ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SUMMARY AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR PROPOSED NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION, NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

KETCHIKAN PORT FACILITY RECAPITALIZATION PROJECT

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

PURPOSE AND NEED

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) proposes to recapitalize its property and facilities currently operated by the Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO) at the existing Marine Operations Center-Pacific (MOC-P) Ketchikan Port Facility. The facility is at 1010 Stedman Street in the city of Ketchikan, Alaska, and is the dedicated homeport for the NOAA Ship *Fairweather*. Due to failing and inadequate facilities, the existing NOAA homeport is unable to fully support the berthing of vessels or staging for cruises or missions carried out by the NOAA Ship *Fairweather* or other NOAA vessels. The Proposed Action would provide upgrades and replacement facilities necessary to reestablish homeport operations and maintenance functions for the NOAA Ship *Fairweather* and other NOAA vessels. The proposed recapitalization project would more effectively support NOAA missions conducted primarily in the North Pacific Ocean and the Arctic Continental Shelf.

PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action at the Ketchikan Port Facility would require demolition, disposal, and replacement of key structures and infrastructure in a 77,000-square-foot upland area and a 102,000 square foot in-water area owned by NOAA. Nearly all the existing OMAO facilities and assets at its Ketchikan Port Facility would be affected.

Alternatives Considered

Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative would include the following proposed actions upland of the high tide level (HTL):

- Corrugated metal warehouse building (3,600 square feet)—to remain in use with upgrades to replace the existing roof and to install new windows
- Prefabricated office building (1,200 square feet)—to be removed and replaced (see details of new office building below)
- Aluminum-sided storage building (900 square feet)—to be removed

- Aluminum-sided electrical power vault building (383 square feet)—to be removed
- Fuel/oil spill catchment shelter (832 square feet)—to be removed, graded, and paved
- Shoreside laboratory building (1,200 square feet)—to be removed
- Asphalt paved and unpaved areas for circulation, parking and outdoor storage—to be removed, graded, and paved with asphalt
- Buried remnant infrastructure (e.g., fuel pipelines and pumps and abandoned utility conduit)—to be removed as needed
- Existing utility infrastructure—to be rerouted on site, as needed
- Fencing and gates—to be removed and replaced
- New single story, pre-engineered metal office building (approximately 2,600 square feet) on a concrete pad to include six offices, two bathrooms, conference room, and light storage—to replace the existing prefabricated office building
- New cast in place concrete transfer bridge abutment (approximately 40-foot long and tapering from approximately 55-foot wide at the onshore end to approximately 35 feet at the offshore end)
- New concrete boat launch ramp (approximately 160 feet by 18 feet) of which approximately half would be a cast in place concrete apron and half of pre-cast concrete panels, supported on mound of shot rock fill with armor rock protection.

The remaining fenced grounds of the NOAA property would be regraded and paved to accommodate up to 40 parking spaces typically used during vessel missions by NOAA personnel. The total upland impervious area for the Preferred Alternative is approximately 38,180 square feet. A drainage feature receiving surface water flows from higher elevations and culverts adjacent to and under Stedman Street emerges above ground and flows to Tongass Narrows at the most southerly portion of the Ketchikan Port Facility property. This surface drainage feature within the NOAA property but outside of the existing NOAA security fence would not be altered as part of the Proposed Action.

Remnant fuel lines and upland utilities—both buried and overhead—would be removed and utility conduit rerouted to connect with public utility service lines immediately off site. These service lines include electrical power, potable water, firefighting utilities, sewer, and telecommunications. A buried sewer-holding tank would be relocated farther upland on the property, requiring excavation of up to 8 feet for removal and installation of a replacement tank. Two existing fuel tanks and appurtenances would be salvaged. Concrete and other nonhazardous materials would be stockpiled for disposal to a regional landfill.

Upland demolition and construction activities are anticipated to be undertaken using an excavator, forklift, and 50-ton crane.

