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SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE IMPACTS

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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. 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 nonrenewable resources, such as fossil fuels and nonrenewable construction materials. Construction activities would require oil, gasoline, and diesel fuel for construction equipment. Additionally, construction materials for buildings and structures would consist of lumber, steel, aggregate sand and gravel materials for cement, and other natural resources. Operation of facilities under the proposed Project would result in an irreversible commitment of nonrenewable energy resources, including fossil fuels and natural gas. However, use of these resources is common for construction activities on similar scale projects throughout southern California, and the proposed Project would not require anything above the ordinary that would substantially deplete existing supplies. Additionally, as described in Section 3.12, "Utilities," LAHD's Construction and Maintenance Division recycles and reuses asphalt and concrete demolition debris by crushing and stockpiling the crushed material to use on other Port projects.

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 personal vehicles and research vessels. Electrical energy and natural gas would also be consumed during construction and operation. These energy resources would be irretrievable and their loss irreversible.

1 Non-recoverable materials and energy would be used during construction and
2 operational activities, but the amounts needed would be accommodated by existing
3 supplies. The increased use of materials and energy would mean it would be
4 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. As discussed in various sections of
7 Chapter 3, “Environmental Analysis,” none of the proposed project elements would
8 result in irreversible environmental damage. As described in Section 3.4, “Cultural
9 Resources,” the proposed Project would result in significant impacts on the historic
10 Municipal Warehouse No. 1 and the eligible Municipal Pier No. 1 historic district.
11 The impacts would not result from direct physical changes to the structures
12 themselves, but rather as indirect effects from the introduction of a five-story
13 100,000-square-foot building for the wave tank facility. Impacts occur because the
14 building would be incompatible with the historic setting and affect the integrity of the
15 existing historic building and district. However, the effect could be reversed should
16 the wave tank not be constructed or should it be removed at some future date. The
17 proposed Project would not have a significant impact on sensitive biological species
18 or communities (Section 3.3, “Biological Resources”) or result in significant water
19 quality impacts (Section 3.13, “Water Quality, Sediments, and Oceanography”). The
20 proposed Project would also not result in a permanent, adverse change to the
21 movement of surface water sufficient to produce a substantial change in the current
22 or direction of water flow as no dredge or fill activities would occur (Section 3.13,
23 “Water Quality, Sediments, and Oceanography”). As discussed in Section 3.7,
24 “Hazards and Hazardous Materials,” construction and demolition for the proposed
25 Project could potentially result in the release of hazardous materials or subject
26 construction workers to risk from Mike’s fueling station. Construction-related spills
27 of hazardous materials would be subject to regulatory control and cleanup, and would
28 include the implementation of BMPs and Mitigation Measure MM RISK-1 to
29 minimize the potential for an accidental release of petroleum products and/or
30 hazardous materials or explosions during construction. Moreover, potential release
31 of asbestos-containing materials and lead-based paint would be avoided through the
32 required implementation of local and state regulations, including South Coast Air
33 Quality Management District Rule 1403.

34 Impacts associated with operation of the proposed Project would occur as described
35 in various sections of Chapter 3, “Environmental Analysis.” However, such impacts
36 would cease to exist or change in some fashion should the proposed Project, or
37 portions thereof, cease to operate, change operations, or otherwise be redeveloped
38 and reused. For example, impacts related to aesthetics would change should the area
39 be demolished and/or redeveloped in the future; impacts on geology are related to
40 existing hazards that would be reduced or eliminated should the area become
41 unoccupied in the future; impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials would
42 generally be improved by the proposed Project; impacts related to air quality, GHG,
43 and noise would be reduced or eliminated should institutional and commercial
44 activities be reduced or eliminated; and similarly, traffic impacts would be eliminated
45 or reduced with operational changes or physical improvements that may occur in the
46 future.

1 Thus, the proposed Project would only result in irreversible changes due to the use of
2 energy resources and fossil fuels during construction and operation. However, the
3 use of energy and fossil fuels for the proposed Project would not be uncommon to
4 other types of institutional or commercial uses, and would, therefore, not result in
5 significant irreversible impacts on the environment.

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