

California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
San Francisco Bay Region  
1515 Clay Street, Suite 1400, Oakland, CA 94612  
(510) 622-2300

### Notice of Preparation

<b>To:</b> <u>State Clearinghouse</u> <u>1400 Tenth Street</u> <u>Sacramento, CA 95814</u>	<b>From:</b> <u>Beth Christian</u> <u>San Francisco Bay Regional Water</u> <u>Quality Control Board</u> <u>1515 Clay Street; Suite 1400</u> <u>Oakland, California 94612</u>
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#### **Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment**

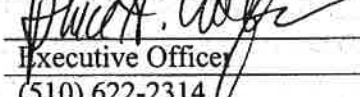
The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board), as the lead State agency, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), as the lead federal agency, are planning to prepare a joint Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Environmental Assessment (EA) for the operation and maintenance of the federal navigational channels in San Francisco Bay, consistent with the adopted *Long-Term Management Strategy for Placement of Dredged Material in the San Francisco Bay Region* (LTMS) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/EIR and associated management plans. The Regional Water Board is requesting your agency's comments on the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities regarding the proposed project. Your agency may need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are described in the attached materials.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice. Please send your response to Regional Water Board, c/o Linda Peters, Project Manager, URS Group Inc., Post Montgomery Center, One Montgomery Street, Suite 900, San Francisco, CA 94104-4538, along with the name for a contact person in your agency.

Project Title: Federal Navigation Channels EA/EIR

Project Applicant: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Date: 2/22/2013 Signature:   
Title: Executive Officer  
Telephone: (510) 622-2314

## COMMENTS AND SCOPING MEETING

Written comments on the scope of the EA/EIR should be sent to the Regional Water Board, c/o Linda Peters, Project Manager, URS Group Inc., Post Montgomery Center, One Montgomery Street, Suite 900, San Francisco, CA 94104-4538. Comments will be accepted until March 27, 2013. In order for the public and regulatory agencies to have an opportunity to submit comments on the scope of the EA/EIR, a meeting will be held during the NOP scoping period. The date, time, and meeting location are listed, as follows:

Tuesday, March 12, 2013  
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
URS Corporation  
1333 Broadway, Suite 800  
Oakland, CA 94612

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### **Project Location**

The federal navigation channels and associated placement sites are located in the San Francisco Bay LTMS Program Area, which spans 11 counties, including Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, San Francisco, San Mateo, Solano, and Sonoma. However, the geographic scope of potential impacts of the proposed project are limited to 11 federally authorized navigation channels and associated placement sites in the San Francisco Bay (defined herein as the San Francisco, San Pablo, Suisun bays) (Figures 1 and 2).

### **Project Purpose and Need**

The USACE's stated purpose of the project is to operate and maintain the federal navigational channels to the associated federally-authorized depth, in the San Francisco Bay consistent with the adopted LTMS EIS/EIR and management plans.

### **Description of the Project**

The USACE has been responsible for maintaining the navigability of federal navigation channels at Congressionally-authorized depths. Accumulation of sediment that settles in these channels can impede navigability. Operation and maintenance dredging removes this sediment to authorized depths to fulfill the USACE's Navigation Mission to provide safe, reliable, and efficient waterborne transportation systems (channels, harbors, and waterways) for the movement of commerce, national security needs, and recreation. As such, the USACE is proposing to continue operation and maintenance dredging to federally authorized depths at specified federal navigation channels in San Francisco Bay, and promote continued placement of dredged materials, consistent with the goals and adopted plans of the LTMS, while adequately protecting delta smelt, longfin smelt, and green sturgeon.

The Regional Water Board, having the regulatory authority for implementing the requirements of Section 401 of the federal Clean Water Act and the state Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, will

consider the USACE's application for a multi-year Water Quality Certification (WQC)/Waste Discharge Requirement (WDR) for continued operation and maintenance dredging of specified San Francisco Bay federal channels and associated dredged materials placement. The San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) will consider the USACE's request for consistency certification pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act.