Nearly all of the existing in-water infrastructure at the Ketchikan Port Facility would be removed, including the following in-water and over-water structures and assets:

- Remnant wooden access trestle and parallel utility trestle and supporting piles
- Main pile-supported pier structure (9,000 square feet) and supporting piles
- Steam plant (boiler) shed on the pier
- Three concrete-filled steel mooring dolphins
- Two single piles extending above the water surface
- Floating cylindrical fendering (250 linear feet); this may be saved or salvaged by the contractor.
- South dolphin structure

The following new in-water structures would be constructed:

- An approximately 240-foot long and 50-foot wide (48-foot wide pier with 2-foot fendering) floating replacement pier would replace the existing pier and its supporting piles. The floating pier would be secured and stabilized by 10 steel piles, each 24 inches in diameter, and accessed via a single, 144-foot long and 17-foot wide steel, truss-framed transfer bridge. The transfer bridge would be supported by a bridge support float adjacent to the pier and hinged to the shoreline cast in place concrete abutment. The 24-foot by 22-foot bridge support float secured by four additional 24-inch diameter steel piles. Replacement mooring dolphins and fenders for mooring would be installed. Ship utilities would be extended dockside attached to the transfer bridge (30 percent design drawings for the Preferred Alternative are provided in Appendix D).
- A small boat dock, approximately 90 feet long by 14 feet wide, would be installed and connected to the floating dock by an aluminum gangway approximately 40 feet long and 5 feet wide. The small boat dock will be secured with four pilings.
- Discussed above for upland facilities, the small boat launch ramp proposed at the northern portion of the NOAA-owned shoreline is also an in-water element that would be supported on a raised, rip-rap protected mound with side slopes of 2:1 (Horizontal:Vertical) and a total footprint of approximately 200 feet by 70 feet wide.

In-water work would be performed using equipment stationed on a floating barge or from the shore as needed. Concrete and other nonhazardous materials would be stockpiled for disposal to a regional landfill. An estimated 100 to 200 remnant piles would be removed. Wood piles would be choked and pulled by vibratory methods; if piles incur breakage or splintering during the removal process, the pile would be cut at mud line. Steel piles would be cut at or near the mudline using a torch or plasma cutter for cuts above low water. For cuts made below low-water (or if the piles are concrete-filled), a wire saw may be used. Installation of the new steel piles is anticipated to be undertaken using a barge mounted down-the-hole (DTH) rock socket drill and vibratory hammer. Piles would be embedded into bedrock to a minimum depth of 20 feet. The last foot of each pile would be "proofed" using an impact pile driver that is anticipated will

require approximately 5 to 10 blows per pile based on the contractor's experience at other pile-driving sites in the Ketchikan area.

Following completion of construction activities, operations of the facility would include administrative, light-industrial, security, dockside maintenance, and maritime activities. The NOAA Ship *Fairweather* would remain berthed at the site from November through March each year and would be periodically berthed at the site between missions in the spring and summer months. Other vessels may also periodically berth at the facility and a limited number of small boats or watercraft on trailers may be temporarily parked on paved upland areas or within the warehouse. Operations are anticipated to require the permanent relocation of up to 20 NOAA staff to Ketchikan.

Action Alternative 1

Action Alternative 1 would be similar to the Preferred Alternative (discussed above); however, instead of a floating pier, a fixed pile-supported pier would replace the existing pier. A fixed pier under Action Alternative 1 would have approximately the same dimensions as the float pier design but would require 60 to 100 steel piles to support the pier deck over water and at least 10 steel piles to support the transfer bridge. Steel piles would be 18 to 24 inches in diameter.

All other components, including construction and demolition methods, upland improvements, utilities, the small boat dock and boat launch, and operational activities at the site would be as described for the Preferred Alternative.

No-Action Alternative

Analysis under NEPA requires review of a No-Action Alternative. Under the No-Action Alternative, there would be no recapitalization of facilities at the OMAO Ketchikan Port Facility. The NOAA Ship *Fairweather* would continue to be berthed and serviced from other locations in Ketchikan (e.g., at dry dock facilities or Coast Guard Station Ketchikan) or at the NOAA MOC-P homeport in Newport, Oregon.

All existing upland and in-water structures would remain, including in-water timber piles that contain creosote. The existing condemned trestle would remain unusable and continue to deteriorate. Hazardous materials or soils discovered during periodic inspections would be removed or secured in place. This alternative would not meet the purpose and need for the project.

