



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
GALVESTON DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P. O. BOX 1229
GALVESTON, TEXAS 77553-1229

August 16, 2018

**JOINT NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, GALVESTON DISTRICT AND TEXAS COMMISSION ON
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

**DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT,
MATAGORDA SHIP CHANNEL PROJECT DEFICIENCY STUDY, MATAGORDA COUNTY,
TEXAS**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Galveston District (USACE) announces the release of the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Matagorda Ship Channel (MSC) Project Deficiency Study in Matagorda County, Texas. The MSC entrance cuts through the Matagorda Peninsula and is located near Port O'Connor, Texas.

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve navigation safety on the MSC and reduce channel scouring. The design deficiency is in the land cut, where the channel narrows from 2,000 feet to 950 feet (referred to as the bottleneck). The bottleneck constricts the flow and increases current velocity that leads to channel scouring. Navigation safety is hampered by the effect of the current velocities on the pilots' control of ships.

Alternatives being considered include channel designs and beneficial use placement areas for dredged material. The Proposed Action includes removing the existing rock dike on both sides of the channel and reusing the stone to construct a new 2,800-foot dike on the west bank and 3,800-foot dike on the east bank of the MSC. A barge canal would be mechanically dredged to a depth of -14 Mean Lower Low Water (MLLW) from the bay side and material would be placed in the permanent placement area behind the new dikes and in the temporary placement areas to be hydraulically dredged later. A 3-foot blanket of stone would be placed for armoring the new channel slopes from elevation +4.0 to -17 feet MLLW. The bottleneck between the jetties would be removed. Dredging would be performed using a hydraulic cutterhead dredge to a depth of -40 feet MLLW. Approximately 2,454,000 cubic yards (cy) would be dredged on the west channel side and placed in a 344-acre beneficial use placement area. The material would be discharged in the surf zone adjacent to the west jetty for beach restoration. Approximately 2,454,000 cy would be dredged on the eastern channel side; half would be placed in the surf zone adjacent to the west jetty. The other half would be placed adjacent to Sundown Island on the northwestern side creating a 51-acre island expansion with a 73-acre water bottom footprint. Three areas of existing large jetty stone, 1,950 linear feet (1.4 acres) would be removed and reused for construction of the flares on the bay side. Under the Proposed Action, the water velocity would be reduced, navigation would be safer, vessels would no longer need to wait, and channel scouring would be reduced.

A Texas Coastal Zone consistency certification is required. The USACE has prepared a Consistency Determination that evaluated the Proposed Action for consistency with the Texas Coastal Management Plan and has concluded that it is fully consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the Texas program. The EA and Texas Coastal Consistency Determination have been submitted to the General Land Office for review.

The USACE is soliciting comments from the public, Federal, State, and local agencies and officials, Indian tribes, and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Comments will be used in preparation of the EA.

The Draft EA and FONSI will be available for review at the following libraries:

- Port O'Connor Public Library, 101 Suite B South 6th Street, Port O'Connor, Texas 77982
- Bay City Branch, 1100 7th Street, Bay City, Texas 77414

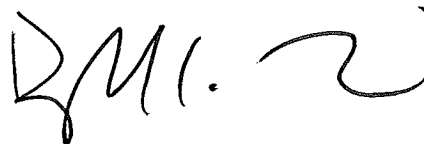
The report is also available for download at the following URL address:

<http://www.swg.usace.army.mil/BusinessWithUs/PlanningEnvironmentalBranch/DocumentSforPublicReview.aspx>

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will accept written public comments on the Draft EA and FONSI for a 30-day period starting on August 29, 2018 and continuing through September 27, 2018. Comments on the Draft EA and FONSI must be postmarked by September 27, 2018. You may send written comments or questions to: USACE, New Orleans District, Attn: Michael Brown, PDC-CEC, 7400 Leake Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70118, or you may email comments or questions to Michael.t.brown@usace.army.mil. Compact disc (CD) copies of the report can be requested from Mr. Michael Brown as well.

This public notice is also issued for the purpose of advising all known interested persons that there is pending before the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) a decision on water quality certification. The USACE is requesting §401 State Water Quality certification from the TCEQ for this action. Any comments concerning this application may be submitted to the TCEQ, 401 Coordinator, MSC-150, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, TX 78711-3087. A copy of the public notice, with a description of work, has been made available for review in the TCEQ's Austin office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D.C. Sims', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Douglas C. Sims, PMP, RPA
Chief, Environmental Compliance Branch
Regional Planning and Environmental Center