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SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE CHANGES

9.1 Introduction

Pursuant to Section 15126.2(c) of the State 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. Irretrievable 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 non-renewable resources, such as water area, fossil fuels, and non-renewable construction materials.

The proposed Project would develop the site for increased Port-related activities. Resources that are committed irreversibly and irretrievably are those that would be used by a project on a long-term or permanent basis. Resources committed to this proposed Project include the 10 acres of water area that would be filled for container storage area and 400 feet of additional berth, fossil fuels, and non-renewable construction materials such as rock, concrete, gravel, and soils.

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 ships, port terminal (e.g., cargo handling) equipment, and vehicles. Electrical energy and natural gas would be consumed during construction and operation. These energy resources would be irretrievable and irreversible.

Non-recoverable materials and energy would be used during construction and operational activities, but the amounts needed would be accommodated by existing supplies. Although the increase in the amount of materials and energy used would be limited, they would nevertheless be unavailable for other uses. The minimal irreversible changes would likely be justified by the economic growth in trade and import/export of goods, as well as the increased efficiency in cargo handling at the Port, which the proposed Project would provide.