



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
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ALAMEDA POINT  
SSIC NO. 5090.3  
BRAC OFFICE

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January 18, 2006

Mr. Thomas Macchiarella, Code 06CA.TM  
Department of the Navy  
Base Realignment and Closure  
Program Management Office West  
1455 Frazee Road, Suite 900  
San Diego, CA 92108-4310

**RE: Draft Proposed Plan for Installation Restoration Site 25 Soil Former NAS Alameda**

Dear Mr. Macchiarella:

EPA has reviewed the above referenced document which we received on December 14, 2005. Overall the Proposed Plan addresses the comments and concerns EPA had with the earlier draft with respect to the soil remediation. The readability of the document is greatly enhanced by focusing exclusively on the soil issues at Site 25. Please find attached our comments and requests for revisions. If you have any questions, feel free to call me at (415) 972-3029.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anna-Marie Cook".

Anna-Marie Cook  
Remedial Project Manager

enclosure

cc: Mary Parker, BRAC PMO West  
Marcia Liao, DTSC  
Judy Huang, RWQCB  
Suzette Leith, EPA  
John Chesnutt, EPA

**EPA Comments on Draft Proposed Plan for  
Installation Restoration Site 25 Soil Former NAS Alameda**

1. **Page 1, second column, first line:** The word “preferred” should be removed from this sentence.
2. **Page 3, first column, second paragraph:** Explain further that the entrapped gas plant and refinery wastes make up what is now referred to as the Marsh Crust. Subsequent filling actions have buried the Marsh Crust at depths ranging from 8 -15 feet below ground surface. The fill material itself, i.e. the material that overlies the Marsh Crust, consists mostly of dredged sediment from the Oakland Inner Harbor. This sediment contains deposits of similar waste materials to that forming the Marsh Crust and originated from the coal gasification plants that were historically located in what is now Jack London Square. As the sediment was dredged and used to fill in Alameda Point, the contaminants from the sediment were spread throughout the filled areas. There are clear trends that show that the areas filled first, i.e Estuary Park and the northern portion of North Housing exhibit higher levels of PAH contamination and there is higher contamination at depth than at the surface, which stands to reason as the sediment dredged first had the highest levels of deposited contamination. It is important to distinguish that the Marsh Crust is not the source of the PAH contamination found in the artificial fill, and that the presence of PAHs in the soil at Site 25 is not due to “upward migration” of Marsh Crust contaminants.
3. **Page 3, second column, last paragraph:** This paragraph is poorly worded. The paragraph should state that metals were analyzed for and the concentrations of metals in the soil were the same as those of background metals, and that there is no unacceptable risk from metals. It is unnecessary to state that the RI report concluded that the Navy’s past practices had not contributed to the concentrations of metals at the site.
4. **Page 5, Table 1:** Does “receptors” just refer to human receptors? It would be clearer to distinguish that human receptors are the subject of this table.
5. **Page 5, first column, paragraph below Table 1, third and fourth sentences:** These two sentences do not add to the understanding of risk and should be deleted.
6. **Page 5, first column, second to last sentence:** Delete the phrase “for unrestricted use sites” since the risk management range applies to all scenarios.
7. **Page 5, second column, second paragraph:** EPA recommends removing the first six and a half lines of this paragraph and beginning the paragraph with: “Site-specific factors are typically considered at sites where the cancer risks are in the  $10^{-4}$  to  $10^{-6}$  range when decisions are being made about whether action will be taken.” This better explains the analysis that has been made and the actions being recommended in this PP.

8. **Page 5, second column, third paragraph:** The sentence “Exposure pathways evaluated (Table1) are future residents plus an exposure pathway for ingestion of homegrown produce” does not make sense. Residents are not a pathway; also, ingestion of produce would apply to future residents.
9. **Page 5, second column, last paragraph, first and second sentences:** These sentences need to be reworded and presented differently. The last sentence in the second paragraph in this column specifically states that when risks are above the risk management range, action is generally warranted. Then just a few more sentences down, the reader sees that the Navy is listing a risk above the risk management range, i.e.  $3 \times 10^{-4}$ , and stating that this falls within the risk management range. In this case it would be better to explain the risk results and to which depths they apply, and then draw a conclusion based on risk level and depth.
10. **Page 6, Table 2:** There is no explanation why the construction worker scenario was used for Parcels 182 and 183 at the 0-4 and 0-8 foot depths, but no where else.
11. **Page 6, second column, last sentence:** Revise to read “During the FS, the RAOs provide...and for assessing a remedial action’s potential for achieving remedial goals.”
12. **Page 7, first paragraph:** In addition to protecting against a cancer risk, the RAO should also protect against a non-cancer HI of greater than 1.
13. **Page 7, second paragraph:** A rationale should be given for the 1.0 mg/kg as the concentration that triggers excavation.
14. **Page 7, Table 4:** It is insufficient to say that the ICs will be implemented at the time of property transfer. It would be preferable to say: “The ICs described in this box will be implemented at the time of property transfer. Prior to transfer, the Navy will institute temporary measures to ensure that the goals of the ICs are met.”
15. **Page 8, first paragraph:** It is confusing to refer to the ICs as a reason for removing alternatives 4 and 5, because alternatives 2 and 3 include ICs. EPA recommends saying that alternatives 4 and 5 were screened out “because these two alternatives has significantly greater costs for soil removal and still required ICs.”
16. **Page 8, last sentence before the table:** Sentence should state “The soil alternatives evaluated in detail in the FS are summarized in Table 5 as:”
17. **Page 8, Table 5, No Action Alternative:** In the “Description” box, the sentence should start either with “no action” in quotation marks, or with “The no-action alternative”.