Alternatives Considered and Rejected

An off-site homeport alternative was determined to not be economically feasible given the current level of investment and ownership established at the existing OMAO Ketchikan Port Facility. Acquisition and redevelopment of shoreline areas in the greater Ketchikan region that would be capable of supporting larger vessels are limited and would require substantially greater investment. An off-site alternative outside of the greater Ketchikan region was not considered

feasible due to the congressional mandate for a NOAA Ship *Fairweather* homeport in Ketchikan, Alaska.

Other on-site alternatives, such as repair or expansion of the existing facility infrastructure, were not considered feasible due to the compromised condition of the existing pier, access trestle, and mooring dolphins. This infrastructure has been closed for use since 2008 and requires replacement due to the severe deterioration of timber piles and the bracing for the trestle and pier, making them unsafe for use. Since that time, the NOAA Ship *Fairweather* has been without a functioning, dedicated Alaskan homeport facility, requiring use of local temporary berths (e.g., U.S. Coast Guard Station Ketchikan) and transit to the MOC-P headquarters in Newport, Oregon, each winter.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

NOAA prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzing the proposed action in conformance with procedural requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The document adheres to requirements of NOAA Administrative Order 216-6A, Environmental Review Procedures for Implementing the NEPA (amended April 2016) and the Companion Manual for NOAA Administrative Order 216-6A.

Based on an evaluation of the proposed action's effect on the human environment, it was determined that no significant impacts would result.

The EA analyzed the following topics:

- Air Quality
- Noise
- Geological Resources
- Water Resources
- Hazardous Materials
- Wetlands and Other Waters
- Floodplains
- Biological Resources
- Land Use
- Recreational Resources
- Utilities and Solid Waste
- Transportation
- Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice
- Visual Resources
- Cultural Resources

No anticipated environmental impacts were identified in relation to the No-Action Alternative. Table 1 summarizes the anticipated environmental impacts to environmental resources identified in the Final EA for each action alternative and any mitigation measures required to support this Finding of No Significant Impact.

Table 1, Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Resources	Anticipated Impacts	Summary of Mitigation
Air Quality	**Preferred Alternative:** Minor **Action Alternative 1:** Minor	**Preferred Alternative:** No Mitigation Required. BMPs for construction would be implemented to minimize fugitive dust and diesel exhaust emissions. **Action Alternative 1:** Same as for Preferred Alternative.
Noise	**Preferred Alternative:** Moderate **Action Alternative 1:** Moderate	**Preferred Alternative:** Mitigation Measure 4.2.4: Provide notice of pile driving activities to Bayview Cemetery operators. Temporary suspension of construction activities if requested BMPs for construction would be implemented to minimize unnecessary construction noise. **Action Alternative 1:** Same as for Preferred Alternative.
Geological Resource	**Preferred Alternative:** Negligible **Action Alternative 1:** Negligible	**Preferred Alternative:** No Mitigation Required. Construction industry standards would be implemented to reduce impacts associated with geological conditions, including the use of site-specific geotechnical evaluations to inform detailed design. **Action Alternative 1:** Same as for Preferred Alternative.
Water Resources and Hydrological Processes	**Preferred Alternative:** Minor **Action Alternative 1:**	**Preferred Alternative:** No Mitigation Required. BMPs for construction would be implemented including stormwater pollution prevention plan, erosion and sediment

Resources	Anticipated Impacts	Summary of Mitigation
	Minor	control plan, pile removal and installation plan and obtaining required permits under federal CWA. **Action Alternative 1:** Same as for Preferred Alternative.
Hazardous Materials	**Preferred Alternative:** Minor **Action Alternative 1:** Minor	**Preferred Alternative:** No Mitigation Required. BMPs for construction would be implemented including pile removal and installation plan, pipeline and tank removal plan, soil and groundwater management plan, site-specific health and safety plan, and handling and disposal of hazardous building materials in accordance with applicable regulations. **Action Alternative 1:** Same as for Preferred Alternative.
Wetlands	**Preferred Alternative:** Minor **Action Alternative 1:** Minor	**Preferred Alternative:** No Mitigation Required. Permits to be obtained from USACE under Section 404 and Section 10 of the CWA may include additional conditions. **Action Alternative 1:** Same as for Preferred Alternative.
Floodplains	**Preferred Alternative:** Minor **Action Alternative 1:** Minor	**Preferred Alternative:** No Mitigation Required **Action Alternative 1:** No Mitigation Required
Biological Resources	**Preferred Alternative:** Minor **Action Alternative 1:** Minor	**Preferred Alternative:** MM 4.8.4: Bio-observers and hydroacoustic monitoring, implement further noise attenuation methods if noise levels below thresholds cannot be maintained.

