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LETTER AND COMMENTS FROM SEACOAST ANTI-POLLUTION LEAGUE (SAPL) ON PROPOSED PLAN OPERABLE UNIT 4 (OU4) SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT UNIT 5 (SWMU5) NSY PORTSMOUTH ME
3/27/2011
LEPAGE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, INC

Lepage Environmental Services, Inc.

P. O. Box 1195 • Auburn, Maine • 04211-1195 • 207-777-1049

March 27, 2011

Ms. Danna Eddy
Public Affairs Office (Code 100PAO)
Portsmouth Naval Shipyard
Portsmouth, NH 03804-5000

Subject: February 2013 *Proposed Plan for Operable Unit 4*

Dear Ms. Eddy:

This letter is submitted as requested by and on behalf of the Seacoast Anti-Pollution League (SAPL) regarding the February 2013 *Proposed Plan for Operable Unit 4, Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Kittery, Maine* (the Proposed Plan). Most of the comments below reflect the oral comments presented on behalf of, and with input from, SAPL members at the March 13, 2013, Public Hearing held at the Kittery Town Hall.

Support for the Preferred Remedy

SAPL supports the remediation of contaminated sediments in areas offshore of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard as described in the February 2013 *Proposed Plan for Operable Unit 4*. The removal of toxics at locations MS-01, 03, 04, and 12 should improve the environmental quality off shore in the long run. However, while SAPL supports the removal of contaminated sediments from the four locations, SAPL has questions and concerns about the Navy's preferred alternative as follows:

Confirmation Sampling is Crucial

The Proposed Plan states that once the final remedies are implemented for OU4, the interim offshore monitoring will be discontinued. Since there will no longer be any monitoring program in place, it is crucial that confirmation sampling performed in conjunction with the removal action be sufficient to demonstrated that <u>all</u> contamination that exceeds cleanup goals has been removed at each of the four locations.

Maintaining the Integrity of Shoreline Structures

The Introduction section of the Proposed Plan describes how the installation of erosion control structures at several sites has resulted in the reduction of contaminant concentrations or prevention of contaminated-sediment accumulation in the offshore. [Site 32 (OU7), OU3, OU2] Therefore, these structures are integral to the Navy's proposed remedy for OU4 as they prevent erosion and migration of soil and contamination from the sites into the adjacent river. SAPL believes that frequent inspection and evaluation will be needed to ensure that any structural deterioration is fixed before failure occurs. What are the Navy's plans for inspections and repairs? How will rising sea level be factored into the plans? Should repairs or replacement become necessary, how will the Navy prevent erosion and migration of site soils and contamination into the offshore?

Potential for Offshore Contamination Resulting From Onshore Actions

The Navy is proposing to remediate four offshore locations, but not ten other locations based on the results of the offshore monitoring conducted from 1999 through 2011. Remedial efforts and other actions conducted on-shore, such is no longer discharging via the OU5 industrial waste outfalls and improving shoreline erosion control structures at OU2, have also benefited the offshore environment. However, on-shore activities in the future may spread contamination to offshore areas again. For example, page 3 of the Proposed Plan states that the excavation of contaminated soils adjacent to Jamaica Cove resulted in the release of contaminants to sediment offshore of Jamaica Cove.

Given that the interim offshore monitoring program will no longer be conducted, what contingency plan does the Navy have for addressing contamination of offshore areas caused by activities conducted on-shore? How will the Navy address potential impacts to ecological receptors in offshore areas adjacent to remedial or other activities being conducted on-shore?

Sea Level Rise

SAPL again expresses its concern with the effect of rising sea level on the contamination located at various sites around the Shipyard, as well as on the remedial measures taken to clean up the sites. A recent report from Carbon Solutions New England at the University of New Hampshire, entitled "*Climate Change in the Piscataqua/Great Bay Region: Past, Present, and Future*" concludes that "we can expect the 100-year flood height to increase several feet over the next 90 years", which will result in more severe flooding in coastal New Hampshire in the future. The effect of such an increase on the Great Bay area can be observed at a website developed by Princeton University climate scientists, sealevel.climatecentral.org/surgingseas.

[http://sealevel.climatecentral.org/surgingseas/place/states/NH#center=14/43.0761/-70.7407&surge=3&show=cities]

Rising sea level will alter the current groundwater/surface water system and affect the stability of shoreline structures. The remedy for OU4 relies on the integrity of shoreline structures to maintain stability along the shoreline slopes and to prevent erosion and further migration of the waste and contaminated soil that will remain at sites on shore.

How was rising sea level considered in the development of potential remedies for OU4, and in the selection of the Navy's preferred alternative? What are the effects of rising sea level and increasing frequency and/or severity of storm events on the proposed remedy and how have they been evaluated? What range of sea-level change was considered? What are the potential future impacts to the Navy's preferred alternative as sea level rises? How has the Navy planned to deal with the potential future impacts?

Impact of Shipyard Closure

What will happen if the Shipyard closes and the Navy is no longer on the property to keep an eye on various on-shore sites that could potentially impact OU4? Recent experience at another Navy facility in Maine that recently closed has shown that security measures for even the most dangerous sites will no longer be maintained at a high level once a base closes. In the event of closure, how will the Navy ensure that there are no adverse impacts on OU4 offshore areas as a result of activities or actions on the former Shipyard property? For example, how will the integrity of shoreline erosion control measures (such as those cited in the Proposed Plan for OU2, OU3, and OU7) be maintained to prevent migration of contaminants to the offshore?

New Contaminants or Sources of Contamination

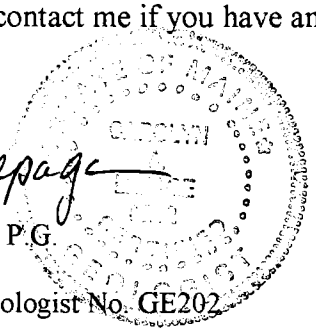
What contingencies or plans does the Navy have for possible future offshore monitoring needs for the following situations:

- Detection of "emerging contaminants", or other 'new' contaminants at either on- or off-shore sites.

- On-going investigations reveal new potential source(s) of contamination that could affect the off-shore environment.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Carolyn A. Lepage, C.G. & P.G.
President
State of Maine Certified Geologist No. GE202

cc: Doug Bogen, SAPL
Elizabeth Middleton, NAVFAC MIDLANT
Iver McLeod, MEDEP
Matthew Audet, EPA
Deborah Cohen, TetraTech