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MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER  
MAINTENANCE DREDGING  
PUBLIC HEARING

-- REVISED --

February 5, 2003

- - -

BE IT REMEMBERED THAT, pursuant to the Washington Rules of Civil Procedure, this hearing was taken before Vikki L. Claflin, a Certified Professional Court Reporter and a Notary Public for the State of Washington, on February 5, 2003, commencing at the hour of 6:40 P.M., the proceedings being reported at 115 Lake Street, Ilwaco, Washington.

1 APPEARANCES

2 JACQUELINE ABEL, J.D.

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PUBLIC SPEAKERS:

- 1
- 2 Mark Funk
- 3 John Fratt
- 4 James Tongue
- 5 Edith Beasley
- 6 Dale Beasley
- 7 David Quashnick
- 8 Peter Huhtala
- 9 Theene Holznagel
- 10 Mike Desimone
- 11 David Burke
- 12 Alan Willis
- 13 Matt Van Ess
- 14 Dan Richard
- 15 John Torjusen
- 16 .
- 17 .
- 18 .
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1 WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2003;

2 ILWACO, WASHINGTON

3 6:40 P.M.

4 COL. HOBERNICHT: Hello, everybody. If you would  
5 please take your seats, we'll get started. Thank you for  
6 coming tonight. My name is Colonel Richard Hobernicht, and  
7 I am the district engineer for the Portland District, United  
8 States Army Corps of Engineers. This public hearing will be  
9 run with the aid of a professional moderator. I will have  
10 some introductory remarks in a few minutes but, at this  
11 time, we would like to turn the meeting over to Ms.  
12 Jacqueline Abel, to get us started. Ms. Abel?

13 MS. ABEL: Good evening. Thank you for coming to  
14 tonight's public hearing. My name is Jacqueline Abel, and  
15 I'm a professional facilitator who was asked by the U.S.  
16 Army Corps of Engineers to be a moderator for tonight's  
17 meeting. I'm not a staff member of any government agency.  
18 I was asked to moderate to assure that a fair and impartial  
19 hearing of information and concerns may be heard tonight. I  
20 do not have any personal or financial stake in the outcome  
21 of today's hearing. I believe that I am impartial about  
22 the issues here tonight. I know many of you have very  
23 important points that you would like to have heard by your  
24 government officials. They are here to present an overview  
25 of the status of the proposed maintenance dredging activity

1 for the mouth of the Columbia River, and to listen to what  
2 you have to say.

3                   This is an important opportunity for all  
4 of you, and it will require respect for the process and for  
5 each other. I will need your help, in order to let as  
6 many of you who wants to speak have the opportunity to do  
7 so tonight. But, before I get into ground rules for  
8 tonight's meeting, let me make certain everybody understands  
9 the purpose of tonight's meeting.

10                   The purpose of this meeting is to  
11 provide the public with an opportunity to hear briefly from  
12 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers about the status of the  
13 proposed maintenance dredging activity for the mouth of the  
14 Columbia River. It is also to provide you, the public,  
15 with an opportunity to submit both oral and written  
16 comments. All of your oral comments will be reported and  
17 later transcribed by our court reporter tonight. This is  
18 not a hearing on the improvement of the 40-foot Columbia  
19 River Federal Navigation Channel or on the deepening of the  
20 channel or a forum for other topics. Tonight's meeting is  
21 also not a debate. This hearing is being held in  
22 conjunction with the State of Washington Department of  
23 Ecology, and you will also hear briefly from them tonight.  
24 We're holding this hearing because it's important to the  
25 Corps and to the Department of Ecology for the people of

1 the region to speak and to be heard. The time you have  
2 taken to come out here tonight to make yo! ur comments is  
3 very important, and it's been greatly appreciated.

4 There are two ways for you to make your  
5 thoughts and your feelings known. You may give oral  
6 testimony tonight here in this room, or you may submit  
7 written comments to the Corps. The deadline for written  
8 comments has been extended to March 3, 2003. That's --  
9 That's a recent change, so you might want to note that.

10 Before we begin, I would like to review  
11 the upcoming agenda a little bit and go over a few  
12 administrative details. As I mentioned, there's going to be  
13 brief presentations by the Corps and by the State of  
14 Washington Department of Ecology. When the presentations  
15 are over, we will then move into the public testimony, which  
16 is when we hear from folks here in this room. All of the  
17 oral testimony will be recorded by the court reporter for  
18 the public record. If you also have your comments in  
19 written form, we would appreciate a copy of them, and  
20 there's -- there's a box over there where they can be  
21 dropped off. The Corps and the State of Washington  
22 Department of Ecology do want to hear what you have to say,  
23 in person or in writing -- however you want to make your  
24 thoughts known.

25 I'm going to go over some ground rules

1 for tonight, and I'm just going to go over them quickly.  
2 There also are handouts with the ground rules, over there by  
3 the door, if you would like to see them. You might want  
4 to pick them up, at least on your way out, because they do  
5 give you the address where you can send your comments, and  
6 they also list the Web site where you can look for  
7 continuing information on this issue. I'm requesting that  
8 we follow these ground rules tonight, given the interest in  
9 the issues that are going to be discussed here. Speakers  
10 will be recognized in the order in which they signed up to  
11 speak. Any publicly-elected officials will be recognized  
12 first, out of courtesy to them. Treat each speaker and the  
13 panelists with respect. You may not agree with what a  
14 person is saying, but everyone has a right to their own  
15 views, and we want to get them all on the record. As  
16 strongly as you may feel about an idea here, please keep  
17 side conversations and comments to a minimum, so that the  
18 court reporter can get all the testimony into the record and  
19 so others have ample time to make their comments, too.  
20 Help me help you testify by being up here at the microphone  
21 and ready to speak when I have called your name. Be  
22 courteous to others and stop speaking when I let you know  
23 that your time is up. Please follow my instructions to  
24 help us all avoid confusion.

25 Remember that today's meeting is not an

1 attempt at a consensus or some kind of vote. It's an  
2 opportunity for members of the public to have their thoughts  
3 considered by government officials. Please don't disrupt  
4 that opportunity in any way. To make sure we end on time,  
5 speakers will be limited to five minutes. Your time is  
6 your own and, in the interest in hearing from as many of  
7 you as possible, your time may not be assigned to someone  
8 else. If you have already testified as a spokesperson for  
9 your group, you should not testify a second time as an  
10 individual. Remember, you will have 26 additional days  
11 after the hearing tonight to submit complete, written  
12 comments. They are due March 3rd.

13                   When everyone has spoken, we intend to  
14 end the hearing with concluding remarks from Colonel  
15 Hobernicht. As I mentioned before, you may provide written  
16 comments on the proposed maintenance dredging activity for  
17 the mouth of the Columbia River, to the Corps, at the  
18 address that's in the public notice. It also appears in  
19 one of the handouts over there.

20                   What will happen with all of your  
21 comments? The Corps will review comments submitted in  
22 writing and the transcript from the public testimony at  
23 tonight's hearing. They will consider the information we  
24 provide that is related to the proposed maintenance dredging  
25 activity for the mouth of the Columbia River. The Corps

1 will issue its statement of findings in early spring.  
2 Colonel Hobernicht and the other representatives of the U.S.  
3 Army Corps of Engineers, Washington State Department of  
4 Ecology, and others will be available at end of tonight's  
5 meeting to talk with any of you that would like to stay and  
6 have a conversation one-on-one with any of them. Remember,  
7 your written comments and your oral ones that you give  
8 tonight will be considered equally.

9                   Thanks for your attention. Thank you,  
10 again, for coming to share your views on the region's  
11 future. I'll turn the meeting back over to Colonel  
12 Hobernicht for the next few minutes.

13                   COL. HOBERNICHT: Tonight, we are here  
14 to exchange information with you about the maintenance  
15 dredging operations for the mouth of the Columbia River and  
16 to take your formal testimony on our proposed plan. As  
17 you're probably aware, the Corps has been involved in  
18 maintaining a safe navigation route across the Columbia  
19 River bar for nearly 100 years. Our efforts began with  
20 jetty construction and progressed to actively dredging a  
21 channel for ships of all sizes and types. Working with the  
22 myriad of interests and stakeholders involved in this part  
23 of the river presents a challenge in coordinating our  
24 activities and finding solutions acceptable to all. We are  
25 committed to the continuation of this final mission.

