

**UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**DEMOLISH ABANDONED PIER**

**MARINE CORPS BASE HAWAII KANEOHE BAY, OAHU, HAWAII**

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Title 40, Parts 1500-1508 et seq.) regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 United States Code [USC] §4321, et seq.); Marine Corps Order P5090.2A, Change 3, Environmental Protection and Compliance Manual; and the USMC NEPA Manual, version 2.0, the United States Marine Corps (USMC) gives notice that an Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for the demolition of an abandoned pier at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Oahu, Hawaii. Based on the EA analysis, the proposed action will result in no significant impacts to the human or natural environment; therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.

**Proposed Action:** The proposed action is to demolish the abandoned former Naval Ocean Systems Center (NOSC) pier, Facility 1662, located at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay. The pier is located within waters of Kaneohe Bay. The proposed action includes demolition of concrete decking and support pilings. The existing pier is deteriorated, with no access to or from the shoreline, having one isolated section of concrete decking on piles, and another section consisting only of concrete support pilings extending above the surface without decking. There is no operational or mission requirement for the pier. The existing structure constitutes a navigational hazard within an active Waterfront Operations area, and a danger to personnel. The pier is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The proposed action would: demolish and remove the existing section of concrete decking; demolish and remove pier pilings by cutting them, using diver-operated pneumatic cutting tools, as close to the bottom as feasible; and remove any existing utility lines associated with the pier. The demolition will be effected from floating vessels, primarily a barge with a crane for lifting the concrete sections after cutting, and support vessels such as tugboats. Debris removed would be hauled away for recycling and/or landfill disposal, as appropriate.

**Background:** The original pier, consisting of a wooden deck on concrete piles, was constructed in 1975 for the Naval Undersea Center (NUC) on the western side of Mokapu Peninsula for use by research boats. NUC merged with another Navy laboratory to become the Naval Ocean Systems Center (NOSC) in 1977. NOSC upgraded or added to the original pier in order to support its research and development mission. The concrete-capped extension of the pier was constructed circa 1980. From the end of the NOSC mission at MCBH in 1993 to 2001, the pier was used for recreational fishing. The original pier consisted of a wooden walkway from shore, mounted on 24 concrete piles; the additional concrete-decked wing was mounted on 28 concrete piles. Due to increased security measures, the pier became off-limits for recreational use. The wooden walkway portion of the pier was removed in 2011, and the remaining concrete-capped portion of the pier has continued to deteriorate. All that remains of the pier are the concrete piles that supported the wooden walkway, and the now-isolated concrete-deck section (approximately 200 by 13 feet/2,600 square feet), with its supporting piles.

**Alternatives Analyzed:** The proposed action is the only viable alternative, other than the no-action alternative, due to the navigational safety hazard posed by the pier. The only potential alternatives that

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could be considered would be in the methodology used in pier demolition. Demolition via use of explosives to cut the pilings was not considered a viable alternative and was not given serious consideration.

**Environmental Effects:** The EA evaluated the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the proposed action and the no-action alternative as related to air quality, noise, biological resources, water resources, wetlands, floodplains and flooding, visual resources, and hazardous wastes. Because the proposed action is the removal of an off-shore pier, involving no construction of a replacement facility, the proposed action would have little or no impact upon floodplains and flooding, wetlands, topography and soils, infrastructure, recreation, traffic, socio-economic issues, or land use compatibility. Environmental impacts will primarily be limited to the marine environment, in terms of potential impacts to marine protected species, essential fish habitat, and water quality.

Consultations with the National Marine Fisheries Service under the Endangered Species Act and the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act included the development of a number of appropriate Best Management Practices and Conservation Measures to minimize and mitigate the temporary, construction-related impacts. These practices and measures include, but are not limited to: inspecting vessels to be used for the presence of invasive marine species such as corals; conducting the demolition during periods of calm seas and weather; use of observers to monitor the presence of protected marine species such as the Hawaiian monk seal and the green sea turtle; the use of turbidity-containment devices such as silt curtains; controls placed on the operation of demolition-related vessels in the project area (e.g., careful placement of anchors to minimize impact on coral), including when protected species are detected near the project area (e.g., reduced engine speed); and avoiding work during the coral spawning season.

In addition to the controls and practices listed above, a Navy qualified diver will inspect the project site prior to the start of demolition activities to verify whether any invasive coral species are present. If so, it will be determined whether it is safe to remove the pier pilings with the coral attached or if the piling would require wrapping to prevent the inadvertent spreading of such coral in the area. At the same time, the underwater site inspection will allow determination of the feasibility of removing and relocating any protected coral species that may be present. Also, sound levels produced by the underwater equipment used to remove the piles will be monitored to determine if a pre-set clear distance of 150-feet, at an agreed-upon prescribed 120-decibel (dB) level, would be sufficient to prevent harm to marine mammals. Work will cease if a marine mammal approaches the designated clear distance, and would not resume until it is determined that the animal has left the area. If the underwater noise level proves to be greater than 120 dB at 150 feet from the work site, the safe distance from the site would be increased until the level falls to 120 dB or lower.

An analysis of cumulative impacts concluded that the proposed action will not result in any long-term impacts that could not be avoided, minimized or mitigated. The Hawaii Coastal Zone Management Office has acknowledged that the proposed action is an activity that is covered by the Navy and Marine Corps *de minimis* list under the Coastal Zone Management Act, and would not result in any reasonably foreseeable direct or indirect effects upon uses or resources within the Hawaii Coastal Zone.

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**Public Involvement:** A 15-day public review period of the Draft FONSI was initiated with a Notice of Availability (NOA) published in the Honolulu Star-Advertiser on September 7, 8, and 9, 2017, as well as in the September 8, 2017 edition of *The Environmental Notice*, the bi-monthly bulletin of the Hawaii Department of Health, Office of Environmental Quality Control. The draft FONSI and the EA were available to the public on the MCB Hawaii website at:


<http://www.mcbhawaii.marines.mil/unit-home/featured-Information/pier-demolition/>

An e-mail address and a standard mailing address were provided in the NOA for comments. One comment, from the State of Hawaii Department of Health, Environmental Planning Office, which did not result in any changes to the EA or Draft FONSI, was received during the public comment period.

**Finding:** Based on the EA analysis, and considering the context and intensity of anticipated environmental effects, the USMC has determined that the proposed action will have no significant impacts on the quality of the human or natural environment. Consequently, an EIS is not required.

The EA and FONSI are available at the website provided above, and are on file at Naval Facilities Engineering Command Pacific, 258 Makalapa Drive, Suite 100, JBPHH, HI 96860-3134 (Attention: EV21 Project Mgr MCBH Pier EA).

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Date

  
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