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Port Commission Briefed on the NOAA Project Progress

NEWPORT – The Port Commission was briefed on the progress of the NOAA Project at its monthly meeting Tuesday, October 26, 2010.

Project Manager Joshua Dodson of DAY CPM Services advised the Commission that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has released the preliminary Biological Opinion (BiOp) from its review of the Joint Permit Application (JPA). The BiOp is under internal NMFS review and the Port is hopeful the final document (in-water permit) will be released the first week in November. The federally established in-water work window for all West Coast bays runs from November 1st through February 15th each year to minimize the impacts of endangered fish migrations. The Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL) and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) will each weigh in on the BiOp once its final version is released. With the permit, the Port's construction crews can begin the dredging and pile driving required for the Marine Operations Center's piers.

Dodson summarized the project budget to date noting that of the \$38.4 million project budget, \$13 million, or 34%, has been spent to date. The two-story administration building and adjacent warehouse exteriors are nearly complete; the parking lots are being covered with asphalt and crews are preparing for the in-water work with removal of the small wood dock's planks at the facility's north end and completion of the dredge disposal site at McLean Point.

The facility is designed to achieve a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) silver certification. In a related issue, Mr. Dodson noted that the 8,000 eelgrass plants harvested during the summer from areas that will be dredged are thriving in their temporary nursery at the Oregon Coast Aquarium. The plants will be transplanted at the project's mitigation site next spring.

More

Mark Reusser, General Superintendent with Andersen/West Coast Contractors, the project's construction manager/general contractor (CM/GC) then briefed the audience on the construction progress to date. Mr. Reusser said that approximately 60 people are currently working on site and the total will likely swell to 120 shortly as the work intensifies with additional paving, pier work and the interior-related build-out.

In anticipation of increased public interest, project information has recently been updated on the Port's web site (www.portofnewport.com) which now includes a Frequently Asked Questions page as well as an online comment form. Additional details about the JPA will be posted as they are finalized.

For more information about the project, contact General Manager Don Mann at the Port of Newport, 541-265-7758, or visit the Port's Web site at www.portofnewport.com. Comments can be submitted at anytime by emailing terminalproject@portofnewport.com.

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