1                   Your comments are important to us, and  
2 we will review them all. If you have information you know  
3 or feel we have missed, please let us know before March 3rd  
4 so we can consider it before we move too far along in  
5 finalizing our plan and preparing contracting documents.

6                   In addition to the oral testimony that  
7 will be captured by the court reporter, we will accept any  
8 written comments you may have prepared. There's a box near  
9 the door for you to place them in. The box is right over  
10 there. I know each of you is busy, and I appreciate you  
11 taking the time to participate in this process. I will be  
12 here through the entire session. Feel free to come up and  
13 talk to me after we have completed taking testimony. If  
14 you have a question I cannot answer, I will get in touch  
15 with the person who can answer your question.

16                   Before we take your testimony, I'd like  
17 to introduce the people seated alongside me. Doris  
18 McKillip, the Corps' project manager for the Mouth of the  
19 Columbia River Channel Maintenance project; and Neil Aaland,  
20 the interim Southwest Regional Office regional director,  
21 Washington State Department of Ecology. Each would like to  
22 say a few words before we get started. With that, I would,  
23 again, like to thank you for coming. Doris? Oh, Neil.

24                   MR. AALAND: I'm going to spend just a  
25 moment or two talking briefly about the regulatory

1 authorities that Washington State will be using for the  
2 project. Real quickly, there's two basic regulatory  
3 authorities that we'll be using. The first is section 401  
4 of the Clean Water Act, and we've reviewed those projects,  
5 you can see here, just to verify compliance with our state  
6 water-quality standards. The second major regulatory  
7 authority is the Coastal Zone Management Act -- CZM Act.  
8 We reviewed these proposed federal actions to ensure they  
9 comply with our adopted State Coastal Zone Management  
10 program. So those are the two primary areas that we are  
11 going to be looking at, when we look at whether to approve  
12 the project.

13 Now, in terms of what we want, in terms of public  
14 comments -- what we're looking for -- We would like to hear  
15 from you regarding your opinions and your information on  
16 water-quality impacts and concerns about those impacts, and  
17 then areas where you believe that the Corps' consistency and  
18 determination may not be consistent with our adopted State  
19 Coastal Zone program. So, if you could focus your comments  
20 in these areas, that's what we would find the most helpful  
21 as we undertake our review.

22 And, finally, the last slide has the name of the  
23 contact person, and our primary contact person is in the  
24 back of the room, and that's Loree Randall. And sitting  
25 with her is Paula Ehlers, who's the section manager for the

1 SEA program in the Southwest Regional Office. I've put the  
2 contact information up here for you, for Loree. It's also  
3 available on the take-home handouts. So please grab one of  
4 those as you leave, and that will have this information, as  
5 well. And that's all I have to say right now. I'm  
6 looking forward to hearing your testimony.

7 MS. MCKILLIP: Well, it's good to see a  
8 lot of you again, and it's good to see a lot of you new  
9 people, whose faces I don't recognize. I would really like  
10 to thank Mack Funk for suggesting this room. When I called  
11 him to say, "Where can we meet in Ilwaco?" he suggested the  
12 Ilwaco Heritage Museum, and this has been a great place. I  
13 might add, it reminds me of my grade school, Petersburg  
14 Elementary, up in The Dalles. I should be playing the  
15 flute or singing right now, but I guess -- No, I won't.

16 I would also like to thank Stacey  
17 Piero, who was the person that helped us arrange to use  
18 this area, and all of the volunteers. We had Shirley,  
19 Mary, Frank, and the director of the museum help set up  
20 tonight, and I would like to thank everybody here. They  
21 were just wonderful to work with.

22 One of the things that we instituted last year  
23 was an MCR update and e-mail, and we sent out around 30,  
24 last summer, to let everybody know what was going on with  
25 the MCR project. We have a sign-up, if you would like to

1 be on that mailing list. We have about 100 people on it.  
2 We have a sign-up at the door. Let me know and, as the  
3 season progresses, you will be getting updates every time  
4 something interesting happens, and that way you will know  
5 where the dredges are; if we've done a survey; upcoming  
6 activities; family stories about the kids -- just anything  
7 there. For example, last week I sent an update on the  
8 Omnibus Bill and where we are with funding, and I'll be  
9 keeping people apprised. There's a lot of people very  
10 interested in that. So, as I get information, I send that  
11 out. So, if you would like to be part of that network,  
12 please sign up on that list.

13           Okay. I'm a little -- I'm not used to being  
14 next to the mike, so if I, kind of, move awkward, excuse  
15 me. But I would like to just go over the basics of the  
16 maintenance project. I have charts from this year, on the  
17 top, on both sides, and then on the bottom. We had a  
18 public hearing in Astoria last year. Those of you who  
19 probably remember -- It's on the lower side. The main  
20 difference from last year's chart and this year's chart is  
21 that site "F" is not on this year's. And also, there's a  
22 location where the placement area is, on the deepwater site.  
23 But feel free to look at those, and I'll be around to  
24 answer questions after we get done today, if you have any  
25 questions on those.

1                   As Colonel Hobernicht said, we have been  
2 out here over 100 years now. We have two rubblemound  
3 jetties -- the north and south side, near jetty "A" -- are  
4 structures that are on the site. Matt, if you'd like to  
5 point those out. I think everybody here knows them better  
6 than anybody else in the world, out here. We have the  
7 south jetty and the north jetty and jetty "A." And those  
8 jetties were finished in the 'teens, around 1917-1918. My  
9 grandfather, Bliss Clark, was stationed at Fort Stevens  
10 during World War I. He was ready to go to war, and so he  
11 was there at about 1916, when those were finishing up. I  
12 thought that was kind of interesting. When I read the  
13 history, I always think of that.

14                   The channel is about half-a-mile -- Actually, it's  
15 exactly half-a-mile wide. It's 55-feet deep on the north  
16 2,000 feet, and it's 48-feet deep on the south 640 feet.  
17 It's a 6-mile long project, from river mile 3 to minus 3.  
18 So, it's a 6-mile project. It meets up with the Columbia  
19 River project at river mile 3. The channel maintenance runs  
20 from an average of about 4-5 million cubic yards a year.  
21 We normally have two medium-sized hopper dredges available  
22 to do the dredging. One is, of course, a federal dredge --  
23 the "Essayons." The other is a contract hopper dredge.  
24 The last three years, Natco has been the contractor. We've  
25 also had Manson and the Great Lakes. So, each year, we're

1 interested to see who gets on that contract.

2 Dredging season starts in late June and goes to  
3 October. I've seen it once go into November, but that was  
4 when we had a lot better weather than normal. And  
5 disposals are at ocean disposal sites and Clean Water Act  
6 disposal sites. We also have different types of ocean  
7 disposal sites. There's the EPA-designated sites, under the  
8 Marine Protection Research and Sanctuaries Act, under their  
9 102 authority. That's also known as the "Ocean Dumping  
10 Act." The Corps has selected sites, under the Marine  
11 Protection Research and Sanctuaries Act, 103 authority. And  
12 then, there are Clean Water, section 404 sites. We have  
13 two of those right now.

14 And to just go over those briefly --  
15 the north jetty site is a section 404 site, and it is used  
16 to shore up the north jetty. It's a soft-engineering way  
17 of keeping sand, so that the jetty has something to rest  
18 on. You can build on -- basically, sand, and it has a  
19 capacity of up to about 500,000 cubic yards. Site "A,"  
20 which is 102 site, has limited capacity. It's had many  
21 problems in the past. It's one we're really somewhat leery  
22 of using, but we have it in the public notice. We'll do  
23 bathymetric surveys and coordinate that with the EPA, to see  
24 whether or not that's a good site to go back to. I know  
25 that there are people who have concerns over that, too. So

1 we would definitely coordinate that before it was used. It  
2 would have a very limited capacity. We're thinking maybe  
3 100 to maybe 300 thousand, at best.