The management of dredging and dredged material placement in the San Francisco Bay Region is coordinated through the Dredged Material Management Office, consisting of the USACE, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Regional Water Board, BCDC, and the California State Lands Commission.

The EA/EIR will analyze and disclose potential water quality and other environmental impacts of operation and maintenance of the 11 federal navigation channels and use of the associated placement sites in San Francisco Bay for the next 10 years. The USACE proposes that each individual federal navigation channel continue to be dredged as needed, depending on shoaling and available funding; the frequency of dredging would range from annual activities to those that occur only once during the 10-year planning horizon; and consistent with the goals and adopted plans of the LTMS.

The USACE's current maintenance dredging typically involves four steps: 1) testing for sediment quality and suitability determination; 2) removing recently shoaled sediment from the dredging site to restore authorized dimensions; 3) transporting the dredged material by barges, hopper dredges, or pipeline to the placement site; and 4) placing the dredged material at the designated placement site(s).

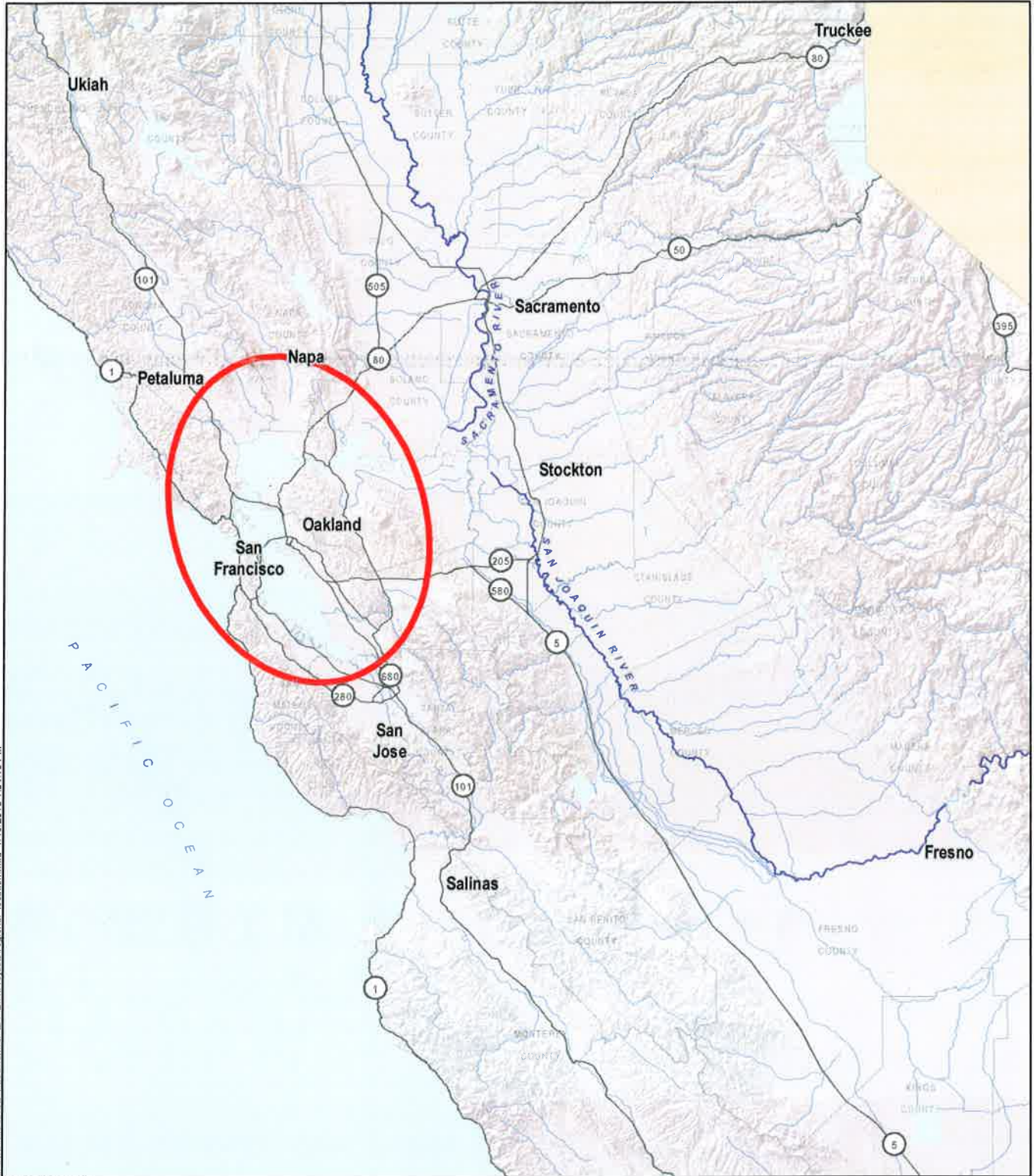
USACE proposes that prior to conducting dredging activities, sediment would continue to be sampled and analyzed to determine its suitability for various placement and beneficial reuse alternatives based on its physical, chemical, and biological characteristics. Current maintenance dredging typically includes hydraulic dredging, mechanical dredging, and/or knockdowns. Current hydraulic dredging usually involves hopper dredges or suction attached to hydraulic pipelines that convey dredged material to a barge or directly onto a placement site. Current mechanical dredging usually involves bucket or clamshell dredges, which scoop material into a barge for transport to a placement site. Current knockdowns use a clamshell or other equipment to smooth high spots into immediately adjacent deeper areas, without transport to an offsite placement location. The USACE is proposing to conduct dredging activities within the work windows of the LTMS, or as otherwise specified in the Biological Opinions issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service to the USACE pursuant to Section 7 of the federal Endangered Species Act.

