

Chapter 6

Environmentally Preferred Alternative

6.1 Effects Found Not to Be Significant

As detailed in Table ES-2 of this Draft EIS, issues that were found to be less than significant without or before applying mitigation included aesthetics, cultural resources and tribal cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, land use, maritime transportation, noise, recreation, public safety, and utilities.

One issue found to be potentially significant without mitigation was biological resources. However, application of mitigation would reduce biological resource impacts below a level of significance. The analysis determined that the Proposed Project would not have a long-term significant effect on biological resources.

In other instances, consequences of the Proposed Project were found to be beneficial, such as the decreased energy use and air emissions per unit of cargo resulting from the increased efficiencies.

6.2 Unavoidable Significant Impacts

This Draft EIS considered the potential impacts of the Proposed Project and alternatives according to the resource categories described in Chapter 4 of this Draft EIS. Significant and unavoidable impacts to air quality may occur from the emissions of priority pollutants and toxic air contaminants from construction and operation of the Proposed Project. Mitigation measures would be implemented but would not reduce all impacts to below significance for NEPA (or CEQA). A description of mitigation and monitoring for the Proposed Project is included in Chapter 5.

6.3 Environmentally Preferred Alternative

Under the NEPA analysis, the No Federal Action Alternative (Alternative 2) is ranked the environmentally preferred alternative in terms of the fewest overall environmental impacts when compared to the NEPA Baseline. Under the No Federal Action Alternative, no in-water development or construction would occur (i.e., no dredging or dredged material disposal, dike reconstruction, pile removal and installation, or wharf construction), although backlands development would occur. The backland acreage and terminal use under the No Federal Action Alternative would be the same as the NEPA baseline conditions.

However, although the No Federal Action Alternative would result in fewer unavoidable significant adverse impacts or mitigated impacts than the Proposed Project, it would not meet the purpose of the Proposed Project to improve maritime shipping and commerce by

1 improving container terminal infrastructure in, over, and under water and on terminal
2 backlands at Berths 121-131, while also maintaining consistency with established Port
3 environmental policies (see Section 1.2.1 of this Draft EIS). It would also not meet the
4 Project's stated needs under NEPA to provide the physical and operational capacity to
5 handle the projected cargo throughput and increased vessel size, thus enabling the Port to
6 fulfill its role of facilitating maritime trade and commerce (see Section 1.2.2 of this Draft
7 EIS). This is because although Alternative 2 would improve backland operations by
8 expanding the intermodal railyard, the Berth 121-131 Container Terminal is berth-
9 limited. Accordingly, backlands improvements would improve efficiency but not increase
10 the ultimate cargo capacity of the terminal (as Table 2-1 shows, the Proposed Project,
11 with its improved vessel berthing facilities, would at full capacity be able to handle 1.87
12 million TEUs of containerized cargo per year whereas Alternative 2 would be limited to
13 1.33 million TEUs per year).

14 Because Alternative 2 would not support the increased throughput demand the Port
15 anticipates, it is not considered to be a viable project that could achieve the project
16 objectives. Accordingly, the Proposed Project would best fulfill the overall project
17 purpose and goals of the Port and is the Port's preferred alternative.