4                   And then we have the shallow-water site.  
5 And that's a combination of an EPA 102 site and a  
6 Corps-selected 103 site. I'm making sure I get my numbers  
7 right, here. And then, we have the deepwater site and the  
8 -- We have a smaller area inside of there that's 7,000 feet  
9 by 7,000 feet, under a 103 process. And we have the  
10 placement area, which is 3,000 feet by 3,000 feet, within  
11 that. And so the only areas the hopper would use would be  
12 that area of 3,000 feet by 3,000. But the 7,000 by 7,000  
13 shows where the material would drift, after it's placed in  
14 the water along the main routes, after that. So, we wanted  
15 to show the areas that were included in that.

16                   And then, I have some more sites later  
17 on -- Benson Beach -- but that's if funds are available.  
18 We could include that in our North Coast contract, which is  
19 our hopper dredging contract. And I'm sure Mike could give  
20 you a lot -- Mike Desimone could give you more details on  
21 that project afterwards, too. He's going to stay  
22 afterwards, too, if there are any questions on that.

23                   Now, Benson Beach, I think everybody has  
24 heard about, from this area, but it was a pilot study -- a  
25 demonstration study -- that Pacific County was instrumental

1 in getting the permits on. They were issued the permits to  
2 use this site. The Lower Columbia ports, coastal  
3 communities, and State of Washington contributed funds last  
4 year. We were able to actually use the Corps' contract  
5 placement material at the Benson Beach location, and we had  
6 between 43 and 44,000 cubic yards successfully placed there  
7 last year. It was a -- really, a demonstration of  
8 excellent collaboration of the all of the users here, and I  
9 had a great time down on the jetty throughout the period  
10 and met a lot of you there. So, I think that's probably  
11 how I know so many of you. And this shows where the  
12 placement site was last year. I don't know how well this  
13 will translate, but a lot of you are in the picture, up on  
14 the right side, by the pipe. And it was a pipe from a  
15 hopper dredge on the beach area! . So, with that, I will  
16 move into testimony, I believe.

17 MS. ABEL: Thank you. I also wanted  
18 to introduce John Malek, who's here from the U.S. EPA.  
19 Many of you know him, I think. And he's told me that he's  
20 here tonight as a resource and also will talk with people  
21 after the testimony, if you have questions or if you want  
22 to have a conversation with him.

23 Now I'm getting to the part of the evening where  
24 -- the important part of the evening -- hearing from people  
25 here who want to make comments to the government that has

1 come to hear from you tonight. So let me talk about how  
2 we're going to do that. Anyone who wants to speak has,  
3 hopefully, signed up on the testimony list. Add your name  
4 now, if you haven't. What I will do is call your name.  
5 You'll come up to the microphone. I'm going to call three  
6 names at once, so that you will know that your name is  
7 coming. You'll have a little preview of when your time is.  
8 Please be ready to speak. Let us know if anybody is having  
9 trouble getting to the microphone. We can come to you.  
10 I've asked the Corps to assign their staff member, Matt  
11 Rabe, to assist me with the timing of your comments and to  
12 work under my direction. They have loaned him to me for a  
13 little while tonight. He will set a stopwatch for five  
14 minutes when I tell you to start -- when you start speaking  
15 at the microphone. When there's one minute left, he will  
16 hold up a card -- Thank you, Matt -- to let you know to  
17 start winding down your comments. When your time is up, he  
18 will raise the other side of the card. That lets you know  
19 that your time is up. When you see that, you should go  
20 ahead and finish the sentence that you're on now. I will  
21 also be keeping an eye on the time, as well as giving my  
22 attention to you while you're giving your testimony. At the  
23 end of your time, please leave the microphone so the next  
24 speaker can begin.

25 We hope to accommodate all of you who

1 have signed up to testify tonight. We will need your help  
2 to do this, so that everyone can be heard. Because the  
3 meeting is being transcribed, please state your name and  
4 spell your last name, so the court reporter can get it down  
5 accurately. Please state the name of the organization or  
6 agency you're with, if you are representing someone besides  
7 yourself. Then you will direct your comments to Colonel  
8 Hobernicht and the rest of the panel. Speak slowly, so the  
9 court reporter can get it all down. And, with that, I'm  
10 going to get ready to call the first three speakers. While  
11 Matt's getting the list, I'm going to go ahead and apologize  
12 to anybody whose name I mispronounce tonight, as I  
13 undoubtedly will. If you find you want to add your name  
14 once we get started, there's a list over there. Go ahead  
15 and add it. I don't know if we have any publicly-elected  
16 officials here tonight. None have been really identified  
17 for me.

18 MR. BURKE: Here's one, but I'll wait.

19 MS. ABEL: Would you like to go first?

20 MR. BURKE: No. Put me in the order

21 --

22 MS. ABEL: I'd be happy to call you first.

23 MR. BURKE: No, no. I'm introducing nothing  
24 special.

25 MS. ABEL: Oh, okay.

1           MR. BURKE: I came here as an ordinary person.  
2 I'll wait.

3           MS. ABEL: All right. Well, thank you  
4 very much. Okay. First, we'll hear from Mark Funk; then  
5 John Fratt; then James Tongue. So, will Mark come up?

6           MR. FUNK: I'm Mark Funk -- Port  
7 manager, here in Ilwaco. The Port of Ilwaco understands and  
8 supports the need to dredge the mouth of the Columbia River.  
9 However, we also have grave reservations, and we are  
10 compelled to express those comments.

11           We believe that local and national  
12 interest is best served by placing the dredged material onto  
13 Benson Beach. The Corps of Engineers continues, seemingly,  
14 to resist this approach. The public notice dated January 6,  
15 2003, states, "Direct placement of material at Benson Beach  
16 requires more time and costs considerably more than the  
17 other disposal alternatives discussed in the" -- "in this  
18 public notice."

19           Let me point out some facts. In 2000,  
20 the Corps refused to include Benson Beach in the MCR  
21 project. In 2001, the Corps structured the bid so that it  
22 was up to the bidders to decide if they wanted to work at  
23 Benson Beach. The winning bidder declined. In 2002, the  
24 Corps structured the bid so that the bidder could submit a  
25 low bid for the major portion of the work and submit an

1 inflated bid for the Benson Beach work. That's exactly what  
2 the winning bidder did last year. They made a huge profit  
3 at Benson Beach, at taxpayer expense, thanks to the Corps.

4           The general statement that I quoted  
5 above, in the Corps' public notice, conflicts with the  
6 factual report written by the Corps' consultant, Pacific  
7 International Engineering, on the results of the 2002 Benson  
8 Beach project. And I quote, "The dredging and disposal  
9 cycle for direct placement at Benson Beach is comparable to  
10 the dredging and disposal cycle time for the deepwater site  
11 'F.'" -- and I copy the reference.

12           And I will close with a written  
13 statement. "In addition, the public notice fails to inform  
14 interested parties of the Corps' out-of-court settlement.  
15 This agreement was made for safety reasons with the Columbia  
16 River crab fishermen, and it limits the disposal of dredge  
17 material in certain areas in order to restrict mound-induced  
18 wave amplification. Not only does the Corps fail to tell  
19 the public of the legally-binding agreement, but it also  
20 fails to mention, on at least two locations, hundreds of  
21 thousands of cubic yards of material were re-dredged because  
22 of Corps errors in placing the dredged material. The most  
23 recent occurrence was the re-dredging of approximately  
24 200,000 cubic yards, in August of 2001, following the loss  
25 of two fishermen from the 'Miss Brittany.' Approximately

1 600,000 cubic yards were re-dredged six years earlier.  
2 These mistakes cost taxpayers more than a million dollars.  
3 The Corps needs to include these mistakes in its complicated  
4 cost calculus.! I've been in the port business more than  
5 20 years, trying to work with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.  
6 After more than 200 years as a federal agency, the Corps  
7 still needs to make improvements in the way it does  
8 business."

