

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Port of Nome Modifications Nome, Alaska

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska District (USACE) has conducted an environmental analysis in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended. The Final Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment (IFR/EA) dated March 2020, for the Port of Nome Modifications addresses navigational improvement opportunities and feasibility in Nome, Alaska. The final recommendation is contained in the report of the Chief of Engineers, dated 29 May 2020.

The Final IFR/EA, incorporated herein by reference, evaluated various alternatives that would provide safe, reliable and efficient waterborne transportation systems for movement of commerce, national security, and recreation at the Port of Nome in the study area. The recommended plan is a cost-effective plan based on the cost effectiveness/incremental cost analysis and includes the following:

- A new deep water basin formed by extending the existing west causeway by approximately 3,484 feet (ft.) to a depth of approximately -40 ft. Mean Lower Low Water (MLLW). The extension is "L" shaped with a 2,100 ft. long north-south section and a 1,384 ft. long west-east section.
- Two 450 ft. long docks and a 650 ft. long dock incorporated into the west causeway extension.
- The outer basin modifications include removing the existing breakwater stub (spur) from the south end of the existing causeway, extending the causeway to deep water.
- Existing east breakwater is removed and replaced by a new 3,900 ft. east causeway/breakwater combination that extends to approximately -25 ft. MLLW.
- The outer basin channel entrance width increases to approximately 670 ft. and 400 ft. long docks are added to the west and east causeways.
- The outer basin is deepened from -22 ft. MLLW to -28 ft. MLLW.
- Material dredged during construction would be placed in water in front of the sea wall east of the port between bathymetric contours of -15 ft. MLLW to -30 ft. MLLW. Total dredged quantity estimate from construction is 2,533,400 cubic yards.
- The annual operation and maintenance dredged material quantities are estimated at 104,000 cubic yards with placement at the beach east of the existing port.

In addition to a "no action" plan, six structural alternatives were evaluated. The alternatives each included a combination of modifications, including extending the existing west causeway, modifying or replacing the existing east breakwater, additional docks, and several alternative depths for the outer basin and deep water basin. Each alternative was evaluated for various navigation channel dredged depths.

Several non-structural measures were considered; however, only dredging and installation of aids to navigation were carried forward. The non-federal sponsor has stated that all of the non-structural measures not carried forward have already been implemented by the City of Nome. Environmental considerations were not a factor in determining if non-structural measures were to be carried forward. Refer to Section 5 of the IFR/EA for discussion of alternative formulation and alternative selection.

For all alternatives, the potential effects were evaluated, as appropriate. A summary assessment of the potential effects of the recommended plan are listed in Table 1:

Table 1: Summary of Potential Effects of the Recommended Plan

Resource Category	Insignificant effects	Insignificant effects as a result of mitigation	Resource unaffected by action
Climate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Wind	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sea Ice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Bathymetry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geology	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Soils & Sediments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tides	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Currents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sea Level Rise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Water Quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Air Quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Noise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visual Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Habitat & Wildlife	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ESA-Species	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MMPA-Species	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Migratory Birds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Special Aquatic Sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Historic Properties & Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Subsistence Use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental Justice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Protected Tribal Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

All practicable and appropriate means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects were analyzed and incorporated into the recommended plan. Best management practices (BMPs) as detailed in the IFR/EA will be implemented, if appropriate, to minimize impacts. A summary BMPs and mitigation measures is found in Section 8.9 of the IFR/EA.

Public review of the initial draft IFR/EA and FONSI extended from 8 May to 7 June 2019. A revised IFR and supplemental EA was provided for public review from 31 December 2019 to 30 January 2020. All comments submitted during both public review periods were responded to in the Final IFR/EA and FONSI (Appendix L).

Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, USACE has coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for species under their jurisdiction. USACE determined that the recommended plan may affect but is not likely to adversely affect

the polar bear, spectacled eider or Steller's eiders. The USFWS concurred in their letter dated 12 March 2019.

Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended, USACE has coordinated their preliminary effects determinations for six ESA listed marine mammal species that fall under the purview of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). USACE determined that the recommended plan may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the beluga whale. USACE determined that the recommended plan is likely to adversely affect the ringed seal, bearded seal, Steller sea lion, humpback whale and gray whale, requiring formal consultation. By letter dated 22 April 2019, NMFS indicated that they will need more details regarding the timing and duration of construction activities, specifically on the dredging, pile driving and dock construction activities. The details necessary to initiate formal consultation on the listed marine mammals are not typically known until later in project development. Therefore, consultation with NMFS under the ESA will continue through the Pre-construction, Engineering and Design phase of project development.

An Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) under the Marine Mammal Protection Act will also be sought during the Pre-construction Engineering and Design (PED) phase for construction impacts to marine mammals from this project. The IHA consultation will be concurrent with the ESA Section 7 formal consultation.

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, USACE determined that historic properties would not be adversely affected by the recommended plan. Concurrence from the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) was sought in a determination letter dated 8 April 2019; concurrence was received in a letter dated 7 May 2019.

Pursuant to the Clean Water Act of 1972, as amended, the discharge of dredged or fill material associated with the recommended plan has been found to be compliant with Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines (40 CFR 230). The Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines evaluation is found in Appendix A of the IFR/EA. A provisional water quality certification pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act was issued by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) Division of Water on 12 July 2019.

By operation of Alaska State law, the federally-approved Alaska Coastal Management Program expired on 1 July 2011, resulting in a withdrawal from participation in the CZMA's National Coastal Management Program. The CZMA Federal consistency provision, Section 307, no longer applies in Alaska.

Pursuant to the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as amended, USACE determined that the recommended plan would adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH), but in minor, localized ways that can be offset through BMPs and conservation measures as summarized in Section 8.9 of the IFR/EA. NMFS concurred with the USACE determination in a letter dated 5 March 2019.

All applicable environmental laws have been considered and coordination with appropriate agencies and officials has been completed.

Technical, environmental, and economic criteria used in the formulation of alternative plans were those specified in the Water Resources Council's 1983 Economic and Environmental Principles and Guidelines for Water and Related Land Resources Implementation Studies. All applicable laws, executive orders, regulations, and local

government plans were considered in evaluation of alternatives. Based on this report, the reviews by other federal, state, and local agencies; tribes; input of the public; and the review by my staff, it is my determination that the recommended plan would not cause significant adverse effects on the quality of the human environment; therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

July 29, 2020
Date

David R. Hibner
David R. Hibner
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Commander