

Finding of No Significant Impact
Final Supplemental Environmental Assessment
Baltimore Harbor Anchorages and Channels,
Maryland and Virginia

November 2001

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District has prepared a supplemental environmental assessment (EA) which evaluates and documents the potential environmental effects associated with dredging proposed to reconfigure the anchorages and channels in the Baltimore Harbor. The purpose of the supplemental EA is to address the changes in the project design since the project's 1999 authorization. The proposed revisions to the 1997 feasibility report's recommended plan are proposed to address local concerns to the plan, including safety and efficiency issues, as well as cost, and benefit considerations. All descriptions of the proposed placement sites and any anticipated impacts of these areas are discussed in the 1997 integrated feasibility report and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and are incorporated into the supplemental EA by reference.

Potential impacts from the proposed action are assessed with regard to the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem, endangered and threatened species, hazardous and toxic materials, aesthetics and recreation, cultural resources, and the general needs and welfare of the public.

Potential impacts to the environment associated with implementation of the revised project will be minor and temporary in nature. The dredging will occur in water that does not currently support significant aquatic resources. The area is located in a highly developed area that is heavily used by the shipping industry. Temporary impacts from the dredging, such as an increase in turbidity, a disturbance of benthic habitat, and disruption to fish species in the area, will occur. However, all of these resources will revert back to the pre-construction condition once the dredging activity has ceased.

The proposed revisions to the dredging plan for the anchorages and channels are still within the scope and study area of the original proposal discussed in the 1997 integrated feasibility report and EIS. The revisions are recommended to address concerns raised regarding maneuverability of vessels within the proposed anchorages. The revised anchorages and channels will accommodate the passage of two vessels and facilitate the turning of ships in the area. Anchorage #4 was reduced in scope, and the depth reduced from 42 feet to 35 feet, for use by smaller draft vessels. Although design changes are proposed, the degree of impact to the area has not changed substantially from the 1997 proposal, other than the reconfiguration of the anchorage within the same work area and the decrease in amount of depth required for anchorage #4. Dredging volumes have been reduced from 4.4 million cubic yards to 3.9 million cubic yards. The placement site for initial construction material remains as Hart-Miller Island. The proposed work does not

significantly differ from the proposed action in the 1997 EIS and does not have significant impacts to the resources in the study area.

Upon reviewing the supplemental EA, I find that there would be no significant impacts to the resources considered and that an EIS is not required for the proposed actions. This statement has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

Charles J. Fiala, Jr.
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer

Date: _____