9 And, finally, I would like to take this  
10 opportunity to point out that, in addition to the  
11 maintenance dredging in the mouth of the Columbia River, our  
12 local shallow-draft ports also have tremendous challenges,  
13 and the administration budget proposals just wave those  
14 away. And so the assessment of shallow-draft ports from the  
15 administration's budget is ineffective. And many projects  
16 provide recreational benefits rather than commercial  
17 benefits. So, therefore, the administration proposal is not  
18 to do any dredging in shallow-draft ports, and that's wrong.

19 MS. ABEL: Thank you for your comments.  
20 Next, we'll hear from John Fratt; then James Tongue; then  
21 Edith Beasley.

22 MR. FRATT: Welcome, Colonel, to Ilwaco.  
23 Maintenance dredging in the mouth of the Columbia is vital  
24 -- vital for our nation. I appreciate my colleague -- Oh,  
25 by the way, I'm John Fratt -- F-R-A-T-T -- 5208 Dubois

1 Drive, Vancouver, Washington. I work for the Port of  
2 Vancouver. I have also worked for the Port of Kalama. In  
3 both positions, I've recognized the importance of maintenance  
4 dredging in the Columbia River Channel, and its vitality for  
5 international trade.

6 Many of the people here tonight will  
7 refer to Benson Beach, and I will, too. The Port of  
8 Vancouver, the Port of Kalama, and the Port of Longview,  
9 along with Pacific County, all participated in additional  
10 funding for the Benson Beach demonstration project. Like  
11 Mr. Funk, I was disappointed at the charges that were made  
12 by a private contractor, but recognized that that was part  
13 of their contract bid. I was very proud of the fact that  
14 my ports -- the Lower Columbia River ports, on the  
15 Washington side -- came up with additional monies, along  
16 with the appropriation from Senator Murray, with the help of  
17 Senator Cantwell, to fund the Benson Beach project -- very  
18 disappointed that the cost was so high. But I want to work  
19 towards lowering that cost, because I truly believe that  
20 Benson Beach is a way in which we can undo many of the  
21 problems that we have with maintenance dredging.

22 I'm a strong supporter of Benson Beach,  
23 and I will once again ask my U.S. senator -- U.S. senators  
24 -- and my congressman to help us find additional monies  
25 specifically earmarked for Benson Beach. We will work in

1 conjunction with those federal agencies that participated  
2 last time. And, like Doris, last time I thought it was a  
3 miracle. We did do something. We demonstrated that it  
4 could be done.

5           The other thing I ask is you look for, in the  
6 future -- having attended the meeting -- the finding that  
7 the area south of the south jetty is eroding away. I  
8 believe the statistics were: 350 million yards have eroded  
9 over time. Maybe that area is an area we can look to, in  
10 the future.

11           Again, international trade is what we do  
12 in the port business. Forty percent of the U.S. exports of  
13 wheat go out in the mouth of the Columbia River. That's  
14 vital for our balance of trade. It moves through that  
15 existing channel. Section -- The Clean Water Act and the  
16 turbidity, particularly -- I recognize that there is a  
17 question of turbidity but, indeed, many times in the  
18 Columbia River, when we're dredging, the turbidity of the  
19 Columbia is higher than the outfall from the materials. I  
20 believe that this matches the water-quality impacts and is  
21 consistent with CZM, and I urge you to consider Benson Beach  
22 and continue to deepen the Columbia River Channel. Thank  
23 you.

24           MS. ABEL: Thank you. Next is James  
25 Tongue; then Edith Beasley; then Dale Beasley.

1                   MR. TONGUE: I'm James Tongue. I'm a  
2 local resident in Seaview, and the name "Tongue" may be  
3 familiar to you. My family has a home in the Seaview area  
4 near the beach. I've lived not far from Benson Beach for  
5 three generations. I am a former founding director of the  
6 Seaview Coast Conservation Coalition. However, I'm not  
7 representing them here this evening. But I would just like  
8 to make a comment to you as an observer and a local  
9 resident in that I do agree with the comments from Mr.  
10 Fratt and Mr. Funk and the basic necessity of dredging for  
11 our area. And it seems to me a shame that the Corps'  
12 basic mission and function to perform that duty is  
13 complicated by issues of where to dump the dredging spoils  
14 for benefit or economy. You've had more pressure recently  
15 from local people to try and alleviate some of the erosion  
16 in Benson Beach and, also, beyond that -- more northerly at  
17 Benson Beach, towards Long Beach -- because of the rapid  
18 erosion that's taken place there in ! the last three years,  
19 and most particularly this winter.

20                   It seems to be unnecessary, perhaps, if  
21 there's a conflict between concerns there, to try and  
22 alleviate that erosion and concerns of the other kind, as  
23 well, from crab fishermen and others interested in fisheries  
24 in that area, if, in the first place, the basic issues of a  
25 proper process, then, is not being followed. And what may

1 cause some of the erosion, more particularly north of Benson  
2 Beach, which is the removal -- and the extensive removal  
3 this summer, particularly -- on an unrelated project that we  
4 found in Long Beach, ordered directly through the U.S. Air  
5 Force Reserve, which involved a great removal of sand from  
6 the 30th Street Estuary, trucking it down the beach and  
7 depositing it in the upper wetlands areas to create fill for  
8 the road construction involved in tourist development.

9                   And also, in addition to that, the  
10 County of Long Beach continues to allow old contractors to  
11 remove the sand from the Seaview approach, and both are very  
12 markedly eroding rapidly this year. When the estuary sand  
13 is removed, these high tides go pretty much further up the  
14 estuary to wash a great gouge around both ends of the  
15 estuary, back out to the ocean. The Seaview approach area  
16 is very markedly dipped at this time from an accumulation of  
17 sand. And it just seems to me an irony and an unnecessary  
18 overlapping effort and complication of mission, without first  
19 addressing the fact that perhaps that sand removal should  
20 not be placed where it has been placed. And we need to  
21 review the proper EIS statements that have been made. The  
22 regional -- Or, the Corps of Engineers itself is actually  
23 giving the County a permit for sand removal and replacement,  
24 in addition to the permits for construction in sand. I  
25 feel these issues should be at least researched soon, before

1 other issues and other complications are made, in the  
2 whole process of sand placement and dredging. Thank you.

3 MS. ABEL: Thank you. Edith Beasley,  
4 then Dale Beasley, then David Quashnick.

5 MS. BEASLEY: May I use the podium?  
6 I'd rather not have my back to the audience. I promise to  
7 be quick. I'm not going to bite. Thank you.

8 Edith Beasley -- I'm a member of the public.  
9 Thank you for coming this evening to listen to what the  
10 public has to say about the Corps of Engineers and the  
11 state agencies' role in the maintenance of the mouth of the  
12 Columbia River. It's disturbing to read in the newspapers  
13 where the Corps is telling everyone that "We won't be using  
14 any ocean dredge" -- "ocean disposal sites for at least 20  
15 years." Yet, the reality is that the Corps of Engineers  
16 will be dumping dredged spoils in deepwater ocean disposal  
17 sites this summer. I wonder how ships would navigate  
18 without the maintenance of the mouth of the river. The  
19 river is one with the ocean. The only separation is in the  
20 area of funding of deeper dredging. The river knows no  
21 separation.

22 Something is terribly wrong with the  
23 Corps' narrow interpretation of the navigation project. The  
24 smoke-and-mirrors approach, or blatant deception, is an  
25 outright subversive strategy used again and again by the

1 Corps and the EPA. The Corps takes great pains in  
2 artificially separating -- separating out the maintenance  
3 dredging in the mouth of the river so no one will notice.  
4 The Corps takes great pains in switching to so-called  
5 "restoration projects" in the estuary, so as not to have to  
6 formally address resources and other concerns in the ocean.  
7 The Corps takes great pains to fully utilize the deceptive  
8 and Corps-forgiving practice of flowlane disposal of millions  
9 of cubic yards from river mile 3 to 106, to keep dredged  
10 spoils out-of-sight, out-of-mind.

