

New Port Sediment Cleanup Project Easier on Atmosphere

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(Portland, OR - August 12, 2008) As sediment removal swings into action at Portland's Marine Terminal 4 (T-4) on Tuesday, August 12, all involved locally in the Port of Portland's project will be able to breathe a little easier. Making an extra effort to reduce the work's effect on local air quality, the Port has required that ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel be used in all heavy equipment on-site.

EPA Project Manager Sean Sheldrake recently praised the Port for establishing the cleaner-burning fuel requirement.

"They went above-and-beyond," said EPA's Sheldrake. "The Port has committed to protecting local air quality throughout their facility, but it's really encouraging to see that same commitment extended to reducing impacts at a sediment remediation project. This sets a new standard for future cleanup actions in the Portland Harbor."

The T-4 sediment removal action includes dredging and capping of contaminated sediment, as well as stabilizing a bank along the Willamette River to control erosion. The project is part of an overall effort to clean up Portland Harbor, which was designated a Superfund site by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in December 2000.

In 2003, the Port became the first entity in the Harbor to sign a cleanup order with EPA, and the Port's removal action this summer is the second such action to occur within the Portland Harbor Superfund site. This summer's cleanup work will remove contaminants resulting from over a hundred years of marine and other activities in the region; the primary contaminants of concern at T-4 are petroleum, metals, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).

Sediment cleanup activities at T-4 are scheduled to occur in two phases. This first phase, which will be performed in 2008 and will last approximately five weeks, includes dredging and transporting approximately 14,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment to an off-site disposal facility located in The Dalles; isolating contaminated sediment in the back of Slip 3 with a cap made of an organoclay-sand mix; and stabilizing the bank of Wheeler Bay with native vegetation to minimize erosion and improve stability. The work is expected to continue through September.

To minimize overall environmental effects, dredging and capping work will take place when fish are least likely to be migrating through the Willamette River. The Port will also use special fish diversion mesh to discourage fish from entering the work area. Water quality monitoring will occur regularly during the dredging and capping processes.

In-water work has also been designed to minimize business disruption to Port tenants. Terminal 4 is a busy and active marine terminal located just north of the St. Johns Bridge that handles automobiles and bulk goods.

The second phase of the T-4 project includes dredging, capping, monitored natural recovery, and the construction of a Confined Disposal Facility (CDF) to hold dredged sediment. The entire cleanup plan for T-4 was approved and selected by EPA in 2006. In September 2007, EPA granted the Port an extension for design of the CDF and allowed the selected remedy to be split into two phases. Final design of the second phase will resume later this year. All cleanup activities at T-4 are designed to be consistent with Portland Harbor-wide cleanup goals.

Additional information is available by contacting EPA or Port project staff or by visiting project Web sites (contact information and links are below). The Port has also set up a hotline for community members to report any concerns during the work period: 503.944-7070.

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For more about the Port's project, go to: http://www.portofportland.com/T4_EA_Home.aspx