Resources	Anticipated Impacts	Summary of Mitigation
		BMPs would be implemented and compliance with federal regulations, including coordination with USFWS and NMFS regarding MSFCMA, MBTA, BGEPA, MMPA, and ESA and BMPs for spill control outlined for Hazardous Materials. **Action Alternative 1:** Same as for Preferred Alternative.
Land Use	**Preferred Alternative:** Negligible **Action Alternative 1:** Negligible	**Preferred Alternative:** No Mitigation Required **Action Alternative 1:** No Mitigation Required
Recreational Resources	**Preferred Alternative:** Minor **Action Alternative 1:** Moderate	**Preferred Alternative:** No Mitigation Required **Action Alternative 1:** No Mitigation Required
Utilities and Solid Waste	**Preferred Alternative:** Minor **Action Alternative 1:** Minor	**Preferred Alternative:** No Mitigation Required **Action Alternative 1:** No Mitigation Required
Transportation	**Preferred Alternative:** Negligible **Action Alternative 1:** Negligible	**Preferred Alternative:** No Mitigation Required. Consult with ADOT&PF to determine if traffic control plans and/or lane closures required. **Action Alternative 1:** Same as for Preferred Alternative.
Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice	**Preferred Alternative:** Minor **Action Alternative 1:** Minor	**Preferred Alternative:** No Mitigation Required **Action Alternative 1:** No Mitigation Required

Resources	Anticipated Impacts	Summary of Mitigation
Visual Resources	**Preferred Alternative:** Minor **Action Alternative 1:** Minor	**Preferred Alternative:** No Mitigation Required **Action Alternative 1:** No Mitigation Required
Cultural Resources	**Preferred Alternative:** Negligible **Action Alternative 1:** Negligible	**Preferred Alternative:** No Mitigation Required, BMPs for construction would be implemented, including standard protocols for inadvertent discoveries, if encountered. **Action Alternative 1:** Same as for Preferred Alternative.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations state that the determination of significance using an analysis of effects requires examination of both context and intensity, and lists ten criteria for intensity (40 CFR 1508.27). In addition, NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 216-6A, Section 6.01(b) 1 – 11, provides eleven criteria, the same ten as the CEQ Regulations and one additional for determining whether the impacts of a proposed action are significant. Each criterion is discussed below with respect to the proposed action and considered individually as well as in combination with the others.

1. *Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to cause both beneficial and adverse impacts that overall may result in a significant effect, even if the effect will be beneficial?*

   No. The Preferred Action is not expected to result in a significant beneficial or adverse effect. The EA analyzes associated environmental consequences of the Preferred Alternative based on established standards and criteria. Analysis for each of the following topics and resource areas were undertaken: Air Quality, Noise, Geological Resources, Water Resources, Hazardous Materials, Wetlands, Floodplains, Biological Resources, Land Use, Recreational Resources, Utilities and Solid Waste, Transportation, Socioeconomic and Environmental Justice, Visual Resources, and Cultural Resources.

2. *Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to significantly affect public health or safety?*

   No. Public health and safety effects are not expected to be significant. NOAA will ensure that the Preferred Alternative will be constructed in a manner consistent with all applicable

federal, state and local laws pertaining to hazardous materials handling, storage, transportation and disposal, included, but not limited to, relevant laws pertaining to asbestos and lead-based paint.