11           The Corps takes great pains to ignore  
12 the State's requirements for mitigation of impacts. The  
13 Corps takes great pains in covering up their noncompliance  
14 with the 1997 court-ordered stipulation agreement with the  
15 crabbers, changing their wave-modeling criteria so as not to  
16 address troubling navigation-safety concerns and make it  
17 appear that they are now in compliance. The Corps takes  
18 great pains in delaying the release of information and in  
19 answering questions for agencies, stakeholders, and the  
20 public to make informed comments. I could go on.

21           Regarding the proposed 14-square-mile deepwater  
22 site, the States and the Task Force have asked serious  
23 questions of the Corps regarding its size and demonstrated  
24 need; biological and resource concerns; mitigation, and so  
25 on. Not surprisingly, the Corps has not supplied the

1 necessary information, but continues to march forward with a  
2 temporary disposal site for up to 10 years, this -- thus  
3 usurping the Marine Protection Research and Sanctuaries Act,  
4 and other laws and regulations. The timing is purposeful  
5 and strategic.

6           The use of the section 103 temporary  
7 site should only be used as an emergency measure, but the  
8 Corps shamefully abuses its discretionary power on an  
9 ongoing basis. The Corps and the EPA have taken -- have to  
10 take into consideration the economic cost of the project to  
11 our own communities on either side of the river. Relying  
12 on a 1983 Environmental Impact Statement and a continuum of  
13 inadequate environmental assessments is not acceptable.

14           The Corps must complete an updated EIS  
15 that evaluates all dredging and disposal alternatives,  
16 beneficial uses, and complete economic analysis that takes  
17 into consideration environmental and economic losses.

18           It's very important for the Corps to  
19 really hear and act on what the state agencies and Ocean  
20 Disposal Task Force and the stakeholders and the public have  
21 to say. They must take -- They must take full  
22 consideration of their comments and concerns. Year after  
23 year, the Corps neglects acting on those issues and concerns  
24 in a timely manner, thus strategically placing themselves in  
25 a crisis-management situation. By doing so, they force

1 state agencies to -- agencies' actions to move forward  
2 without adequate information. The States put conditions on  
3 their water-quality certification and CZM consistency, which  
4 appear to be ignored. This must stop. If the Corps does  
5 not meet all conditions fully, certification and consistency  
6 must be withdrawn or denied.

7                   In your water-quality certification,  
8 have you looked at or considered the shallowing of Baker Bay  
9 and what that means to the estuary and to the entire  
10 ecosystem? Have you truly considered the practice of  
11 flowlane disposal and contaminated sediments? Do you know  
12 what tests -- what tests were done before dredging and  
13 disposal? Did you see the results of those tests, and  
14 approve? What considerations are being made in light of the  
15 listing of dioxins as a carcinogen? What impacts will occur  
16 with flowlane disposal at river mile 4 and 5, or upriver?  
17 Are those impacts being mitigated? Is flowlane disposal not  
18 just a conveyor-belt theory that just deceptively adds to  
19 the more -- to more ocean disposal? If you cannot answer  
20 these questions, among many others, you must deny  
21 water-quality certification.

22                   The Corps has flagrantly violated the  
23 NEPA process. This -- This has truly not been a  
24 transparent process. The Corps has been, and continues to  
25 be, so grossly negligent that an outside formal review of

1 this process is requested. As lead agencies in Washington  
2 and Oregon, we ask you to hold the Corps and the EPA  
3 accountable to the laws of Pacific County and to the laws  
4 of your respective state and to the laws of the country and  
5 to the public's concern. This is your job. The burden of  
6 proof to answer the tough questions should not be placed  
7 upon the public, but rather squarely on the shoulders of the  
8 Corps of Engineers and the EPA. My written comments will  
9 contain more specifics. Thank you.

10 MS. ABEL: Thank you. Next, we'll hear  
11 from Dale Beasley; then David Quashnick; and then Peter  
12 Huhtala.

13 MR. BEASLEY: Thanks for coming to  
14 Ilwaco tonight. We appreciate your being here, and that's a  
15 tough act to follow. I can't speak as well as that lady  
16 who has just spoken, unfortunately. The sheer volume of  
17 rules and regulations and individuals involved in this whole  
18 process is kind of like herding independent-minded cats.  
19 And it's really a difficult situation to try and bring  
20 everything into one focus.

21 One clear thing has happened here that most people  
22 have agreed on, and that's the collaborative effort and the  
23 sustainable, beneficial use of Benson Beach, which we fully  
24 support. I would like to ask all of these agencies, and  
25 the Corps is included here, to stop taking such a

1 short-term, crisis-management view of this and start taking  
2 a longer-term perspective. We've got some things coming up  
3 here in the next year or so, and we're going to be working  
4 on a National Ocean Policy Act, and states are going to be  
5 required to form collaborative efforts similar to the  
6 Chesapeake Bay Commission, and they will be incorporating a  
7 lot of the intended CZMA and state laws in this process.  
8 And I would like to see this group get in the forefront of  
9 this action and address it and shape in it a way that that  
10 is beneficial for the MCR.

11 I think the Portland District Corps,  
12 believe it or not -- I don't know if I should say this or  
13 not -- I really thought long and hard about this -- But I  
14 think they're really meeting the Corps' reform movement and  
15 process by initiation of things like Benson Beach, and  
16 they're beginning to talk about things like regional  
17 sediment management -- things that we need to talk about.  
18 And we've actually been considering even maybe the  
19 possibility of rainbow disposal in other areas and working  
20 on sustainable solutions, instead of the old wasteful and  
21 habitat-destructive means that we've used for the last 25  
22 years. I would like to encourage them to continue to work  
23 on reform forums.

24 But now, I guess, we have to get to some of the  
25 old, tough issues that are still contentious, that need to

1 be resolved, because this other action isn't moving quite  
2 fast enough. This sort of reform takes time, and we can  
3 appreciate that.

4 Tough issue No. 1, of course, is  
5 lifesaving. I don't think this has been properly addressed.  
6 The mounding issue at these sites still needs some absolute  
7 work on them. We made a little progress last year, and  
8 we've got a ways to go yet. We've got to continue to work  
9 on that. My written comments will be a little more to the  
10 point.

11 Tough issue No. 2, of course, is that we have to  
12 continue to work on sustainable solutions. And I'm glad to  
13 see that the Benson Beach project is in the federal Omnibus  
14 Bill, and I'm sure that it will pass, with sufficient  
15 dollars, if we get the contract right. We may have to add  
16 a line item. This year, we just can't let it go like we  
17 did before. There's probably enough money in that budget to  
18 get Benson Beach done.

19 Tough issue No. 3 is the deepwater site. Last  
20 year, the States of Oregon and Washington put some  
21 conditional-use requirements on the site, and some of these  
22 things have not been properly addressed. Don't get me  
23 wrong. We do support some form of deepwater site. We need  
24 it as a contingency site. We do need some form of  
25 deepwater site. But I still think we have to work on the

1 size of the site; we have to work on the location of the  
2 site, within the deepwater proposed area; we have to work a  
3 little more on the -- on resource inventory and the baseline  
4 studies. I don't think what was done this year was  
5 adequate to rely upon. And, of course, there's always what  
6 we call "mitigation for damages," and I hope that we get to  
7 that point this year. We've been looking a little closer  
8 at dumpsite "B" this year, and so far, after six years of  
9 no deposition at dumpsite "B," we were still at 50 percent,  
10 compared -- I'm only on tough issue No. 3. I've got 8 to  
11 go, and I'm not going! to skip.

