

Maritime Administration
Finding of No Significant Impact

For the Port of Little Rock
Mooring Upgrade Project
Little Rock, Arkansas

This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and the accompanying Environmental Assessment (EA) are submitted pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. 4332 (2).

The Maritime Administration has determined that this project, for which the Proposed Action Alternative has been selected, will have no significant effect on the human or natural environment, individually or cumulatively, under normal conditions. The project is located at the Port of Little Rock located on the Arkansas River in Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas.

The proposed action is to provide funding for the Port of Little Rock to restore and expand current barge fleet operations by replacing 15 deteriorated deadman anchors in two locations on the Arkansas River shoreline with 36 steel monopile mooring dolphins and installing 11 monopile dolphins in a third location within Slackwater Harbor. The project will provide the Port of Little Rock with the infrastructure improvements needed to address the immediate need for more secure and efficient mooring and transloading cargo at the Port of Little Rock as well as the expected need for more capacity in the future.

The project would occur at the existing facility within the Port of Little Rock and surrounded by industrial facilities and the River Terminal, which is currently used to transport forest products, metal products, and bulk products such as grain, clay, rock, fertilizer, and cement. The project was determined to have potential temporary and localized effects on water quality and air quality due to turbidity and emissions during construction, respectively, and to have no impacts to floodplains or traffic during construction or operation. Noise and vibration from construction would be temporary and short-term at each location.

To address public comments related to the proposed project's impacts on health risks, water quality, soils, and noise and vibration, the Port of Little Rock included environmental commitments in the EA that will be implemented to reduce and avoid impacts to environmental resources to the greatest extent possible (Table 1).

Table 1. Environmental Commitments

Type of Commitment	Port Committed Action
Noise and Vibration	<p>Vibratory pile driving will be utilized where sufficient rather than impact driving techniques to reduce vibration levels from the Project. One or more of the noise control approaches listed in Section 3.4 of the EA would be implemented during construction of the Project if impact driving is required.</p> <p>Temporary noise impacts are anticipated to occur over a period of approximately one month between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm during weekdays. The Final EA includes recommendations for noise mitigation which will be included in the construction contract documents as appropriate.</p>
Health Risks	<p>Any future changes to port operations, including, for example, the construction of infrastructure necessary to ship liquid and gaseous products, would comply with applicable federal, state, and local environmental review and permitting requirements.</p> <p>The Port will issue an advisory to the harbor service to eliminate fleeting of barges with potentially hazardous cargo near the residential area.</p> <p>The Little Rock Fire Department Hazardous Material team and Rescue Unit will respond to hazardous material spills as needed. Depending on the nature of the incident, the City of Little Rock Emergency Management Department can send notifications through the National Weather Service alert system, emergency sirens equipped with an announcement system, and by door-to-door notifications. Most likely, residents would be asked to shelter in place, although evacuations could take place. Both the City of Little Rock and Pulaski County have boats that could be used in case emergency evacuation by water is needed.</p>
Water Quality	<p>The Port and shipping companies must comply with federal, state, and local regulations that will minimize adverse impacts.</p>
Soil, Geology, and Seismic Activity	<p>Standard best management practices will be implemented during construction.</p>

The Maritime Administration has determined that the EA adequately and accurately discusses the environmental issues and effects of the proposed action and specifies appropriate mitigation measures and standard conditions of approval in order to minimize environmental effects. Therefore, a FONSI is warranted, and preparation of an environmental impact statement, pursuant to NEPA is not required.

Elin Kandle
Office of Environment Reviewer

1/12/2023
Date

Daniel Gjuska
Associate Administrator for Environment and Compliance

1/13/2023
Date