

**San Diego Unified Port District**  
**CEQA and COASTAL DETERMINATIONS**  
**and**  
**NOTICE OF APPROVAL**

Project: Biota Sampling Activities in San Diego Bay  
Location(s): San Diego, Coronado, and Chula Vista, California  
Parcel No.(s): 030-000, 030-003, 003-019, 003-068, 003-086 056-005,  
Project No.: 2018-097  
Applicant: Kelly Tait, Planning and Green Port, San Diego Unified Port District, 3165 Pacific Highway, San Diego, California 92101  
Date: May 23, 2018

Project Description

The proposed project involves biota sampling activities at four submerged tidelands locations to further analyze pesticides and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in San Diego Bay. Biota sampling for tissue analysis would include collections of fish and plankton. Tissue analyses would be performed on a total of up to 10 samples per species per location. Species for collection would include: Black Perch (*Embiotoca jacksoni*), Northern Anchovy (*Engraulis mordax*), Shiner Perch (*Cymatogaster aggregate*), Slough Anchovy (*Anchoa delicatissima*), Spotted Sand Bass (*Paralabrax maculatofasciatus*), Topsmelt (*Atherinops affinis*), and Zooplankton.

Fish Species would be collected by trawling and hook and line techniques. The length of each trawl would vary depending on the site, but ideally a maximum 5-minute trawl would occur to stay within an approximate 500-m radius of each target sampling location. At the end of each trawl, the net would be retrieved and brought onboard the vessel. The cod-end would be opened, and the catch deposited into pre-cleaned plastic tubs for identification and sorting prior to processing. In areas where eelgrass may be present, the sampling team would keep the net from contacting the bottom and would ensure that the trawl doors remain above the sediment surface at all times to avoid disturbing eel grass beds. Fish landed using hook and line would be placed into a pre-cleaned tub for identification and processing. Plankton would be collected in the mid-water column by towing a 60-centimeter diameter plankton net with 335-micron mesh at a slow speed (2-3 knots). After each tow, the plankton net would be carefully washed with site water to capture all material within a clean plastic bottle attached to the cod end. The material would be poured into a clean pre-labeled glass jar. Biota sampling activities would take approximately three days to complete and would require one boat with approximately four staff.

The following categorical determinations are based on the project submittal, work plan, and all project information known to the District as of the date of this determination.

**CEQA DETERMINATION**

Based upon the above description, the project is determined to be Categorically Exempt pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines) 15306 (Information Collection) and/or Section 3.f of the District's *Guidelines for Compliance with CEQA* because the project involves biota sampling activities to analyze pesticides and PCBs in San Diego Bay. Section 3.f, of the District's CEQA Guidelines is as follows:

- 3.f Information Collection (SG § 15306) (Class 6): Includes basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. These may be for information gathering purposes, or as part of a study leading to an action which has not yet been approved, adopted or funded.

The Categorical Exemptions listed above are appropriate for the proposed project because the project involves biota sampling activities to analyze pesticides and PCBs in San Diego Bay that would not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15062, a 35-day statute of limitations for this CEQA exemption shall apply from the date a Notice of Exemption is posted with the San Diego County Clerk, or a 180-day statute of limitations for this CEQA exemption shall apply if no Notice of Exemption is filed. The District has further determined none of the six exceptions to the use of a categorical exemption apply to this project (CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2).

The proposed project complies with Section 87 of the Port Act, which allows for the establishment, improvement, and conduct of a harbor, and for the construction, reconstruction, repair, maintenance, and operations of wharves, docks, piers, slips, quays, and all other works, buildings, facilities, utilities, structures, and appliances incidental, necessary, or convenient, for the promotion and accommodation of commerce and navigation. The Port Act was enacted by the California Legislature and is consistent with the Public Trust Doctrine. Consequently, the proposed project is consistent with the Public Trust Doctrine.

## **CALIFORNIA COASTAL ACT**

### **PORT MASTER PLAN**

The proposed project is located in Planning District 1, Shelter Island/La Playa, which is delineated on Precise Plan Map Figure 4, Planning District 6, Coronado Bayfront, which is delineated on Precise Plan Map Figure 17, and Planning District 7, Chula Vista Bayfront, which is delineated on Precise Plan Map Figure 19. The Port Master Plan water use designations within the limits of the project are Boat Navigation Corridor, Open Bay, and Recreation Berthing. The proposed project conforms to the certified Port Master Plan because the project involves biota sampling activities to analyze pesticides and PCBs in San Diego Bay consistent with the existing certified water use designations. The project would not change the uses of the sites nor would it interrupt or expand the existing conforming uses of the sites.

### **CATEGORICAL DETERMINATION**

The above project involves biota sampling activities to analyze pesticides and PCBs in San Diego Bay that would not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. This project is consistent with the existing certified water use designations and is Categorically Excluded under Section 8.e of the District's *Coastal Development Permit Regulations*, as follows:

8.e. Information Collection: Basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major significant disturbance to an environmental resource.

Pursuant to California Coastal Act Section 30717, there is a 10 day working period to appeal this "Coastal Act Categorical Determination of Exclusion" to the California Coastal Commission.

RANDA CONIGLIO  
President/CEO

Determination by:  
Ashley Wright  
Senior Planner  
Planning Department

Deputy General Counsel

Signature: Anna Ryad for  
Date: 5/23/18

Signature: W.S. McAlister  
Date: 5-18-18