12 Tough issue No. 4 is river mile 5, or 4 --  
13 wherever it is. I think we should really call that what it  
14 is -- ocean disposal. And we need to clarify some things  
15 with river mile 4 and 5, in relation to how it's going to  
16 affect the MCR. We need to know what volumes are going to  
17 go under mile 4, in what years. We've got to know the  
18 total amounts -- We've got to know the total amount of  
19 sediment that is going to be coming in, and -- You really  
20 didn't want to hear what I had to say tonight, anyway, so  
21 --

22 MS. ABEL: We look forward to getting  
23 your written comments, too, and we'll --

24 MR. BEASLEY: You won't be able to carry my  
25 written comments.

1 MS. ABEL: Next, we'll hear from David Quashnick.

2 MR. QUASHNICK: Yeah. I'm David Quashnick, a  
3 commercial crab fisherman. My main concern is site "A." I  
4 know everything is -- is a concern, but site "A" is -- as  
5 far as I'm concerned, should be -- Some of that should be  
6 removed because it's already a dangerous situation right  
7 there. It's almost like we were -- We're having a problem  
8 on the north side of the river. That's just mainly what I  
9 wanted to say right now, was that I don't think that it  
10 should be a disposal site anymore. I think that it should  
11 be just left alone -- backed off. Because it only takes  
12 about -- just roughly estimating -- probably a 12-foot swell  
13 -- and you have about 500 yards of breakers going across  
14 that place. And it's not supposed to be breaking there,  
15 and it's a real dangerous situation that you're putting a  
16 lot of crab fishermen in, or any other sport fleet or  
17 anything. Right there, it's not supposed to be breaking.  
18 So just to let you know that it does break there, and I  
19 don't think there's anybody in here that wants to be  
20 there when that is happening. I've seen it, so just think  
21 about that when you're thinking about dumping in site "A."  
22 That's all. Thanks.

23 MS. ABEL: Thank you. Could you spell  
24 your last name?

25 MR. QUASHNICK: Q-U-A-S-H-N-I-C-K.

1 MS. ABEL: Thank you. Peter Huhtala, then Theene  
2 Holznagel -- I'm sure I mispronounced that -- and Mike  
3 Desimone.

4 MR. HUHTALA: Hi. I'm Peter Huhtala.  
5 I'm Director of the Columbia Deepening Opposition Group --  
6 CDOG. Thank you, Colonel Hobernicht, and all of you, who  
7 are assembled and listening to us here. Tough issues.  
8 It's an amazing project. It's been going on for nearly 100  
9 years, keeping the mouth of the Columbia River open and safe  
10 for navigation, for ships both large and for small craft, as  
11 well.

12 One common theme, though, in the past  
13 several decades of maintenance of this project, is that  
14 there have been impacts to the ocean and mouth of the river  
15 resources, and beneficial uses of the Clean Water Act,  
16 including propagation of shellfish and fish -- flatfish.  
17 And we continue to have impacts and, yet, never have there  
18 -- has there been any compensatory mitigation for such  
19 impacts. And we really, I think, are arriving at a time  
20 where -- where the actions that we take need to be more  
21 accountable.

22 I don't feel that there's anyone --  
23 anyone in this room who does not support this -- this  
24 project, to maintain safe navigation at the mouth of the  
25 river. But the impacts to local communities have been

1 substantial over the past century, and they continue to be  
2 substantial, and we're very concerned. We very much  
3 appreciate the experiment at Benson Beach, and we would like  
4 to move that forward quicker. We also support other  
5 creative solutions to disposal, such as shoring up the south  
6 jetty area and the fertilizer-spray techniques that Dale  
7 Beasley referred to earlier.

8           However, it's very disturbing that we  
9 find ourselves again in a crisis mode, where we are running  
10 out of sites that have been designated for safe and  
11 environmentally-acceptable sources of dredged material, and  
12 we will maybe almost be forced into the utilization of some  
13 alternative deepwater sites -- unfortunately, deepwater  
14 sites. And if that really has to take place in order to  
15 maintain safe navigation, especially for the small boats  
16 near the mouth of the river, then I guess that's what we're  
17 going to have to live with. But it really needs to be  
18 minimized to the greatest extent possible.

19           We need to move forward, as we've said  
20 on numerous occasions, with a -- with a comprehensive and  
21 beneficial use of the dredged spoils and the total impact of  
22 -- what this project does. I realize funding is  
23 problematic, but I think everyone -- a lot of us will  
24 really help to make it possible to get funding to do a  
25 proper, full environmental-impact statement for the Mouth of

1 the Columbia River project. I don't believe it's really  
2 been adequate, in light of the National Environmental Policy  
3 Act. I don't believe that at least the biological baseline,  
4 over time, has been established at the deepwater site. And  
5 for that and many other reasons, I believe that we are  
6 dealing with violations of the Research Protection and  
7 Sanctuaries Act. I think that relying upon a 1999 River  
8 Maintenance Biological Opinion as the primary evidence of  
9 ESA-constituted violations of the Endangered Species Act  
10 consultations is, well, ludicrous.

11           The Colonel, at the beginning, said,  
12 "Well, we have extended the comment period by March" -- "to  
13 March 3rd." You know, that you really want to get our  
14 comments so you can make some decisions. Prior to issuing  
15 the contracts and the plans for this summer, you know, I've  
16 got to say that the Corps -- I think you made it into a  
17 crunch, if it becomes very problematic to use deepwater  
18 site, because the process or substance of it -- what has  
19 been done so far -- is kind of illegal, and I don't believe  
20 it will be the fault of the litigants who are responding to  
21 a situation of crisis-management that could have avoided.  
22 Thank you.

23           MS. ABEL: Thank you. Next is Theene  
24 Holznagel, and I need you to spell that.

25           MS. HOLZNAGEL: It's Theene Holznagel --

1 T-H-E-E-N-E, H-O-L-Z-N-A-G-E-L. And I'm with the Columbia  
2 River Channel Coalition. I'm the office manager there. And  
3 I'm here today to represent the Coalition, which is a  
4 broad-based group. We have key business, labor,  
5 agricultural, and community leaders across the states of  
6 Washington and Oregon.

7                   The Coalition fully supports the Corps'  
8 effort to continue to maintain a safe passage of the mouth  
9 of the Columbia River Navigational Channel, in order to  
10 accommodate approximately 2,000 domestic and international  
11 ships coming in and out through the bar each way. These  
12 2,000 ships carry approximately 41 million tons of cargo  
13 annually, making this passage a valuable part of the  
14 nation's transportation system. The Corps has indicated, in  
15 the notice, that the material that is dredged from the mouth  
16 of Columbia River is clean sand, suitable for in-water  
17 replacement, and is considered an important resource. As an  
18 important resource, it is very important for the Corps to  
19 continue using this material for the important suitable  
20 uses, such as beach nourishment and in-water placement, to  
21 protect the north jetty, and also placement on the end of  
22 the north jetty to offset potential erosion along Washington  
23 shoreline, and then the new potential proposal to dispose of  
24 materials to the ocean side of the south jetty. So, as  
25 you can see, there are many safety issues that need to

1 continue -- or, continue to be addressed.

2 I also would like to touch on the Benson Beach  
3 project, as many -- As you know there are many groups and  
4 individuals involved in that project. And we've have heard  
5 good things about that project. The one suggestion that I  
6 would make is possibly increasing the maximum amount of  
7 material that could be placed on the beach. Right now it's  
8 3,000 -- 300,000 cubic yards, and I think it would be more  
9 cost-effective to increase that amount to get more material  
10 on there. If the Corps meets all the water-quality and CZM  
11 requirements, I would urge the State of Washington to issue  
12 a five-year permit, as the State of Oregon did in 2002.

13 Thank you.

14 MS. ABEL: Mike Desimone.

15 MR. DESIMONE: Hi there. Mike Desimone  
16 -- D-E-S-I-M-O-N-E. I work for Pacific County and coastal  
17 the communities of Southwest Washington. I would just like  
18 to express my appreciation to you folks for coming down here  
19 to listen to comments. I appreciate Doris' time and the  
20 staff members' time, and the whole program. We've been  
21 working with you folks for a couple of years in trying to  
22 make Benson Beach a viable project, and the progress is  
23 slow, but we're slowly getting there. Sometimes it's been  
24 painful progress, but we do appreciate that we are moving  
25 forward.

1           Basically, I just wanted to kind of reiterate  
2 about Benson Beach. It's a valuable site. I think that it  
3 needs to be considered. It will be considered in the  
4 future -- this year or next year. There's a  
5 draft-monitoring program plan out there, floating around,  
6 that reports on the project last year, and it needs to be  
7 considered in the analysis of the MCR project. It will  
8 show that -- the cost-benefit ratios for the deepwater site.  
9 So do go through the analysis and make sure that that's a  
10 consideration.

