



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Baltimore District

# News Release

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## Chesapeake Bay sediment study interim results released

**Baltimore** – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, today released the interim results of a study of the quality of sediment in the upper Chesapeake Bay navigation channels.

The study was originally undertaken to evaluate the potential placement of dredged material at Site 104. However, Site 104 is no longer being considered as a placement alternative. The study evaluated potential impacts of open-water placement, such as toxicity to animals in the water and in the sediment, accumulation of chemicals in aquatic animals and those that feed on them, and effects on humans who eat fish and shellfish. Extensive tests indicated that material dredged from the federal navigation channels leading to the Port of Baltimore in the upper Chesapeake Bay is of similar quality to that present throughout the upper Bay. The study looked at sediment quality in the upper Bay channels and did not include the Patapsco River or Baltimore's Inner Harbor channels.

To carry out the study, the Corps used the multi-tiered guidance developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Corps. Several wide-ranging series of tests were conducted in the multi-tiered approach. Each successive step included more rigorous testing.

Study team members reviewed data available from past studies during Tier I. They collected and analyzed samples of sediment and samples of water after it had been mixed with sediment in Tier II. During Tier III, they used a series of biological tests called bioassays and bioaccumulation studies and evaluated the results. The Corps also compared concentrations of chemicals in the sediment to information collected by other research studies of the upper Chesapeake Bay.

The Corps has completed testing through Tier III and is releasing a draft report on those results today. However, Tier III conclusions call for Tier IV testing to assess whether accumulation of nine chemicals in aquatic animals could be potentially harmful to the environment or to human health. A separate report covering the results of Tier IV testing will be completed by late spring.

An overview of the current results and the draft report will be available on the Baltimore District's website at <http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/projects/Maryland/sediment.htm>, or by calling (410) 962-9499 or toll

free 1 (800) 295-1610 or faxing a request to 410-962-4698. The Corps invites public comment on this report through Feb. 15, 2001.

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