

In addition, the Corps and EPA will accelerate their work with the affected state and local governments on a sound dredge material management plan, and complete the interim plan by August 30, 1996. This interim plan will identify any steps that are necessary to sustain dredging through 1997. The final plan will be completed by September, 1998.

Most importantly, we expect that our commitments concerning the MDS will diminish or eliminate the possibility of litigation challenging permits and the EPA rule change during the period prior to September 1, 1997. This proposal is predicated on that result.

3. We will help ensure the health of the Port and the environment for the 21st Century

The short-term efforts identified here cannot truly help the Port without effective long-term strategies to ensure that dredge material is managed properly. We recognize the significant efforts and commitments that New York and New Jersey have made with us to put those strategies in place. We will reinforce those efforts, so that long-term growth of the Port is sustained and sustainable.

Recognizing that a vital Port should be able to accommodate the full range of world-class ships, the Corps will soon begin an expedited feasibility study of alternatives for a 50 foot deep Port, including recent legislative proposals on this issue. The Corps will seek Congressional authorization and take steps to reprogram funds to allow the study to begin in 1996, and the study will be designed for completion in 1999. Recognizing that dredging is not the only issue affecting the future of this and other Ports, the Department of Transportation is committed to a six-month study of the causes of cargo diversion from our East Coast ports. This study, which will be developed in consultation with other affected agencies, will recommend any additional measures that are needed to enhance the international competitiveness of our East Coast ports.

Continued growth of the Port must be coupled with aggressive development of disposal alternatives and expanded efforts to reduce toxic pollution in the harbor. The Administration will continue to support legislation and appropriations to support cost-sharing of upland disposal alternatives. The Administration will also seek support for the range of continuing efforts to develop acceptable alternatives. For example, EPA is today announcing \$1.2 million in contract awards to support development of decontamination technologies for dredge material. In addition, the Corps will immediately seek necessary authorization and funding to begin the technical design and feasibility studies needed for environmentally sound confined containment facilities, in anticipation that such facilities may be part of the final dredge material management plan. We also will pursue additional steps to reduce and address toxic pollution in the estuary. We will seek to minimize polluted runoff by funding and supporting local and region-wide watershed planning and implementation activities. By September 1996, EPA will invest \$100,000 to facilitate pollution reduction in the Arthur Kill. All of these efforts will be coordinated with the Harbor-Estuary Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, which is the blueprint for working cooperatively with