



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** SR 520 Program Files

**From:** Randy Everett, FHWA Major Projects Oversight Manager;  
Allison Hanson, WDSOT ESO Mega Projects Environmental Director

**Date:** March 22, 2012

**Copies To:** John White, WSDOT SR 520 Floating Bridge & Landings Project Director;  
Kerry Pihlstrom, WSDOT SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Engineering Manager;  
Rob Berman, SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Planning Manager;  
Jenifer Young, SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Environmental Manager;  
Margaret Kucharski, WSDOT SR 520 Environmental Lead;  
Tessa Gardner-Brown, SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Environmental Planner

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**Subject: SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project –  
Pontoon Outfitting and Moorage at the Port of Tacoma East Blair Berth 1**

The purpose of this memorandum is to document National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA), and Section 106 and 4(f) compliance for the SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project associated with use of the Port of Tacoma, East Blair Berth 1 (EB1) for pontoon outfitting and moorage.

Environmental documentation for the SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project includes the Final Environmental Impact Statement (June 2011) and supporting discipline reports, the Record of Decision (August 2011), SEPA Addenda (October and November 2011) and NEPA Environmental Reevaluations (December 2011 and January 2012). As the project proceeds with final design and moves toward construction, proposed modifications have been compared to findings in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), Record of Decision (ROD), and other existing reports and documentation.

The FEIS states that as many as 23 pontoons would be outfitted with bridge and roadway structures at available port locations in Puget Sound. Outfitting was defined as the process by which the columns and elevated roadway of the bridge would be built directly on the surface of the pontoon. Outfitting activities were assumed to be consistent with typical operations at the port facilities, and could take up to 4 months.

In addition to outfitting, the FEIS states that pontoons could be moored at these port locations until needed for construction of the floating bridge. Existing environmental documents stipulate

that temporary storage of the pontoons be consistent with typical port facility operations, and no physical improvements be made to these port facilities. Temporary storage sites would be at existing commercial shipping or mooring facilities regularly used by barges or large vessels.

Consistent with these assumptions, WSDOT is proposing to outfit and temporarily moor pontoons at an existing facility within Puget Sound. Following pontoon casting at Grays Harbor or the Concrete Technology Corporation (CTC), outfitting activities and temporary moorage could occur at EB1.

The EB1 facility is an existing 1,200 foot long concrete wharf owned by Port of Tacoma. It is located at 2340 Alexander Avenue, Tacoma, WA, and is serviced by the Blair Waterway. Use of this site would be consistent with the above mentioned statements included in the FEIS, and would support timely completion of floating bridge construction.

Pontoons would be towed to EB1, where outfitting would begin as early as April 2012 and potentially last until March 2014. Completed pontoons could be moored at EB1 until space at the eastside staging area became available. Additionally, this moorage space could be used if pontoons are fabricated at a faster rate than can be cycled through the eastside staging area or incorporated into the final bridge configuration. Therefore, EB1 could be used for outfitting activities or moorage of up to 77 pontoons. Outfitting and mooring a larger number of pontoons than were originally assumed in the FEIS (23 pontoons) would not result in new significant impacts, since these activities are consistent with the existing use of the EB1 facility.

Pontoon outfitting at EB1 would occur directly on the top surface and interior of pontoons, using mobile equipment located on the wharf. Once outfitted, the pontoons would be moored until needed as part of the floating bridge construction sequence on Lake Washington, whereupon the pontoon would be towed to the eastside staging area or placed into the final bridge alignment. To support pontoon outfitting activities at EB1, barge moorage, equipment storage, laydown areas, and parking will occur onsite.

Towing the pontoons to and from EB1 will require up to two tugboats, a process similar to moving a barge or other large vessel. This type of activity regularly occurs within Blair Waterway and throughout Puget Sound as part of standard operations. Pontoon transport will follow existing shipping lanes and is consistent with the FEIS.

No dredging is needed to support pontoon moorage at EB1. The pontoon outfitting activities do not require in-water work and no physical improvements would be made to the existing facility. All concrete contact water associated with outfitting activities will be collected, contained, and pumped to temporary holding tanks on the wharf. The collected water will be disposed of at an offsite licensed facility, or discharged to a sanitary sewer with appropriate waste discharge permits. Appropriate best management practices will be implemented to ensure that no material, debris or concrete contact water will be released to the open water. A WSDOT Biologist has determined that use of EB1 is consistent with the analysis included in the ESA consultations and no additional analysis is necessary for Endangered Species Act compliance.

Outfitting activities, moorage, and associated equipment staging will not require ground disturbing activities, and will not affect adjacent historic resources. A WSDOT Cultural Resources Specialist has determined that no additional analysis or consultation is necessary for Section 106 compliance or Section 4(f) compliance.

Though the EB1 facility is located within the treaty fishing area of the Puyallup Tribe, the Tribe has indicated that additional coordination would not be necessary for the proposed use of this site.

As documented above, the project remains compliant with current federal, state, local, and departmental regulations and directives with regard to NEPA/SEPA processes, Section 106 and 4(f), and the Endangered Species Act. No additional environmental review is required.

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We have reviewed and agree with the contents of this memorandum.

Region / Mode Official



Date



FHWA Official



Date





**Port of Tacoma, East Blair Berth 1 (EB1)**

