

March 20, 2012

**Public Notice for Water Quality Certification and/or Waste
Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)**

U.S. Coast Guard Station Humboldt Bay – Shoreline Protection Project
WDID No. 1B12009WNHU

Humboldt County

On February 13, 2012, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the United States Coast Guard (Applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification (certification) for activities associated with the replacement of a rock rip-rap revetment along the shoreline of Humboldt Bay to prevent further erosion of the shoreline and protect existing structures. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with Humboldt Bay shoreline in the Eureka Plain Hydrologic Unit No. 110.00.

The proposed project is located along the north spit of Humboldt Bay, adjacent to U.S. Coast Guard Station Humboldt Bay (USCG Station), 200 New Navy Base Road, Samoa. The primary mission of the USCG Station is search and rescue. The USCG Station serves the public around Humboldt Bay and over 50 miles of Pacific Ocean coastline. The USCG Station includes several buildings including Building 8 and an associated parking area that are threatened by the ongoing erosion of the adjacent shoreline. The shoreline adjacent to the USCG Station is subject to erosive forces attributable to tidal action, storm events, wind-driven waves, and ocean waves that pass through the entrance channel. Erosion threatens to undermine the existing parking lot area and flood Building 8 during high tide storm events.

The Applicant has used this facility since 1878. During World War II the United States Navy built a support facility for seaplanes at the USCG Station. Sometime prior to 1958, the Navy placed a stone (riprap) shoreline protection barrier along the beach in front of Building 8 to control the shoreline erosion. Settlement, waves, storm forces, and lack of repair and maintenance of the riprap have reduced the barrier to rubble. In 1999, a K-rail barrier was installed at the top edge of the shoreline to protect the parking lot and Building 8 from high tides and winter storm waves. In 2000, the Applicant placed approximately 10,000 cubic yards of imported sand along the beach in front of the K-rail barrier to further protect the eroding shoreline. In 2001, the Applicant applied for permit authorization to implement beach maintenance and restoration activities as a method for shoreline protection. That project was denied permit authorization because consulting agencies had expressed concerns over the financial and ecological effects that could result from the continued use of beach nourishment for shoreline protection. The beach and shoreline area have continued to erode behind the remains of the deteriorated riprap barrier. Erosion in front of Building 8 allows overtopping of the K-rail barrier and flooding of the building during high tide storms. The erosion and flooding damages the facilities and impacts the Applicant's ability to conduct their mission. The Applicant determined their concerns regarding potential damage to Building 8 and the

parking lot area warrants a more permanent and long-term solution to control the shoreline erosion.

The Applicant proposes to stabilize the eroding shoreline by placing a stone revetment (riprap) wall along approximately 510 linear feet of shoreline. The major components of the rock riprap revetment include an outer armor layer of large rock, which provides protection against wave action, and underlying geotextile and filter stone layers, which supports the armor layer and allows water to pass through the structure while preventing underlying materials from being washed out through the armor layer. The proposed revetment will be placed parallel to the existing shoreline with the south end transitioning to existing stone shore protection and the north end transitioning to the existing shoreline grade. The revetment design includes a toe-trench that will be excavated parallel to the revetment face and backfilled with 2-3 ton toe stones to prohibit scour below the revetment. Existing pile cutoffs associated with a former pier will be removed as necessary to accommodate the proposed revetment alignment.

Fill associated with the proposed revetment will result in permanent impacts to waters of the United States associated with an area approximately 15-feet wide by 180-feet long (2,700 square feet) where a portion of the revetment footprint will be located below the Mean Higher High Water (MHHW) elevation. The remainder of the proposed revetment will be located above the elevation of MHHW. Compensatory mitigation is not required for the proposed project. Non-compensatory mitigation includes the use of Best Management Practices for pollution prevention and sediment control throughout the project area during construction. To avoid direct impacts to water quality, construction activities below MHHW will be timed to coincide with low tides and the project will be completed without working within open water.

The Applicant has applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project, pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. A Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement (1600 Permit) from the California Department of Fish and Game is not required for this project. The U.S. Coast Guard prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA) for the proposed project in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. The impact analysis in the EA provides evidence that the proposed project will not cause a significant impact on the environment and a Finding of No Significant Impact is anticipated to complete the NEPA process. Public review of the Draft EA began on March 5, 2012, and will remain open through April 5, 2012. The Draft EA is available for public review at the Humboldt County Library in Eureka. Written comments on the Draft EA may be sent during this public review period to: Linda S. Peters, URS Group, Inc., One Montgomery Street, Suite 900, San Francisco, California 94104.

The Regional Water Board has considered the environmental document and any proposed changes incorporated into the project or required as a condition of approval to avoid significant effects to the environment. The Draft EA has been supplemented to include separate discussions of topics relevant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) including discussions of mitigation measures and analysis of growth

inducing impacts. The adverse environmental impacts associated with the proposed project are generally short-term construction-related impacts. All construction activities located at or below the MHHW elevation will be conducted while the tide is out and water elevation is below the work area. Construction within the intertidal habitat area would only occur between May 15 and October 15 to avoid the migration season for salmonids. Pollution prevention and erosion control measures will be implemented to prevent impacts from construction operations. Regional Water Board staff determined the proposed project consists of replacement of an existing facility having substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure being replaced, and is categorically exempt from CEQA review (Section 15302 – Replacement or Reconstruction). Regional Water Board staff anticipate filing a Notice of Exemption for the proposed project.

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of the Applicant's proposed activities. The application for Water Quality Certification in the Regional Water Board's file contains additional details about the proposed project including maps, construction plans, and site photos. The application and Regional Water Board file, including the Draft EA, are available for public review at the Regional Water Board office.

Regional Water Board staff are proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act authority. In addition, staff will consider all comments submitted in writing and received at this office by mail during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter and ends at 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the comment period. If you have any questions, please contact staff member Dean Prat at (707) 576-2801 within 21 days of the posting of this notice.