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PORTSMOUTH NAVAL SHIPYARD

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Navy's proposal raises questions from state

Shoreline soil erosion subject of concern for regulators

By Larry Favinger
Staff Writer

PORTSMOUTH NAVAL SHIPYARD — State regulators have questions on the Navy's proposal to stabilize lead-contaminated soil erosion from a Superfund site.

In response to the plan to restore a wall near the defense utilization and market office on the waterfront, opposite Peirce Island, Iver McLeod, project manager for the Bureau of Remediation and Waste Management in the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, offered several questions.

These include:

- Whether or not the proposed remedy

is permanent or temporary. If permanent, what is the estimated life, and if temporary, when will permanent stabilization be installed?

- Has a failure analysis been done to determine why the previous riprap (stone) failed?

• Why has there been no discussion regarding prevention of erosion elsewhere along the Seavey Island shore?

• Are there estimates of how much lead-contaminated soil may have eroded and have studies indicated where the soil may have gone?

- Will the remedy be constructed below

the low-tide line and is there any indication that erosion is occurring below that line?

"We're actively working with the Department of Environmental Protection and the Environmental Protection Agency to resolve any questions, comments or concerns they have with the proposal," Alan M. Robinson of the shipyard's Congressional and Public Affairs Office said.

Answers to specific questions were not available.

"We are heartened by the fact the Maine Department of Environmental

Protection is asking about the same issues we are concerned with," said Steve Haberman, executive director of the Seacoast Anti-Pollution League.

McLeod said his department is "pleased the Navy is undertaking an emergency removal action" and, in general, "finds the proposed stabilization appropriate" but that questions remain on the timing because four-year-old photos show "the riprap on this slope" starting to slump.

The Navy plans to put in a geotextile liner and riprap along the shoreline to hold the soil in place and prevent further

erosion. This meets the standards established by the Superfund act.

Haberman said his group is "concerned the Navy, because the shipyard has been designated as a federal Superfund site, is not looking carefully enough at things like shoreline erosion while the final cleanup solution is being worked out."

"Having the site designated as a Superfund location," Haberman said, "does not absolve the Navy of the responsibility of trying to keep those discharges to a minimum."

Fred Evans, the remedial project manager at the shipyard, hopes the plan to stop the erosion will be ready by the Sept. 20 meeting of the Restoration Advisory Board