



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

NEWS RELEASE

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Corps issues dredging permit to Castle Astoria Terminals

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District, today issued a federal permit to Castle Astoria Terminals, Inc., to dredge up to 105,000 cubic yards of material from its facility on Steinway Creek, off the East River in Queens, N.Y.

The dredged material will be transported to the Historic Area Remediation Site in the Atlantic Ocean, where it will be placed as cover to remediate the site.

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 Historic Area Remediation Site (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 six miles off Sandy Hook, N.J., historically used for disposal of sand, silt and clays dredged from shipping channels, was closed. Simultaneous with closure of the Mud Dump, the site and surrounding areas that have been used historically as disposal sites for contaminated material, were re-designated as the HARS. The material from the Castle Astoria Terminals facility has been tested and meets the criteria put forth in that 1996 agreement as material suitable to cover contaminated sediments that presently exist within the HARS. Under the 1996 agreement, significant additional protections were afforded to the ocean environment, and a long-standing backlog of dredging projects moved forward expeditiously, strengthening the economic viability of the Port.

The permit issued to Castle Astoria Terminals contains 22 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 tamper-proof receptacles. The boxes allow accurate monitoring of transport and placement locations.

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

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The permit further requires strict adherence to conditions requested by the National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and N.Y. State Department of Environmental Conservation. These include seasonal windows on dredging activities to protect fish migrations and fish spawning, as well as windows prohibiting dredging during periods of low dissolved oxygen in the East River.

Additional conservation measures include a requirement for a closed clamshell dredge bucket and a restriction on barge overflow practices, which will further minimize environmental impacts of the project.

Today's decision ends a three-year public interest review process which provided the opportunity for substantial public input through the issuance of three public notices by the Corps and through testimony received at a public meeting in October.

EPA and the Corps believe, based on careful testing and evaluation, that the material from both Castle Astoria and the Brooklyn Marine Terminal is suitable for placement at the HARS based on the evaluation framework the Agencies have been using since the HARS was designated. It also meets the spirit and intent of the 1996 agreement.