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Port of Portland Terminal 4 Superfund Cleanup Moving Forward

Port of Portland and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have reached a preliminary agreement allowing the Port to continue cleanup at its marine Terminal 4. The work will build on significant cleanup the Port previously conducted at the site.

Consistent with its commitment to moving forward with the cleanup under the Portland Harbor Superfund Site Record of Decision, the Port approached EPA last summer about beginning discussions on how to best move forward on cleanup. Yesterday, the EPA sent the Port a letter outlining the areas of preliminary agreement and identifying next steps to moving the cleanup forward.

The letter also identifies a commitment by EPA and the Port to explore the best technical solutions for cleanup based on the anticipated future uses of the terminal. Next, the Port and EPA will begin formal negotiations to amend the current agreement, allowing additional sampling and design to occur.

“We’re committed to a cleanup that protects our community and environment and excited to further the significant work that we’ve already accomplished at Terminal 4,” said Curtis Robinhold, Port executive director. “We’re proud to stand with the others, public and private, who have committed to moving cleanup forward at Portland Harbor.”

Terminal 4 is within the Portland Harbor Superfund Site, and contamination is largely from historic industrial activities discontinued 20 years ago. The Port conducted significant environmental cleanups at the terminal in the 1990s and 2000s. In 1995, the Port removed 35,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment from Slip 3. The Port also signed an agreement with EPA in 2003 and implemented an early action in 2008 that resulted in cleanup of nearly 13,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment, capping of approximately 8,000 square feet of sediment, and improvement of 850 feet of shoreline.

To ensure consistency in the cleanup remedy, the Port and EPA agreed to defer further cleanup under the early action agreement until EPA issued its final remedy decision, which occurred in January 2017. Also, through work under Oregon Department of Environmental Quality oversight, the Port largely completed the cleanup of any possible continuing sources of contamination to the river at Terminal 4, and the remaining work on sources will be completed prior to or concurrent with the cleanup.

Terminal 4 is the Port’s most active terminal and a significant source of economic activity for the region. Annually, operations at the terminal directly provide 759 jobs, and firms working at the terminal and related truck and rail companies earn more than \$232 million. In addition, nearly \$12 million in state and local taxes are generated annually by terminal activity.

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