

Finding of No Significant Impact Honolulu Harbor Maintenance Dredging Oahu, 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 Honolulu Harbor, minus Excluded Areas.

The Corps proposes to conduct maintenance dredging of the Federal entrance channel, turning basin, access channel, and areas near Sand Island Bridge for the purpose of maintaining safe and efficient navigation within this harbor. The Federal project at Honolulu was last dredged in 1999. 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 where sediment characterization conducted in 2014 found contaminant concentrations that exceed United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) ocean disposal criteria; identified biologically sensitive areas, such as living coral reefs and sea grass beds, including adjacent buffer zones; and other areas where the proposed dredging equipment would be ineffective, such as rocky areas, corners, and areas obstructed by channel markers.

Dredging would be carried out by the Corps' trailing suction hopper dredge, *Essayons*. Dredged material would be disposed of at the South Oahu Ocean Dredged Material Disposal Site (ODMDS) as approved by the USEPA. Up to 123,018 cubic yards of material would be dredged. Dredging is scheduled for approximately 13 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 entrapment 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 Honolulu Harbor in Oahu, 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.

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District Engineer

Date