



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Department of Environmental Quality

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February 28, 2024

J. Douglas Hall, P.G.
Director, Environmental Compliance
TransMontaigne
dhall@transmontaigne.com

Re: **DEQ Comments on Seawall Tieback Inspection Summary Report**
SMP Terminal (ECSI No. 1528)
Portland Harbor Superfund Site

Dear Mr. Hall,

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has reviewed the report titled *Seawall Tieback Inspection Summary Report* (STISR) submitted by AECOM (January 9, 2024) on behalf of Seaport Midstream Partners, LLC (SMP). The STISR documents the results of August and September 2023 sediment sampling performed in conjunction with inspection of selected tieback anchors for the sheet pile wall source control measure (SCM). The tieback inspection was performed to investigate the integrity of the sheet pile wall SCM following a release of gasoline-range hydrocarbons in the North Tank Farm in late 2021. DEQ provided the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Tribes an opportunity to review and provide comment on the STISR and DEQ's draft comments. EPA and the Five Tribes reviewed these documents and did not have additional comments. DEQ has the following comments on the STISR.

General Comments

- 1) Concerning the collection of samples of fluid seeping from the tiebacks, DEQ notes that SMP did not follow the approved work plan (See Specific Comment 5) or, despite conditions not meeting the exact letter of the criteria that would trigger the sampling of seep fluids (i.e., page 4 of the *Revised 2023 Tieback Inspection Work Plan*), did not take advantage of opportunities to collect additional data that would help inform a determination regarding the status of source control (Specific Comments 6 and 7). The report should provide comment on whether the observation of leaking fluids in association with secondary indicators of contamination (e.g., fluorescence and/or petroleum hydrocarbon odor) in at least four of 12 tieback anchors inspected raises questions regarding the integrity of the tieback anchors at other locations along the sheet pile wall SCM.
- 2) In more than one location, SMP observed fluids with ultraviolet (UV) fluorescence and a reported slight petroleum hydrocarbon odor at the point of emergence and moisture in the engineered fill/sand pack (i.e., reported to have a slight hydrocarbon odor in at least one

location) directly below the tieback. Please provide additional discussion of the basis for the decision to not collect a sample of the seeping fluid under these circumstances.

- 3) The first 13 pages of the draft STISR appears to contain a duplication of the report text with blank pages inserted for Figures 1 and 2, which is then followed by the Table of Contents and the remainder of the full report. Please reformat to remove the duplicate pages.
- 4) DEQ notes that coolers containing the sediment samples were received outside the temperature criteria, one of them by a significant amount. In addition, a number of analytes were detected in the method/trip blanks and the relative percent difference (RPD) and laboratory control sample (LCS)/laboratory control sample duplicate (LCSD) recoveries for selected batches were outside limits. The narrative report should summarize the major issues identified in the Appendix C memorandum and provide discussion regarding the resulting uncertainty in the analytical results.

Specific Comments

- 5) Section 3.2.1 Tiebacks 9-10 – DEQ notes that despite the observation of water seeping from Tieback 9 and engineered fill with a hydrocarbon odor and UV fluorescence being observed below the tieback, no samples of the fluid seeping from the tieback were collected as specified in the revised Tieback Inspection Work Plan (TIWP). Please discuss the basis for this deviation from the work plan.
- 6) Section 3.2.5 Tiebacks 60-61 – DEQ notes that fluorescent fluid was observed dripping from Tieback 60 at a measurable rate, although no sample of the fluid was collected. The revised TIWP states that evidence of impacts to the engineered fill (i.e., “...staining, odor, sheen, or elevated PID reading...”) would trigger sampling of the seep fluid. While not meeting all these criteria, SMP should reasonably assume that a seep exhibiting evidence of UV fluorescence and hydrocarbon odor would be of interest to DEQ for evaluating the status of source control. Please provide additional discussion regarding the basis for the decision not to collect a sample of the seeping fluid at Tieback 60.
- 7) Section 3.2.6 Tiebacks 68-69 – It is unclear why, despite the observation of a slow drip of a viscous, highly UV fluorescent fluid from Tieback 69 which was observed to be impacting the sand pack (i.e., reported hydrocarbon odor), a sample of the fluid was not collected. Please clarify.
- 8) Section 3.3 Fill Sampling and Results – This section should discuss the results of screening the sediment data (i.e., at a minimum diesel-range hydrocarbons, total polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons [PAHs] and carcinogenic PAHs [cPAHs] summarized in Table C-1) against Table 17 cleanup levels (CULs). Please provide discussion or an additional summary table including the number of detections, number of detections exceeding CULs, and the range of exceedance ratios. Due to operational factors including access, permanent booms and facility security, DEQ assumes the cPAH cleanup level of 85 micrograms per kilogram ($\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$) for recreational beaches does not apply to the SMP terminal site.

