

RECORD OF DECISION

NORFOLK HARBOR AND CHANNELS HAMPTON ROADS, VIRGINIA CRANEY ISLAND EASTWARD EXPANSION

The Norfolk Harbor and Channels, Hampton Roads, Virginia, Craney Island Feasibility Report and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), dated April 2006, was prepared in response to a September 24, 1997 resolution of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. Based on the report, the views of other Federal, State, and local agencies, input from the public, and the review of my staff, I find the plan recommended by the Chief of Engineers to be technically feasible, economically justified, in accordance with environmental statutes, and in the public interest.

The report supports the eastward expansion of the Federally-owned Craney Island Dredged Material Management Area (CIDMMA) with specific attention to rapid filling to accommodate anticipated port expansion. The recommended plan would extend the useful life of CIDMMA; account for all relevant environmental issues; and ultimately transfer the expanded area to the Commonwealth of Virginia. The plan recommended by the Chief of Engineers for the CIDMMA is the Locally Preferred Plan (LPP) and consists of the following features:

- Construction of 14,100 linear feet of perimeter dikes around a new 580-acre cell to contain dredged material. The western limit of the cell would tie into the existing east dike of the CIDMMA.
- Construction of an access channel to a depth of -50 feet (MLLW) to serve the Virginia Port Authority's container port. A total of 3,700,000 cubic yards of material would be dredged to establish this access channel, with disposal into the expansion cell.
- Mitigation for unavoidable adverse impacts from the 580 acres of expansion to CIDMMA would include construction of 56 acres of wetlands, 20 acres of new oyster habitat/reefs, and 67 acres of sediment remediation to restore a far larger area of bottom habitat in the Elizabeth River. A monitoring program will be developed during the preliminary engineering and design phase of the project.

In addition to the no action plan, alternatives considered included on site modifications, expansion of CIDMMA, creation of new island facilities to provide for port expansion and evaluation of upland, open water, and beneficial uses opportunities for dredged material disposal options. The alternatives are described and discussed in the feasibility report and are hereby incorporated by reference. The LPP is the environmentally preferable alternative.

Technical, environmental, and economic criteria used in the formulation of alternative plans were those specified in the Water Resource Council's Principles and Guidelines. All applicable laws, Executive Orders, regulations and local government plans were considered in the evaluation of the alternatives. All practicable means of avoiding or minimizing adverse environmental impacts have been incorporated into the recommended plan. Based on review of these evaluations, I find that the public interest would be best served by implementing the recommended plan. This Record of Decision completes the National Environmental Policy Act process.

August 20, 2007
Date

John Paul Woodley, Jr.
John P. Woodley, Jr.
Assistant Secretary of the Army
(Civil Works)