3. *Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to result in significant impacts to unique characteristics of the geographic area, such as proximity to historic or prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas?*

No. Adequate mitigation measures are required for anticipated effects to unique characteristics of the geographic area, including marine mammals and other resources. NOAA will also implement BMPs and comply with federal laws and applicable regulations designed to reduce impacts to the environment. These water quality control measures include:

- Obtain appropriate approvals under the federal CWA
- Implement SWPPPs and Erosion and Sediment Control Plans (ESCPs), as required
- Apply standard BMPs for sediment control and water quality during in-water construction (e.g., floating boom with absorbent pads, silt curtain, conducting work during low tide)
- Objects discharged during pile work (rock socket drilling or torch lance cutting) would be collected on a barge and transported to a permitted upland location for disposal
- Prepare a Pile Removal and Installation Plan to implement procedures for in-water pile installation and removal in accordance with NOAA's 2009 Guidelines for the use of treated wood products in aquatic environments.

4. *Are the proposed action's effects on the quality of the human environment likely to be highly controversial?*

   No. The Preferred Alternative would involve demolition, disposal, and replacement of key structures and infrastructure in a 77,000-square-foot upland area and a 102,000 square foot in-water area owned by NOAA. No adverse effects to the human environment would result that are expected to be highly controversial.

5. *Are the proposed action's effects on the human environment likely to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks?*

   No. The anticipated effects of the Preferred and Alternative Actions on the human environment were evaluated in the EA based on 30% design plans assuming reasonable, worst-case conditions.

6. *Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration?*

No. The Preferred Alternative consists of the recapitalization of the Ketchikan Port Facility that are clearly defined and limited in scope and extent. It would neither be a catalyst or precedent for other future actions by NOAA or others that would result in significant effects, nor would it influence a future action under consideration. Future actions at the project site would be determined through separate planning processes.

7. *Is the proposed action related to other actions that when considered together will have individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts?*

No. The Preferred Alternative is not reliant upon or connected to other actions, nor is it relied upon for the occurrence of other actions. For each of the subject areas analyzed in the EA, the contribution of the Preferred Alternative to a potentially cumulatively significant impact is not considerable, provided the recommended mitigation measures and best management practices are implemented. Therefore, the Preferred Alternative will not result in a significant cumulative impact to the human environment.

8. *Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to adversely affect districts, sites highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.*

No. The Preferred Alternative is not expected to result in significant adverse impacts to listed or eligible historic resources or the loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources during construction and operation. Concurrence with this opinion has been received from the State Historic Preservation Officer.

9. *Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to have a significant impact on endangered or threatened species, or their critical habitat as defined under the Endangered Species Act of 1973?*

No. The Preferred Alternative is not expected to affect endangered or threated species. Five species of Pacific salmon, pink (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha),* chum (*O. keta*), sockeye (*O. nerka*), coho (*O. kisutch*), and Chinook salmon (*O. tshawytscha*), occur in the project area. Local and nearby bays and coves provide a protected habitat for Dungeness crabs (*Cancer magister*), red king crab (*Paralithodes camtschaticus*), and tanner crab (*Chionoecetes bairdi*). Other invertebrates found in the area include shrimp (numerous species), pinto abalone (*Haliotis kamtschatkana*), and geoduck clam (*Panopea generosa*).

The humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) is the only threatened and endangered species (TES) protected by the ESA that is known to occur in or near the project area. This

marine mammal species is under the jurisdiction of NMFS and is discussed in the "Marine Mammals" section of the EA.

There are no known plant, fish, avian, or terrestrial wildlife species or designated critical habitats for these resources that are protected by the ESA known to occur in the project area. Mitigation measures have been identified to ensure potential impacts are less that significant during construction.

10. *Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to threaten a violation of federal, state or local law or requirements imposed for environmental protection?*

No. The effect of the Preferred Alternative on the human environment has been analyzed relative to applicable Federal, state and local environmental laws or regulations. No regulatory violations or other significant environmental effects are expected to result provided that mitigation measures recommended in EA are implemented.

11. *Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to result in the introduction or spread of a non-indigenous species?*

No. No transport, release, propagation or spread of non-indigenous species is associated with the Preferred Alternative.

DETERMINATION

In view of the information present in this document and the analysis contained in the supporting NOAA Environmental Assessment for its proposed action, it is hereby determined that the undertaking of the proposed action will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment. In addition, all beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action have been addressed to reach the conclusion of no significant impacts. According, preparation of an environmental impact statement for this action is not necessary.

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Deirdre R. Jones — Date

NOAA Chief Administrative Officer