- 9) Section 3.4 Backfill – Please provide additional information regarding the disposition of the materials in the supersacks used to create the cofferdams, including the disposal location and any associated documentation.
- 10) Section 3.6 Multi-Use Ports – Please provide additional description regarding the abandonment of the multi-use ports, including any abandonment logs filed with the Oregon Water Resources Department.
- 11) Section 4.0 Conclusion – DEQ notes that one-third of the inspected tiebacks had seepage associated with indications of potential petroleum hydrocarbon contamination. Considering that only selected tieback anchors were observed during the investigation and no samples of seeping fluids were collected, what is the level of uncertainty in the conclusion that there are no ongoing releases from the SMP terminal?
- 12) Figure 2 Site Layout Map – Please revise this figure to highlight locations where seeps were observed and where indications of petroleum hydrocarbon contamination were observed in the engineered backfill.
- 13) Appendix C Summary Data Quality Review –
 - a. DEQ is concerned about apparent quality control problems associated with sample handling, sample packaging and/or sample processing subsequent to receipt by the laboratory. Two coolers were received outside of acceptable temperature limits. Furthermore, one cooler was misplaced by the laboratory for approximately 7 days and when located, exhibited a temperature exceeding the maximum limits by more than a factor of 3. DEQ further notes that the sediment sample from Tiebacks 9-10 was analyzed for volatile petroleum hydrocarbons (VPH) and extractable petroleum hydrocarbons (EPH) outside the method-recommended holding times. Please comment on these procedural failures, which appear to involve the cooler containing the sediment sample (Tiebacks 9-10) with the highest detected contaminant concentrations. What is the uncertainty in the reported contaminant concentrations in this sample in particular? What steps are being taken to prevent future recurrences of these failures?
 - b. Please comment on the frequent occurrence of detections in trip and method blanks for the sediment samples. Was a review of field and lab procedures performed to try to minimize similar occurrences in the future?

In summary, DEQ appreciates SMP's submittal of the STISR to describe sediment sampling performed in conjunction with the 2023 inspection of tieback anchors at selected locations along the sheet pile wall SCM. Based on information provided by EPA, the B1a Group will present the results of the sediment sampling performed in conjunction with the tieback inspections as part of the 30% remedial design deliverable. Please prepare a Response to Comment, revise the STISR in accordance with these comments, and resubmit within 45 days. If additional time is needed, please contact me to discuss an extension. DEQ appreciates the continuing efforts of SMP to meet its source control obligations.

In the meantime, do not hesitate to call (503-229-5024) or email (jeff.schatz@deq.oregon.gov) me if you have questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeff K. Schatz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jeff K. Schatz, R.G.
Project Manager and Hydrogeologist
NWR Cleanup Section

ec: Rebecca Digiustino, Project Manager, DEQ
Dave Lacey, Source Control Coordinator, DEQ
Thomas Bialabok, Senior Project Manager, AECOM
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(jks:JKS)