11           We have proven that that site is feasible for  
12 long-term beach nourishment. We're excited about seeing  
13 that happen. Just a couple of issues I want to raise, and  
14 a couple of comments to you folks. We're concerned about  
15 navigational safety in the mouth of Columbia. The Columbia  
16 is based on fishermen, who the risk their life to go out  
17 there everyday, so we can enjoy seafood. It's not an easy  
18 job or an easy task, and we really appreciate that, and we  
19 know that if we mismanage the site, it's harder for them do  
20 it.

21           It's important to remember that the  
22 sediment that makes up -- that goes into Washington is  
23 derived from the Columbia River sand. We've been involved  
24 in this for the last ten years -- coastal erosion -- and  
25 we're painfully aware that this is the issue we need to

1 resolve at this point. We also think that, you know, in  
2 doing the MCR project, as well as the Columbia River  
3 project, we should avoiding impacts to navigational safety,  
4 as well as fisheries and crabgrounds. We're not convinced  
5 the deepwater site has been fully explored yet. We think  
6 that site should be used as a last resort.

7 We also want to encourage the  
8 continuation of the Sediment Management program. I know  
9 that's slowly getting underway, but that is one way we can  
10 tackle the issue of sediment management on the coastline. I  
11 also think that the Corps needs to revise a new cost option  
12 -- the methodology that goes into that. We need to revise  
13 that to maintain the current standards. So, hopefully, we  
14 can review, analyze, and evaluate Benson Beach and the total  
15 river system. Thank you.

16 MS. ABEL: Thank you. That's the list  
17 that I was given for those that had signed up. There's  
18 another list. Sorry it got confusing, and sorry you had to  
19 come last, rather than first. But please tell us your  
20 name.

21 MR. BURKE: Hello. I am David Burke  
22 -- B-U-R-K-E. I am the Pacific County prosecutor. My  
23 predecessor was not apparently interested in environmental  
24 and land-use issues. I am not my predecessor. I  
25 campaigned last summer, in part saying that the environment

1 of Pacific County mattered and I would do what I can, over  
2 and above the other criminal matters elsewhere in the  
3 community, to make sure the environment, basically, is not  
4 degraded. That's the reason that I am here tonight.

5           Prior to being elected prosecutor, I also was the  
6 hearings examiner for Pacific County, and as part of that  
7 role -- or, exclusively with regard to that role, I handled  
8 a number of shoreline permits. So I've been involved in  
9 shoreline permitting and dealing with issues of Pacific  
10 County environment for the better part of 10 years. I'm  
11 not specifically involved with this particular project.  
12 Mike Desimone has been our lead person at City/County, and I  
13 want to echo the comments that he has made.

14           Because I only found out about this  
15 hearing last week, I'm not prepared to make substantive  
16 comments with regard to what is being proposed. But I want  
17 to make one procedural comment. The notice that was put  
18 out hopefully contained an omission. On page 7, it has  
19 "Environmental Coordination," and it says, "The proposed work  
20 is being or will be coordinated with the following state,  
21 federal, and local agencies." And, if you go down here, it  
22 doesn't list any local agencies. We have a number of state  
23 agencies listed, but we have no Pacific County listed. So  
24 I would strongly encourage you, if you really believe in  
25 environmental coordination, to talk with Pacific County.

1 Mr. Desimone has been our lead person. I will be involved  
2 in this, if I have to. I did not get elected to be a body  
3 plant. This matters to me, and I will pay attention to  
4 this.

5 We want to work with you. I know  
6 there's a lot of hard feelings that you heard tonight.  
7 These are legitimate concerns. I share those concerns, and  
8 I want to make sure that we come to a solution. As a  
9 lawyer, it may sound strange. My last preference is to go  
10 to court, so I don't want to be there. But I want to make  
11 sure that the interests of Pacific County are protected, and  
12 I got elected to do that, and I will do that. So it's  
13 kind of an olive branch, and maybe a stick. I don't know  
14 what the appropriate analogy is. But we want to work with  
15 you folks. If you don't pay attention to the concerns, you  
16 could maybe win the battle, but you may lose the war.  
17 We're a scrappy bunch, and we don't give up. We're  
18 tenacious. Thank you.

19 MS. ABEL: Thank you very much for your  
20 comments. Would you like to make a comment?

21 MR. WILLIS: I have a mea culpa. I  
22 signed the wrong list.

23 MS. ABEL: Well, come on up, and we'll take care  
24 of that right now.

25 MR. WILLIS: Thank you. My name is Alan Willis.

1 I work with the Marine Department at the Port of Portland.  
2 I'm here tonight to express the Port of Portland's support  
3 for the action proposed in the Corps' public notice. Proper  
4 maintenance of the Mouth of the Columbia River project is  
5 important to all commerce that crosses the bar -- deep,  
6 draft, and otherwise. Accordingly, the Port supports not  
7 only the action that is the topic of tonight's hearing, but  
8 also works with Oregon and Washington's elected  
9 representatives in the nation's capital to ensure that  
10 adequate funding is available to the Corps for maintenance  
11 here, as well as all the coastal bars, channels, and jetties  
12 in the Oregon and Washington coast.

13 We also welcome the efforts of others  
14 who have spoken tonight, and I've worked along with them in  
15 seeking additional funding that will allow more flexibility  
16 for maintenance of these channels and bars, and to find  
17 additional beneficial ways to dispose of the materials. In  
18 this regard, the Port again supports the Corps' proposal to  
19 continue and expand the demonstration project at Benson  
20 Beach, as mentioned in the public notice. All of the  
21 evidence that we have seen today indicates the proposed  
22 dredging can be done in compliance with the federal  
23 water-quality standards administered by the State. The  
24 State of Oregon issued a five-year water-quality  
25 certification of this project in 2002, and we're hoping that

1 the State of Washington will do the same. Finally, I will  
2 follow up with testimony -- written testimony by the March  
3 3rd date. Thank you.

4 MS. ABEL: Thank you. Is there anyone  
5 else who has not spoken, who would like the opportunity to  
6 speak now? Come on up.

7 MR. VAN ESS: Thanks. My name is Matt Van Ess.  
8 I'm the director of CREST -- Columbia River Estuary Study  
9 Taskforce. Thanks a lot for coming down and for this  
10 opportunity. Thanks a lot, Doris, for your good work on  
11 this project. The coordination has been really helpful.  
12 And I do think we're making progress. We've done a lot.  
13 Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the public notice  
14 for the 2003 MCR dredging and use of the existing disposal  
15 sites and the use of the deepwater site, under section 103  
16 of the MPRSA.

17 Last week, I listened to Bill Wyatt,  
18 from the Port of Portland, at a public meeting, discussing  
19 the strategic plan for the Port of Portland. He described  
20 his management of the Port like steering a large ship.  
21 When you start to make that turn, it takes a while for the  
22 whole boat to turn, is basically what he was saying. And  
23 he continued that analogy in his work at the Port, and also  
24 in federal agencies' management of the Columbia River.  
25 Basically, we got some people up there tugging at the wheel,

1 but we need somebody to give it a big, stiff turn, I think,  
2 to get this ship moving in the right direction, as it  
3 relates to dredge-material management of the Columbia River.

4 CREST has commented extensively on the issues that  
5 we face and the partnerships that we're developing. And I  
6 agree with Mr. Wyatt on the partnership opportunities that  
7 we have, where communities in the lower river are partnering  
8 with state and federal resource agencies -- upper ports --  
9 specifically on the beneficial uses of dredge material. The  
10 Benson Beach project is great. It's got to happen this  
11 year to the full extent that we can get the permits for and  
12 that have the money for. The Lower Columbia Solution Group  
13 that has been sort of charting through some of the worries  
14 is a great attempt. The Regional Sand Management  
15 Initiatives -- These have to continue on the dredge-material  
16 management disposal issues. And, again, I think we need to  
17 look at this in its entirety.

