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## **NAVY TRANSFERS OWNERSHIP OF 280 ACRES TO PORT**

After completing a rigorous environmental checklist, the U.S. Navy is transferring ownership of approximately 280 of the 500 acres of the former Long Beach Naval Complex on Terminal Island to the Port of Long Beach. The port has invited dozens of dignitaries including Long Beach Mayor Beverly O'Neill and representatives of various government agencies to commemorate the transfer in ceremonies on Oct. 17.

For more than 50 years, the Naval Complex was one of the nation's largest Navy bases. The complex included the Naval Station, homeport to more than 20,000 sailors, and the Naval Shipyard, which employed more than 7,000 civilians.

With the end of the Cold War, Congress ordered the complex closed in the mid-1990s. The Navy assigned the land to U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration, which would transfer the property to the City of Long Beach for redevelopment. Before the land could be transferred, the Navy had to fulfill requirements to remediate the land of contaminants to protect human health and the environment.

While resolving the environmental issues, the Navy and port agreed to a lease in 1998 that allowed the port to use the site for shipping terminals. The port is building a 375-acre, \$576 million container cargo terminal leased to Hanjin Shipping Co. of South Korea. The new, Pier T terminal is scheduled to open by July 2002. The project employs more than 250 construction workers a day, while the completed shipping terminal will employ hundreds of permanent workers.

"Transferring title to the 280 acres gives the port the full control we need to move ahead with plans to redevelop more of the site for port operations," said port Executive Director Richard Steinke. "The Navy and all of the regulatory agencies did a terrific job in working out the environmental issues."

During the last seven years, the Navy has worked closely with the lead environmental regulatory agency for the site, the California Environmental Protection Agency's Department of Toxic Substances Control; the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board; and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to ensure that the property is suitable for redevelopment.

"Now that this valuable piece of property has been cleaned up, we can look forward to its development adding revenue to our economy," said Dennis Dickerson, executive officer of the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board. "For seven years, the Regional Water Board has been a key player in overseeing this project. It is gratifying to see this work completed."

In 1998 the Navy and the port agreed to a transfer plan that allowed the port to immediately take title to about 600 acres of water, the West Basin, which is surrounded by the former Naval Complex. The port

agreed to assume the responsibility for any environmental cleanup in the basin. The port also took title to approximately 80 acres on Pier Echo, the eastern portion of the former Naval Shipyard. The City of Long Beach had deeded the Pier Echo area to the Navy decades ago, with a "reversionary clause" that called for the Navy to deed back the land once it was no longer needed for Navy use.

The Navy has followed an exacting process to transfer the remaining land. To transfer the present 280 acres, the Navy had to first assign ownership to the Maritime Administration, which is deeding the land to the port. The 280 acres includes much of the Navy Mole, Naval Station and the shipyard's dry docks.

That same process should be completed within the next year so that the remaining 140 acres can be transferred to the port.

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October 16, 2001  
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