



***Safe, Secure, Efficient and Environmentally Responsible  
Maritime Operations***

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February 2, 2010

Mr. John Stone  
Port Director  
155 S. Seward St.  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Mr. Stone,

I offer the following in response to your request for my professional opinion as to the navigational impacts the discharge of dredged spoils from a barge supporting the Douglas Harbor improvement project will have on vessels transiting Gastineau Channel during the winter months.

Having served 30 years in the Coast Guard in a variety of marine safety assignments including positions as Coast Guard Captain of the Port for LA/LB and Chief of Marine Safety for Alaska, I often evaluated the navigational impacts presented by various harbor improvement projects and other special operations with the objective of ensuring impacts to maritime operations were minimal. It is my experience that in cases where activities are anticipated to result in interference with maritime commerce, recreational vessels, tourism and fishing operations or present navigational hazards, mitigating measures are required or the operation prohibited.

In reviewing the planned depositing of dredged spoils generated by the Douglas Harbor improvement project into Gastineau Channel I find there are several factors with depositing the dredged spoils that substantially minimize the impacts on other maritime activities in the area. These factors are as follows:

1. The dredge spoil discharges will be conducted in the winter, during the less trafficked period of the year, thus avoiding the heavier maritime traffic experienced during the spring and summer months by large cruise ships, fishing vessels and tugs with tows.
2. The dredged spoil discharges will occur in an area of Gastineau Channel that is unsuited for fishing due to the interference from small boat traffic to and from Douglas Harbor and commercial and recreational traffic inbound and outbound to the Port of Juneau.

*Navigational Impacts of Dredge Spoil Discharges – February 2010*

3. The spoil barge's transit distance from the harbor to the discharge site is short, less than ¼ nautical mile, and the discharge time minimal as the barge is configured for fast discharge with an open bottom minimizing the vessel's time in the Channel.
4. The spoil discharge location is clearly visible to vessels proceeding in and out of the Port.
5. In considering the width of the Channel where the dredged spoils will be discharged and the dimensions of the barge it is evident adequate sea room is available for the smaller fishing and recreational vessels that typically transit the area during winter months to safely pass on either side of the barge. The only exception is for tugs with tows (oil and container barges) that periodically navigate through that area of the Channel and require additional sea room/maneuvering space. In these cases, the prudent "Securite" broadcast by the tug crew when entering the channel to dispose of dredge spoil should be made to adequately alert transiting vessels providing sufficient time to make safe passing and maneuvering arrangements. I recommend in most cases the tug towing the spoil barge delay the discharge operation until the inbound or departing tug and barge complete their transit through the area.

To further ensure minimal disruption to maritime traffic in the area, I recommend the Coast Guard be notified of the details of the dredging operation in advance in order for the agency to incorporate the information in the Coast Guard's Notice to Mariners alerting other vessels of the maritime activity.

In summary, I find the planned dredge spoil dumping operations should have minimal impact on maritime operations in the area provided the above safety measures are addressed.

Regards,



Captain Ed Page, USCG (Ret)  
Executive Director  
Marine Exchange of Alaska