



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
New York District

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Sue Hopkins
Phone: (212) 264-1722
E-mail: sue.hopkins@usace.army.mil
Fax: (212) 264-0614

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 21, 2001

Corps OKs dredging at passenger ship terminal

Dredging is expected to begin this week at the New York Passenger Ship Terminal, ensuring that the 550,000 passengers annually who travel through the terminal will continue to have smooth sailing.

Today the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued a Federal permit for maintenance dredging at the facility on pier 90 along Manhattan's west side. The permit authorizes dredging to 36 feet deep. The permit also authorizes dredging of an area between piers 88 and 90 to 44 feet deep. This area is used by U.S. Navy ships during annual Fleet Week activities.

The permit authorizes dredging of up to 400,000 cubic yards of material from the Passenger Ship Terminal. The material has been tested and found acceptable for transport to the Historic Area Remediation Site in the Atlantic Ocean, where it will be placed as part of a cover to remediate the site. The dredging is expected to take between 16 and 18 days to complete, depending on weather conditions.

The Corps and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency determined that the dredged material meets EPA guidelines as material acceptable to be placed in the ocean and suitable to remediate the HARS. The agencies determined that issuing the permit is consistent with a 1996 agreement among the federal officials, port and labor interests, and environmental groups to resolve long-standing disagreements regarding disposal of dredged material from the Port of New York and New Jersey.

As a result of the agreement, the Mud Dump Site, a site about 6 miles off Sandy Hook, N.J., historically used for disposal of sand, silt and clays dredged from shipping channels, was closed. Simultaneously, a larger geographic area which encompasses the Mud Dump Site was designated the HARS. The material from the Passenger Ship Terminal has been tested and meets the criteria put forth in that 1996 agreement, as modified by a September 2000 memorandum of agreement between the Corps and EPA, as material suitable to cover contaminated sediments that presently exist within the HARS. These agreements enhanced protection of New Jersey's ocean environment and allowed a long-standing backlog of dredging projects to move forward, boosting the Port's economic viability.

The permit contains special conditions aimed at protecting the environment and navigation during dredging and HARS remediation activities.

For example, the permit requires that all dump scows be equipped with "black boxes" which contain positioning equipment protected in a tamper-proof receptacle. The black boxes allow accurate monitoring of transport and dumping locations.

In addition, inspectors responsible for ensuring strict observance of dredged material disposal requirements must monitor all trips to the HARS. Observers approved by the National Marine Fisheries Service must also ride vessels to ensure placement activities do not interfere with federally protected sea turtles and whales.