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PORT HONORED AS ENVIRONMENTAL HERO

The Port of Long Beach has been recognized as an "Environmental Hero" by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and California Sen. Barbara Boxer for helping to address the regional challenge of finding ecologically safe ways to dispose of contaminated sediment.

The EPA honored the port at its third annual Environmental Awards Ceremony last month for developing an innovative approach for disposing of contaminated sediment. The port isolated contaminated sediments in a marine slip and used the sediment as engineered structural landfill. The port was one of 31 western organizations and individuals recognized by the EPA for efforts to protect and preserve the environment during 2000.

In all, the port accepted nearly 1 million cubic yards of contaminated sediments from three marine locations in the greater Los Angeles area: the West Basin of the former Long Beach Naval Complex, Marina Del Rey and the mouth of the Los Angeles River.

The project provided the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with a free disposal alternative for materials that would otherwise have been economically impractical to dispose, and it helped the City of Long Beach cope with a chronic shoaling problem in the Los Angeles River. A key factor in the success of the project was the support of the interagency Los Angeles Regional Contaminated Sediments Task Force.

The sediment was used to create a 30-acre landfill at the port's California United Terminals. The landfill was completed in September 2000. The port is currently removing surcharge material atop the fill. Construction of the expanded container terminal will begin early next year and be completed in the third quarter of 2002.

The sediment disposal project originated as part of the port's redevelopment of the former Long Beach Naval Complex on Terminal Island as a container shipping terminal. The West Basin harbor area at the Naval Complex, however, was contaminated by the decades of Navy activities.

The port sequestered the contaminated sediment within a rock dike and sandwiched it between tens of thousands of cubic yards of clean sand. Also encapsulated was the Marina Del Rey and Los Angeles River sediment. Eventually, during construction of the expanded container terminal, the landfill will be covered with a cap of crushed rock and thick asphaltic-concrete paving.

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