18. **Page 8, Table 5, ICs, “Description” box:** This description has too much technical language and is not helpful for the lay reader. Also, the ICs don’t really limit human ingestion of soil. The word “gains” should be changed to “obtains”.
19. **Page 8, Table 5; discussion of alternatives in section above Table 5; and Page 9 and the following section “Comparison of Alternatives”:** This PP has a lot of discussion about the alternatives evaluated in the FS, but much less about the hybrid/modified alternative that has been put forth as the preferred alternative. This will be confusing to the reader. EPA recommends discussing up front, on page 8, that subsequent to the FS, the Navy and the agencies developed a revised alternative and selected that as the preferred alternative. We suggest the following changes:
- After Table 5, discuss how during the PP stage the Navy added Modified Alternative 3, and describe it. Add a separate Table labeled Modified Alternative 3, with the same columns: Alternative, Description, Cost.
  - Remove all the ARARs or reduce drastically as discussed below.
  - Remove the detailed comparison of Alternatives 2 and 3. This comparison is meaningless, since neither of the alternatives were selected. Replace this with a short section making the following points: During the FS, Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 were compared using the required criteria. When Modified Alternative 3 was developed during the PP phase, it too was compared using the criteria. The reason Modified Alternative 3 is selected is that it is cost effective and protective and elaborate on these last two points.
20. **Page 8 and following, ARARs discussion:** The ARARs discussion is not useful. ARARs were not a factor in selection of the preferred alternative. Additionally, citing regulations without describing them is useless in terms of informing the public. At most, the PP should say that ARARs for the preferred alternative include federal and state requirements for managing and identification of contaminated soil, dust suppression and LUCs. Further, why are migratory birds such a major factor in this remedial decision?
21. **Page 9, “Comparison of Alternatives”:** As noted above, this is not meaningful when the preferred alternative is something else, and our recommendation is to drastically reduce this discussion. However, if this discussion is retained, we have specific concerns:
- Criterion no. 1, last sentence. Sentence implies that Alternative 2 is more protective than Alternative 3.
  - Criterion no. 2. This should say “both comply” rather than “are equally compliant.” “Equally compliant” is confusing when the alternatives have different ARARs.

- Criterion no. 3, first sentence. Remove “primarily” from this sentence.
- Criterion no. 5. This discussion does not appear to be consistent with the table on Page 11.

**22. Page 10, Comparison of Alternatives, continued**

- Criterion no. 6, last sentence. The term “will not” should be changed to “is not expected to”.

**23. Page 11, Table 7: Why is Alternative 3 more implementable than Alternative 2, since Alternative 3 will still need ICs?**

**24. Page 11, Table 7.** The table is confusing when the preferred alternative is not included. We recommend omitting the table, or else including the preferred alternative as Modified Alternative 3.

**25. Page 11, discussion of preferred alternative:** The Navy should be consistent in how it presents the preferred alternative. At one point on page 11 it is described as a combination of Alternatives 2 and 3, while later in the page, it is described as an adaptation of Alternative 3. Since Alternative 3 already has ICs, we recommend describing the preferred alternative as “Modified Alternative 3”.

**26. Page 11, Preferred Alternative, first sentence.** Alternative 3 should be described as “soil excavation and ICs.”

**27. Page 11, Summary Statement.** Item 5 is incorrect since there is not treatment.

**28. Page 11, Summary Statement.** Other than the threshold criteria, the issue isn’t whether an alternative “satisfies” the criteria, but why, when the alternatives are evaluated using the criteria, it is preferred. The PP needs to include a summary of why the preferred alternative is preferred - presumably because it is both cost effective and protective.

**EPA’s Comments on ARARs in Proposed Plans for Alameda Point**

It is not necessary, and can be distracting, to include in a proposed plan an extensive discussion of ARARs. EPA recommends that ARARs discussions in a proposed plan be limited to the following:

1. EPA’s ROD guidance indicates that the proposed plan should include the preliminary remediation goals and their basis, if appropriate (OSWER 9200.1-23P, p. 3-4

and 3-5). Therefore, if the remedial goal is based on an ARAR (e.g. an MCL), that should be stated in the proposed plan.

2. The ROD guidance also indicates that a key component of the proposed plan is an explanation of the differences between the proposed alternative and the other alternatives, and specifically states that the proposed plan may include key ARARs that must be attained by the preferred alternative but not other alternatives (p. 3-6).

3. The NCP indicates that the proposed plan should discuss any proposed ARAR waivers. Note that this does not require discussion of any regulations the Navy has decided are not ARARs, but only of regulations that are ARARs, but for which the Navy is proposing a waiver. (40 CFR 300.430(f)(2)(iv) and ROD guidance p. 3-6).

Neither the ROD guidance nor the NCP even suggests that all ARARs should be included in the proposed plan, nor that the proposed plan needs to include a discussion of regulations that are not considered to be ARARs. Rather, the key is informing the public. As stated in the NCP, the proposed plan “briefly describes the remedial alternatives analyzed by the lead agency, proposes a preferred remedial action alternative, and summarizes the information relied upon to select the preferred alternative.” To the extent that an ARAR is significant to the remedy selection process – e.g., if it is used to set cleanup levels or distinguish the preferred alternative from other alternatives – it should be included. A listing of numerous ARARs, on the other hand, does little to inform the public as to how the preferred alternative will work and why it was selected, and, frankly, could very well be more confusing than helpful.