The USACE is proposing to continue to place dredged materials at established placement sites. As proposed, placement would continue to be in accordance with the LTMS goals and would be dependent on sediment characteristics. Current dredged material placement sites in the San Francisco Bay Area include the aquatic in-Bay placement sites SF-9, SF-10, SF-11, and SF-16; the ocean placement sites SF-8 and SF-DODS, and SF-17 (proposed); rehandling facilities (e.g., Port of Oakland Berth 10); or

beneficial reuse sites (e.g., Montezuma Wetlands Restoration Project, Hamilton Wetlands Restoration Project).

**Probable Environmental Effects**

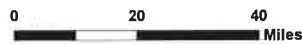
The purpose of this EA/EIR process is to analyze, in a public setting, the potential significant impacts associated with the proposed action, and identify and evaluate the comparative merits of a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed action that feasibly attain most of the basic project objectives, are potentially feasible and would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant adverse effects of the project. Primary areas of investigation for this project include, but are not limited to, sediment quality, sedimentation, and circulation; air quality; biological resources; greenhouse gases; water quality; noise; hazardous materials resulting from dredging activities; and marine navigation. The environmental analysis may reveal that the proposed project would not impact or have significant impacts to many of those areas. However, if any significant adverse environmental impacts are identified feasible mitigation measures to minimize those impacts would be described.



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Source: URS, 2013.

- Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers
- Other waterway
- Project vicinity
- County boundary



