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NAS KEY WEST
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LETTER REGARDING UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA COMMENTS ON SEDIMENT TOXICITY
REPORT FOR SITE 1 AND SITE 8 NAS KEY WEST FL
10/11/1999
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



The University of Georgia

Institute of Ecology

October 11, 1999

Ms. DeeVon Quirolo, Executive Director
Reef Relief
201 William Street
Key West, FL 33041

Dear DeeVon:

I read carefully the report you sent to Reef Relief's Scientific Advisory Board on "Sediment Toxicity Report for Sites IR 1 and IR 8 at the Naval Air Station, Key West, FL" conducted by TetraTech NUS, Inc. This report is very professional piece of work, rich in both chemical and biological analyses, and strictly adherent to existing EPA sediment toxicity testing protocol.

As clearly and explicitly pointed out in the report, these data reveal serious environmental problems in at least two sites in the Truman Annex Refuse Disposal Area. It is refreshing to have proof positive for long-held suspicions about ecological problems in this area.

Bioassays at other sites did not show affects on the test organisms, although some potentially adverse affects were only slightly below statistical significance.

These kinds of individual species bioassays are a legally defensible and appropriate way to proceed with an environmental impact assessment, but, it is also obvious that EPA needs to develop whole-ecosystem bioassays to detect *community* responses to stress. My only concern is that sometimes these species-level studies seem like trying to understand the Baueaux Tapestry by examining each of the threads.

The big question now is what is to be done with this information? Is mitigation possible? Can toxic materials be dredged safely without creating greater problems over a much wider area? Is mitigation the best use of limited restoration dollars?

Good luck in these deliberations.

Sincerely,

QA Record

James W. Porter
Professor of Ecology and Marine Science
Member, Reef Relief Scientific Advisory Board

*Elegant work.
Congratulations
Jim Porter*

cc.: Mr. C. M. Bryan, Tetra Tech