailing suction hopper dredge *Essayons*. Dredged material would be disposed of at the Hilo Ocean Dredged Material Disposal Site (ODMDS) as approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Up to 233,171 cubic yards of material would be dredged. Dredging is scheduled for approximately 26 days between February and April, 2016 and during the same approximate period in 2018.

In addition to avoiding and minimizing impacts to the environment by establishing the excluded areas described above, the Corps has adopted numerous best management practices (BMPs) to minimize impacts on the environment. These BMPs are described in detail in the attached environmental assessment (EA), and focus on minimizing the effects of dredging on water quality and the benthic environment, and reducing the risk to marine animals of ship-strikes or entrainment by the dredge equipment. The action will be timed to avoid dredging during coral spawning season (mid-May through August).

The project and reasonable alternatives are addressed in the EA. As concluded in the assessment, the action will not substantially impact local and regional biological resources such as fish, marine vegetation and invertebrates, birds, sea mammals, endangered or threatened species, essential fish habitat, or commercial fisheries; water quality; cultural resources including historic properties; socioeconomic conditions, to include those of children, minority or economically disadvantaged populations; public health and safety; recreation and transportation. The action

will not act in association with past, present or anticipated future actions to cause appreciable cumulative impacts. The action is consistent with community planning objectives and with regional coastal management planning.

NEPA Determination: I find that maintenance dredging of the Federal maintenance dredging project at Hilo Harbor, Hawaii Island, Hawaii, will not cause significant impacts to the human or natural environment and that the substantive requirements of NEPA have been satisfied. Analysis of the project's effects demonstrates that an environmental impact statement is not required.

Christopher W. Crary
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army
District Engineer

Date