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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE "MAINE DEP APPROVES GROUP AS INTERVENERS IN SHIPYARD
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Maine DEP approves group as intervenors in shipyard plan

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KITTERY, Maine — The Maine Department of Environmental Protection is taking the next step in a review of an initiative to house additional hazardous waste at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

The Maine Board of Environmental Protection has unanimously approved the Seacoast Anti-Pollution League and Matthew Brock, an Eliot resident, as intervenors in the review of the shipyard's application to expand the usage of its facility.

"This puts them in the information loop," explained Joan Jones, an environmental specialist with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, following Wednesday morning interviews with the league and Brock.

Ms. Jones said both the league and Brock will receive copies of all correspondence and will become familiar with the factors in the approval process.

The shipyard is in the application process for a commercial license for

its hazardous waste storage facility.

If the license is granted, the shipyard would receive waste from other Department of Defense sites in the Northeast.

"The environmental protection board did what it should have done by allowing the league to take an active role in the debate over whether to allow the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard to accept and process hazardous waste from all across New England," league Field Director Steve Haberman said following the vote.

The shipyard's \$5 million facility, which was completed in 1996, was designed with the help of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to provide environmentally sensitive and safe ways of storing hazardous waste.

It features state-of-the-art technology for consolidation, storage and shipping of hazardous waste to off-site licensed facilities.

Accepting waste from other Department of Defense facilities would further consolidate costs and reinforce the shipyard's importance

to the Navy.

"We consider that our rationale in applying for this license is sound," Shipyard Public Affairs Officer Debbie White said when asked about the shipyard's views on the intervenor applicants, "and we welcome all constructive input in the process."

Haberman said the Seacoast Anti-Pollution League's decision to become involved in the process was based on three basic areas of concern.

The first, he said, is the introduction of additional hazardous waste onto a site that has already been classified as a Superfund toxic waste location.

"The second is that the Navy's request for expansion of its current license would involve more hazardous waste being transported through the region," Haberman explained, "and the third is the concern that this request could lead to the eventual establishment of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard as a hazardous waste processing and storage site for more Naval facilities and perhaps other commercial businesses as well."

Nothing is disposed of on the shipyard, Ms. White noted. All hazardous wastes are properly packaged and shipped by licensed waste haulers to licensed recycling and disposal facilities around the country.

The Seacoast Anti-Pollution League and Brock will both have until April 15 to indicate specific objections to the proposal.

When the review is complete, Ms. Jones said, "we will request public notice of a public hearing to be held in Kittery." She expects that hearing to take place this summer.