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SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE IMPACTS

9.1 Introduction

Pursuant to Section 15126.2(c) of the CEQA Guidelines, an EIR must consider any significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by the proposed Project should it be implemented. Section 15126.2(c) states:

Uses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely. Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts (such as a highway improvement which provides access to a previously inaccessible area) generally commit future generations to similar uses. Also, irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the project. Irrecoverable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified.

9.2 Analysis of Irreversible Changes

The proposed Project would require the use of nonrenewable resources, such as the waterfront area and fossil fuels, and nonrenewable construction materials. Operation of individual facilities under the proposed Project would result in an irreversible commitment of nonrenewable resources, including fossil fuels and natural gas. Use of these resources, however, would not substantially deplete existing supplies.

Fossil fuels and energy would be consumed during construction and operation activities. Fossil fuels in the form of diesel oil and gasoline would be used for construction equipment and vehicles. During operations, diesel oil and gasoline would be used by transient boats and vehicles. Electrical energy and natural gas would also be consumed during construction and operation. These energy resources would be irretrievable and their loss irreversible.

1 Nonrecoverable materials and energy would be used during construction and
2 operational activities, but the amounts needed would be accommodated by existing
3 supplies. Although the increase in the amount of materials and energy used would be
4 limited, they would nevertheless be unavailable for other uses.

5 Construction activities that result in physical changes to the environment have the
6 most potential to result in irreversible changes. However, none of the proposed
7 project elements would result in irreversible environmental damage. For example,
8 the proposed Project would not have a significant impact on sensitive biological
9 species or communities, demolish significant cultural resources, or result in water
10 quality impacts that could not be mitigated to less-than-significant levels. The
11 excavation associated with the new bulkhead is in an area already developed for Port
12 use, and the land use would not significantly change. The proposed Project would
13 also not result in a permanent, adverse change to the movement of surface water
14 sufficient to produce a substantial change in the current or direction of water flow.

15 Impacts associated with operation of the proposed Project would occur as described
16 in Chapter 3, "Environmental Analysis." However, such impacts would cease to
17 exist or change in some fashion should the proposed Project, or portions thereof,
18 cease to operate, change operations, or otherwise be redeveloped and reused. For
19 example, impacts related to aesthetics would change should the area be demolished
20 and/or redeveloped in the future; impacts on geology are related to existing hazards
21 that would be reduced or eliminated should the area not be occupied in the future;
22 impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials would generally be improved by
23 the proposed Project, but could be further reduced should hazardous facilities be
24 decommissioned, removed, cleaned, and redeveloped with less polluting uses;
25 impacts related to noise would be reduced or eliminated should light industrial and
26 commercial activities be reduced or eliminated; and similarly, traffic impacts would
27 be eliminated or reduced with operational changes or physical improvements that
28 may occur in the future.

29 Thus, the proposed Project would result in significant irreversible changes due to the
30 use of energy resources and fossil fuels during construction and operation. However,
31 construction and operation of the proposed Project would not result in significant
32 irreversible impacts on other environmental resources, as described above.

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