

Public Notice

Public Notice No: CENAP-PL-E-99-01

Date: January 21, 1999

In Reply Refer To: Environmental Resources Branch

RECORD OF DECISION DELAWARE RIVER MAIN CHANNEL DEEPENING PROJECT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Pursuant to Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act, Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act, and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has completed a Record of Decision, dated December 18, 1998, for the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Delaware River Main Channel Deepening Project. A copy is provided for your information [[SEE BELOW](#)].

This project modifies the existing Delaware River Federal navigation channel (Philadelphia to the Sea Project) from the Philadelphia/Camden waterfront, to deep water in Delaware Bay. The Delaware River Main Channel Deepening Project was authorized by Congress in October, 1992, as part of the Water Resources Development Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-580, Section 101(6)). The SEIS reports the results of additional studies conducted during the Preconstruction, Engineering, and Design (PED) phase of project planning. The Record of Decision was forwarded to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on December 22, 1998, to close the administrative record for the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.

SIGNED:

Robert L. Callegari
Chief, Planning Division

We have reviewed the Delaware River Main Channel Deepening Project Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), as well as correspondence received in response to coordination of this document. I find the plan recommended in the 1992 Interim Feasibility Report by the District Engineer, Philadelphia District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to be economically justified, in accordance with environmental statutes, and in the public interest. Thus, I approve that plan for construction.

The project was authorized in Section 101(6) of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1992. The 1992 Interim Feasibility Report evaluated various structural and nonstructural alternatives in addressing navigation needs of the existing Delaware River, Philadelphia to the Sea Federal project. The Record of Decision (ROD) for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), dated 17 December 1992, documented supplemental environmental analyses to be conducted during the Preconstruction, Engineering and Design (PED) phase of project development. The purpose of the supplemental environmental analyses was to perform additional environmental studies to verify conclusions reached during the Feasibility Study, and to respond

to comments received as part of agency and public review of the FEIS. The additional PED studies reaffirmed the environmental impacts as documented in the 1992 Feasibility Report and FEIS.

The plan of improvement recommended by the Chief of Engineers is the National Economic Development (NED) plan and consists of the following features:

- Deepen the existing 40-foot MLW main channel of the Delaware River navigation channel to a depth of 45 feet MLW following the existing channel alignment and widths, which vary from 1000 feet to 400 feet from deep water in the Delaware Bay to Philadelphia Harbor and the Beckett Street Terminal, Camden, New Jersey;
- Widening of channel bends and deepening a portion of the Marcus Hook Anchorage for safety purposes; and
- Disposal of dredged material in several upland dredged material disposal sites in the riverine portion of the project area and at various beneficial use sites in Delaware Bay.

In addition to a "no action" alternative, various structural and nonstructural alternatives are identified and discussed in the Corps of Engineers report. Structural alternatives evaluated in the 1992 Feasibility Report included deepening the entire width of the existing channel and asymmetric channel designs that would deepen various widths of the inbound lane. Nonstructural alternatives included transshipment, use of tides, split deliveries, light loading, pilot regulations, tug assistance, vessel modification and traffic management. None of these were found to accommodate the area's maritime traffic or to provide benefits commensurate with the structural alternative. The various alternatives are described and discussed in the feasibility report and are hereby incorporated by reference. The plan that had the greatest net benefits over costs without unacceptable environmental and social impacts was selected and recommended. The selected plan was also identified as the environmentally preferable plan since it included features that will benefit the environment. These features included beneficial uses of dredged material to nourish shoreline habitat and wetland creation.

The SEIS recommends stockpiling of sand, as beneficial use of dredged material, at offshore locations along the Delaware Bay for future beach replenishment. In response to concerns expressed by resource agencies on adverse fishery and habitat related impacts, the Philadelphia District will further evaluate placement of dredged material for use at nearby beach sites. Specific placement sites will be determined and coordinated with the resource agencies during the plans and specifications phase.

We have reviewed and evaluated documents concerning the proposed action, including additional PED phase studies which have re-affirmed the environmental impacts documented in the Feasibility Report; views of other interested agencies; and the various practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the construction of this project.

All practicable means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects have been incorporated into the recommended plan. The public interest will best be served by implementing the improvements identified and described in the Feasibility Report and the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.

SIGNED:
Russell L. Fuhrman
Major General, USA
Director of Civil Works

December 18, 1998