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Port Commission nears milestone on International Terminal Renovation Project

NEWPORT – The Port Commission received an update on the progress of the International Terminal Renovation project at its meeting Tuesday, Mar. 23, 2010. The Port is nearing 60% design completion, a milestone for the project, while work is being completed on the permitting process.

A Joint Permit Application (JPA) must be submitted to both the Department of State Lands and the US Army Corps of Engineers before the Port can begin in-water construction work on the renovation of the Terminal. Concurrently, a Biological Assessment is submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service. These documents address a wide range of issues including remediation of environmental threats and impacts to jurisdictional waters and protected species. Completion of these documents is expected by late April 2010. When the agencies determine that the documents are complete, the JPA and the Biological Assessment are made available for public review and comment for 30 days.

The Port encourages public participation on the project and recently updated its steering committee which is comprised of representatives from the longshoremen's union, the fishing industry and local conservationists. According to Commissioner JoAnn Barton, Port representatives have had productive discussions with local and regional conservation groups to keep them abreast of the progress of the project. In anticipation of increased public interest, project information has recently been updated on the Port's web site (www.portofnewport.com) which now includes a Frequently Asked Questions page as well as an online comment form. Additional details about the JPA and open house will be posted as they are finalized.

The Port of Newport is rebuilding the International Terminal which includes two docks, warehouse, and administrative offices. Two World War II cargo ships – the Pasley and the Hennebique – currently serve as dock foundations. Both vessels require environmental clean-up and remediation. Over time the Pasley has become unstable and threatens complete structural failure, risking the release of contaminants into Yaquina Bay. Systematic remediation, demolition and removal eliminates these risks and increases critical habitat for salmonids and other aquatic species in Yaquina Bay.

The first phase of the project will include environmental remediation of the Pasley and Hennebique. Afterward, the Pasley will be removed, a new dock constructed, and the existing wooden dock in front of the Hennebique will be upgraded. The existing office and warehouse buildings near the Hennebique will be removed and utility work will begin. During a second phase, the dock in front of the Hennebique will be removed and replaced, and utility work will be completed. Upland construction is expected to start in early summer of this year and in-water construction is expected to start in November, 2010.

For more information about the project, contact General Manager Don Mann at the Port of Newport, 541-265-7758, or visit the Port's Web site at www.portofnewport.com. Comments can be submitted at anytime by emailing terminalproject@portofnewport.com.

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