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## DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT DEVELOPS GUIDELINES FOR REUSE OF DREDGED MATERIAL

Draft guidance developed in collaboration with Md. Dept. of Transportation's Port Administration, designed to encourage private sector innovation; public meeting set

BALTIMORE, MD (March 30, 2017) – Newly developed Maryland Department of the Environment guidelines will help allow for dredged material to be safely reused in innovative ways that protect and benefit the environment.

The Department of the Environment developed the draft guidelines in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Transportation's Port Administration (MPA). The draft guidelines are for reuse of dredged materials, as an alternative to disposal, for such purposes as: fill for brownfields redevelopment; construction and roads; landfill cover; and restoration or creation of aquatic habitats such as marshes. They are designed to clarify regulatory requirements – and, in turn, encourage further private sector innovation in using dredged materials to benefit water quality or as useful products.

“Putting valuable material to work for communities and ecosystems makes sense, and the Maryland Department of the Environment is providing a road map to doing just that in ways that protect public health and benefit the environment,” said Maryland Secretary of the Environment Ben Grumbles.

“Through science, innovation and public-private collaboration, we can advance the greening of Maryland and strengthen our economy with valuable dredged materials.”

“Finding innovative ways to manage sediment removed from the shipping channels serving the Port of Baltimore is a priority for the MPA. With the development of MDE's Draft Guidance Document and Technical Screening Criteria, there is now a clear path forward for making innovative reuse a reality, not just for the MPA, but for the private sector and related industries throughout Maryland,” said MPA Director of Harbor Development Chris Correale. “The MPA is grateful for MDE's leadership on this effort

– we share the same goal that dredged material, as a valuable natural resource, can safely be reused while driving innovation, benefiting the environment and growing Maryland’s economy.”

The Department of the Environment considers dredged material a valuable resource for achieving its mission to protect and restore the environment for the health and well-being of all Marylanders. Most dredged material from the Chesapeake Bay, including Baltimore Harbor’s navigation channels, is made up of clean sediments that can be used on the land as soil amendments or fill or in water to create aquatic habitat.

Dredged material has been safely reused to restore islands, such as Poplar Island in the Chesapeake Bay. That project also increases wetlands and upland habitat for nesting birds. Dredged material could be reused for projects to protect shorelines from erosion or from rising sea levels as a result of climate change, to create wetlands that improve water quality or to restore contaminated sites to safe and productive use. Other potential uses include as aggregate products for block or pavement or for use as base material for highways. Reuse of dredged material from Baltimore Harbor that would otherwise be disposed of in the MPA’s Cox Creek Dredged Material Placement Site would also effectively extend that facility’s lifespan.

The Maryland Dredge Material Management Program’s executive committee assigned a broad-based workgroup the task of reviewing current law and regulatory programs and recommending policy revisions to promote the reuse of dredged material. The newly developed technical guidance is in response to a recommendation in that workgroup’s June 2016 report.

The draft guidance is designed to assist scientists, engineers and other technical professionals seeking approvals to innovatively or beneficially reuse dredged material. The guidelines are designed to allow applicants to better understand what information is required, leading to increased transparency and efficiency in the permitting and approval process.

A public meeting to present the draft guidance and answer questions is scheduled for 6 p.m. April 25 at the Department of the Environment’s Baltimore headquarters, 1800 Washington Boulevard. Public comments on the document will be accepted through May 26. The department will review and consider all comments received.

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