

**Withdrawal of SEPA Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) of Proposed Action
and
Issuance of New SEPA Determination of Significance (DS)
And Request for Comments on Scope of Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for
Terminal 5 Cargo Wharf Rehabilitation, Berth Deepening and Improvements
Project**

The Port of Seattle completed an environmental evaluation, including review of pertinent and available environmental information, and preparation of an Environmental Checklist for the proposed Terminal 5 Cargo Wharf Rehabilitation and Berth Deepening Project. The SEPA decision, a Determination of Non-Significance (DNS), was published March 2, 2015. The March 2, 2015 SEPA DNS is being withdrawn because additional information characterizing plans for improving Terminal 5 is now available to supplement the project analysis and evaluation.

Background: The March 2, 2015 Terminal 5 Wharf Rehabilitation and Berth Deepening Project DNS included evaluation of strengthening the existing cargo wharf, deepening vessel navigational access to adjacent berth area, and improving electrical service capacity to the cargo wharf and upland operations area. Following wharf strengthening and berth deepening, Terminal 5 was expected to return to comprehensive marine cargo use, with the capability to serve increased capacity vessels, when compared to vessels using the site in past decades. Specific information characterizing potential Terminal 5 marine cargo operations, including site cargo handling equipment and cargo capacity, was not available when the March 2015 DNS was distributed. Now that this information is available, the environmental review process for this proposal can include meaningful evaluation of likely environmental effects due to changes in vessel use, marine cargo operations, and cargo volume.

SEPA Phased Review - The information provided in the SEPA DNS and checklist published on March 2, 2015 listed potential environmental effects associated with cargo transshipment at Terminal 5, including increased capacity vessels and changes in cargo operations and cargo handling and crane equipment expected at the terminal following wharf rehabilitation. The DNS was the first step in a SEPA "phased review" process proscribed by SEPA guidelines, WAC 197-11-0559(2)(A)(i) and 197-11-060(5)(e). A phased SEPA review process was used because future Terminal 5 operations will be shaped by shipping industry scale and efficiency requirements, which were unclear with respect to marine cargo facilities in Elliott Bay when the DNS was prepared. Phased review, as identified in the DNS, provided a framework for evaluation of future Terminal 5 operations and anticipated the likely environmental effects due to potential operational changes at the site, including larger, increased capacity vessels and alternative cargo handling operations.



New SEPA Threshold Determination - The Port noted in the previous SEPA DNS that additional environmental review would be conducted when marine cargo operation information and data were available for analysis and evaluation. Subsequent to the issuance of the SEPA DNS for the Cargo Wharf Rehabilitation and Berth Deepening Project, the Port received additional information describing potential marine cargo site use and now has operational information available for analysis, indicating the potential for substantial changes in Terminal 5 cargo operations, compared to cargo operations and volumes anticipated and evaluated in the DNS.

The Port received 52 comments from the public during the public comment period for the March 2, 2015 SEPA DNS. Many of the comments were concerned with potential air, noise, and traffic effects. In addition, some commenters requested the Port prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed project.

As a result of the new information characterizing potential changes in cargo operations and volume the Port is withdrawing the March 2015 Terminal 5 Cargo Wharf Rehabilitation and Berth Deepening Project SEPA DNS. If the lead agency withdraws a DNS, the agency is required to make a new threshold determination, notify other agencies with jurisdiction of the withdrawal of the DNS, and provide notice of the new threshold determination, WAC 197-11-340(3)(c). The Port is now providing this notice of its withdrawal of the DNS and of its decision to issue a threshold determination of a Determination of Significance for the Terminal 5 Cargo Wharf Rehabilitation, Berth Deepening and Improvements Project (T-5 Improvements Project).

Description of the Proposal: The Port of Seattle proposes the Terminal 5 Improvements Project (the proposed project). The proposed project consists of modifications to existing marine cargo facilities, including cargo wharf rehabilitation, berth deepening, electrical service capacity improvements, and upland improvements, with the potential for increased cargo volume of cargo at the site. The project would allow Terminal 5 to accommodate existing large post-Panamax, new Panamax, and new super post-Panamax vessels. Project plans may also include reconfigured marine cargo marshalling area, re-organized intermodal rail facilities, cargo area lighting modifications, pavement repair and maintenance, stormwater drainage improvements, maintenance and repair buildings improvements, and evaluation of entrance/exit gates and heavy vehicle access points.

Environmental Analysis: For purposes of environmental review, two development alternatives and one no-action alternative will be analyzed.

Proponent/applicant: Port of Seattle

Location of the proposal: The project site is located at the existing Terminal 5 marine cargo facility, on the west margin of the West Waterway, in southwest Elliott Bay, Seattle, Washington (Range 3 East, Township 24 North, and Sections 12 and 13). The project area owned and available for use by the port includes the existing Terminal 5 marine cargo facility, including approximately 190 acres existing upland and approximately 19 acres existing cargo pier and navigational access area in the west margin of the West Waterway, adjacent to the Terminal upland cargo marshalling area.

Lead Agency: Port of Seattle SEPA No. 15-09

New SEPA Determination - EIS Required: The Port of Seattle, as lead agency, has determined that this proposal is likely to have significant adverse environmental impacts on the environment and is preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) as required by the State Environmental Policy Act (Chapter 43.21C RCW). The following areas have been identified for evaluation and analysis in the EIS: Earth, Air, Water, Plants, Animals, Energy and Natural Resources, Land and Shoreline Use, Environmental Health, Noise, Aesthetics (including light and glare), Transportation, Public Services, Historical and Cultural and Utilities.


Scoping: Agencies, affected tribes and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS during the 30-day comment period. You may comment on alternatives, probable significant adverse impacts, mitigation measures and licenses or other approvals that may be required. A public scoping meeting is scheduled for 5:30-8:30 PM on Thursday, November 12, 2015, located at The Hall at Fauntleroy, 9131 California Ave SW, Seattle, WA 98136. All comments must be received by Monday, November 23, for consideration in the proposed scope of the EIS. Written comments should be addressed to the responsible official below.

Scoping Document Available: Additional details concerning the proposal and the potential for significant impacts that will be evaluated by the EIS are available by contacting the responsible official at the address listed below and on the Port website at www.portseattle.org and an online open house at www.T5EIS.publicmeeting.info.

Public and Agency Comment: Please refer questions and comments about this determination or the proposal to Paul Meyer, Port of Seattle, Environmental Review and Permitting, P.O. Box 1209, Seattle, WA 98111 or the Port of Seattle electronic mail Internet address at SEPA.p@portseattle.org. Include your mailing address when submitting comments to the electronic Internet address.

Responsible Official: Lindsay Pulsifer

Position/title: Maritime Division Managing Director, Port of Seattle

Signature: 
SEPA Responsible Official

Date: 10.14.15

There is no agency appeal of this determination of significance.