**REGIONAL LOCATION**

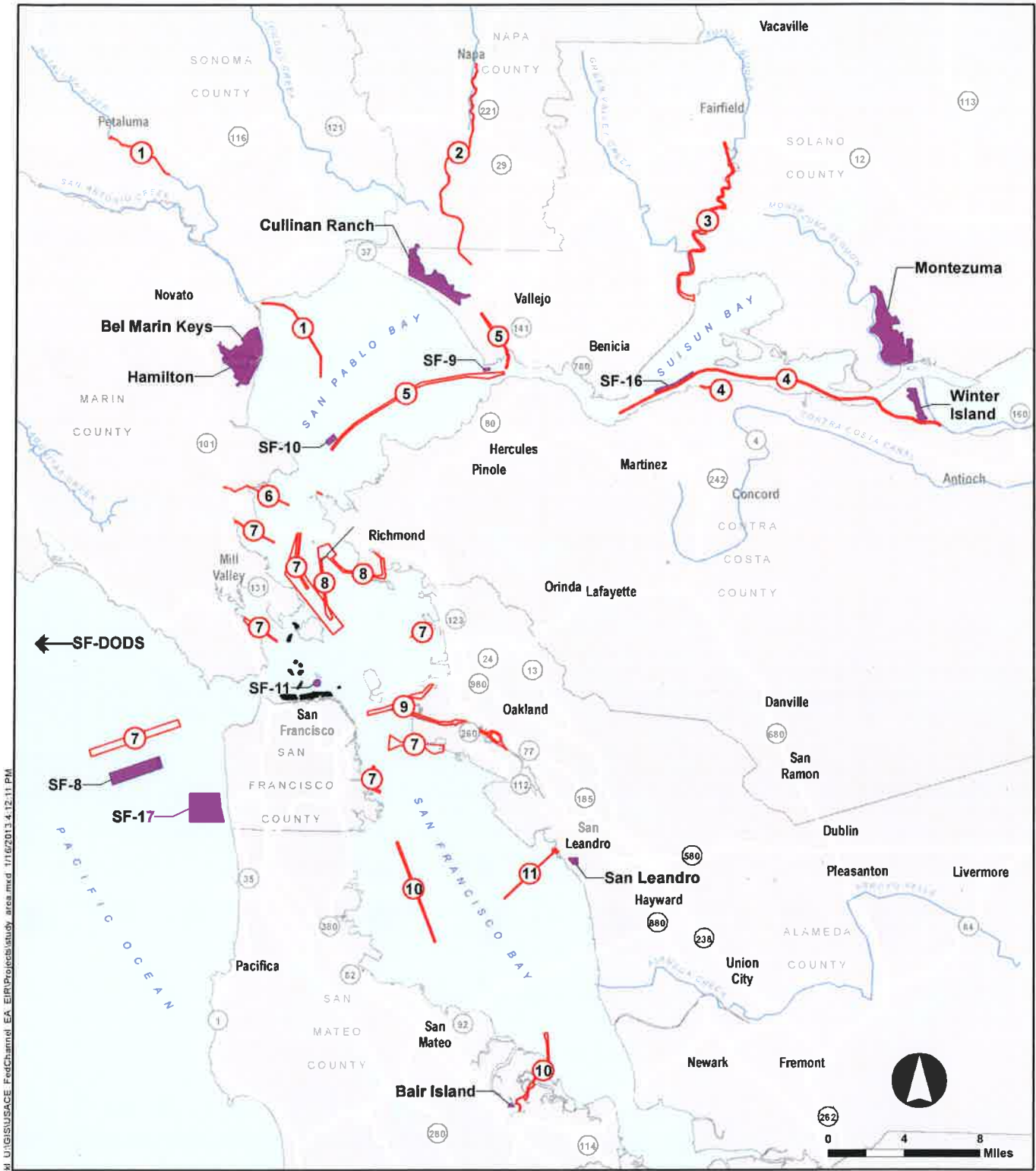
Federal Navigation Channels EA/EIR  
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
 February 2013  
 Bay Area, California



**FIGURE 1**







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Source: URS, 2013.

- |                   |                                   |  |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| ① Highway         | ① Petaluma River Channel          | ⑦ San Francisco Harbor                           |
| ■ Placement site  | ② Napa River Channel              | ⑧ Richmond Harbor                                |
| ■ Shoaling area   | ③ Suisun Slough Channel           | ⑨ Oakland Harbor                                 |
| ▭ County boundary | ④ Suisun Bay Channel              | ⑩ Redwood City Harbor                            |
|                   | ⑤ Pinole Shoal/Mare Island Strait | ⑪ San Leandro Marina (Jack D. Maltester Channel) |
|                   | ⑥ San Rafael Creek Channel        |  |

**STUDY AREA**  
Federal Navigation Channels E/A/EIR  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Bay Area, California

February 2013



**FIGURE 2**