18 We were in Astoria last year, and maybe  
19 it was the year before, we were in Ilwaco. But it seems  
20 like it's year after year, we're looking at "Where are we  
21 going to put the dredge material for this year's MCR  
22 dredging season?" We really do need to get a handle on  
23 this and expand the beneficiaries of the dredge material.

24 So, that's general -- I have a couple of comments  
25 on public notice, and then CREST will be sending some

1 written comments, as well. On the public notice, there's a  
2 description of related work, and it discusses the channel  
3 maintenance, channel deepening, and related port dredging.  
4 And the public notice states that "None of these projects  
5 are utilizing disposal sites listed in this notice." We  
6 disagree. Placement of dredge material downstream of river  
7 mile 5 -- a disposal which occurred last summer and is  
8 proposed in channel deepening -- is ocean disposal. River  
9 maintenance and channel deepening are further included in  
10 the MCR project with the use of the final EIS for channel  
11 deepening, to justify the shallow-water site and the  
12 deepwater site described in the public notice. And, again,  
13 I think this is just an example, but we need to look at  
14 the dredge-material management issues on the Columbia River  
15 holistically. MCR project, river maintenance, proposed  
16 channel deepening -- These are not separate projects.  
17 There's not a wall at river mile 3. We really need to get  
18 a handle, as a community -- as a river community -- along  
19 these issues and look at them holistically and look at them  
20 in the long-term.

21                   Let's see. There's a couple more  
22 things on the public notice I wanted to talk about --  
23 Impacts. The first couple pages of the public notice, in  
24 the -- It's on page 6 of the Water-Quality Certification  
25 document, I believe, actually. We talk about "entrainment"

1 impacts -- potential impacts. Entrainment is described and,  
2 briefly, it says, "Preliminary results have indicated that  
3 Dungeness crabs, flatfish, sandlance, and shrimp are dominant  
4 organisms entrained. Disposal options will result in the  
5 covering of existing benthic habitat and the smothering of  
6 benthic invertebrates and crab that cannot escape." Again,  
7 you know, in the public notice here, we're talking about  
8 impacts. We've demonstrated impacts throughout the public  
9 process in all the maintenance dredging and the MCR  
10 projects. We know there's impacts. Since 1890-something  
11 that we've been dredging the river, we know there's impacts.  
12 Nothing has been mitigated for. We need mitigation this  
13 year. We also need ! to look at the damage that has been  
14 done over the life of these projects.

15                   And the last thing I will say -- This  
16 is on page 11 of the Environmental Assessment. It's in  
17 relation to the ESA fish issue. There's a quote here --  
18 "Biological opinion was issued by NOAA Fisheries in  
19 September of 1999 for the Operation and Maintenance program  
20 for the Columbia River Federal Navigation Channel, and it  
21 concluded that the entire Columbia River dredging program  
22 would not likely adversely affect listed anadromous fish."  
23 It goes further to say "The ocean is not a critical habitat  
24 for the listed salmonids. Consultation with NOAA fisheries  
25 is ongoing." I hope so. Thank you.

1 MS. ABEL: Thank you. This is going  
2 to be the last call for other comments and people we  
3 haven't heard from. Come on up.

4 MR. RICHARD: Hi. I wasn't going to speak  
5 tonight. My name is Dan Richard -- R-I-C-H-A-R-D. In  
6 1975, I was the youngest chartered skipper here in Ilwaco, for  
7 that season. I joined the Coast Guard a year after that.  
8 I was a midseaman, here in Astoria. I worked on dredges a  
9 few years. And I think that a lot of people have really  
10 good points about the problem of the amount of dredging  
11 disposal, but I think that we could take a step back and  
12 look and see that the width of the channel in the whole  
13 project area is one-half mile wide. That's one-half statute  
14 miles. I'm sure any mariner did not come up with that  
15 measurement. I can see no reason why that has to be  
16 one-half mile wide. If the channel was reduced in width,  
17 you could eliminate a lot of the spoils that you generate.  
18 This would be a big help. Mr. Beasley mentioned before --  
19 His top three items are: mounding, sustainability, and the  
20 deepwater site.

21 On mounding -- If you eliminate the  
22 width, or narrow the width, you reduce the amount of spoils.  
23 Sustainability -- You could use your dumpsites longer.  
24 Deepwater site -- Maybe you don't have to go there. So I  
25 would like you to consider reducing the width of the

1 channel.

2                   On the West Coast, Newport's width is  
3 only 400 feet. Coos Bay, 700 feet wide. Willapa Bay, 500  
4 feet. San Francisco Bay, 2,000 feet. And there, you might  
5 have an aircraft carrier and a crude-oil tanker passing in  
6 the channel. We're talking about super-tankers coming into  
7 that port. Meanwhile, here on the Columbia, we have things  
8 like grain and wood products. But we certainly don't want  
9 to reduce safety.

10                   With 2,000 ships a year using the river  
11 -- That's 4,000 trips -- round trips -- So we're talking  
12 about, you know, 10 or 11 ships a day. I think that they  
13 can handle -- you know, our bar pilots here -- They can  
14 handle this -- a reduced width in the channel. If you  
15 reduce it down to 1,200 feet, that would be twice as wide  
16 as the main ship channel beyond mile 3, and I think that  
17 would be plenty adequate. Right now, if you look at the  
18 upstream channel -- 600 feet wide, and it comes down and  
19 opens up like a funnel -- And if you consider that upstream  
20 channel a 2-lane road, it comes down and it widens out to  
21 an 8.8-lane road. I see no reason for that. Thank you.

22                   MS. ABEL: Thank you. Anyone else? I  
23 want to thank you all for your comments and for taking the  
24 time to come here tonight and be heard, and for those of  
25 you who didn't speak, to come and listen. Would you like

1 to speak?

2 MR. TORJUSEN: Just -- If I could make  
3 a comment with regard to what he just said?

4 MS. ABEL: Yeah. Just come on up and  
5 quickly give us your name and make your comment.

6 MR. TORJUSEN: My name is John  
7 Torjusen. I'm a -- one of the bar pilots here on the  
8 Columbia River. And I've been going to sea for 22-plus  
9 years -- been a water pilot here for one year. And the  
10 thought of reducing the width of the channel is not a good  
11 idea whatsoever. To compare it to the other bays on the  
12 West Coast -- a bay is not the Columbia River. There's a  
13 tremendous difference. It would be extremely hazardous and,  
14 sometimes, a half-mile wide channel is not wide enough as it  
15 is. I have really nothing else to comment -- no other  
16 comments to make, although sometimes we wish it were wider  
17 than it is. I'm not trying to change it in that regard.  
18 I'd like to keep it a little bit deeper than it is right  
19 now. Nobody wants to hear about more dredged material being  
20 removed. But, at times in the past, it was over-dredged to  
21 60 feet. All the bar pilots would like to see it  
22 over-dredged to 60 feet. And if we ever increase this --  
23 the depth to 43, then we would like ! to see it go to,  
24 perhaps, 65 feet. There's a lot of action that the ships  
25 do at the mouth of the river, and once you make the turn,

1 right at buoy 14 -- I can't think of what river mile that  
2 would be -- A ship is not as controlled in the entrance to  
3 the channel as it is once you get further inland, where you  
4 don't have the effects of the sea swells and as much effect  
5 from wind. So I certainly would not like to see the  
6 channel made any narrower than it is right now. Thank you.

7 MS. ABEL: Thank you. At this point,  
8 I'm going to, again, extend an invitation -- Colonel  
9 Hobernicht and other representatives of the U.S. Army Corps  
10 of Engineers, the State of Washington Department of Ecology,  
11 the U.S. EPA are going to remain here for a while and are  
12 available to have conversations with you one-on-one about  
13 these issues. At this point I would turn the meeting back  
14 over to Colonel Hobernicht.

15 COL. HOBERNICHT: Again, thanks for  
16 coming. This concludes the meeting. Have a safe drive  
17 home.

18 (Whereupon, the public hearing was  
19 concluded at 8:00 P.M.)

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