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**Humboldt Bay
Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District**
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CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT - NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: County of Humboldt
County Clerk
825 5th Street
Eureka, CA 95501

From: Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation,
and Conservation District
601 Startare Drive
Eureka, CA 95501
districtplanner@humbolddbay.org

Project Title: Eelgrass Joint Mitigation Program: SAP Implementation

Project Applicant: Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation, and Conservation District (Harbor District), 601 Startare Drive, Eureka, California 95501-0765

Project Location: The Eelgrass Mitigation Program includes three sites within Humboldt Bay:

1. Redwood Marine Multipurpose Terminal (RMMT) North Mitigation Area (40.824873°N, 124.168699°W)
2. RMMT North Expansion Mitigation Area (40.830°N, 124.165°W)
3. King Salmon Mitigation Area (40.737054°N, 124.220698°W)

Project Summary: The Harbor District is requesting permits to complete sediment sampling as part of a Sediment Characterization Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAP) for the Humboldt Bay Eelgrass Joint Mitigation Program. The purpose of the Project is to characterize sediment conditions in the three mitigation areas within Humboldt Bay which will support future permitting and dredging design for the Eelgrass Mitigation Program.

Sediment samples will be evaluated for suitability for unconfined open water placement at the Humboldt Open Ocean Disposal Site (HOODS). No dredging or other activities will occur as part of this Project, only sediment sampling. Boring investigations will follow common best management practices to avoid environmental impacts, including impacts to sensitive habitats (i.e., eelgrass) and cultural resources. Sediment characterization sampling will be conducted using vibracore methods deployed from a low draft research vessel provided by Leviathan Environmental Services LLC. A total of 16 sediment cores will be collected: 6 cores from the RMMT North Mitigation Area, 6 cores from the RMMT North Expansion Mitigation Area, and 4 cores from the King Salmon Mitigation Area. Reference sediment will also be collected from the HOODS reference site, and water will be collected from each mitigation area to support elutriate testing.

Pertinent California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Exemption: The District has determined that the project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Categorical Exemption Section 15306 (Information Collection), which exempts "basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major

disturbance to an environmental resource. These may be strictly for information gathering purposes, or as part of a study leading to an action which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded." The project also qualifies for the Class 4 categorical exemption (Section 15304 Minor Alterations to Land), which exempts minor alterations to the land, water and/or vegetation.

Rationale for Exemption: The Project involves data collection, research and resource evaluation activities in support of the Eelgrass Joint Mitigation Program. Most of these activities are office based. The one exception is the sediment characterization investigations that involve marine bores. The borings will be implemented following best management practices that include avoidance of eelgrass plants and adherence to the Harbor District's standard procedures regarding inadvertent discovery of cultural resources. Project activities will not result in a serious or major disturbance to a cultural resource.

The District has further determined that the use of the categorical exemption is not barred by any of the exceptions set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. Specifically:

1. The cumulative impact of successive projects would not result in a significant impact.
2. There are not unusual circumstances that create a reasonable possibility that the project will have a significant effect on the environment.
3. The project would not impact scenic resources.
4. The project is not located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.
5. The project would not cause a substantial adverse change to the significance of a historic structure.

Lead Agency Contact: Rob Holmlund, Development Director
Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District
601 Startare Drive, Eureka, CA 95501

Signature: 
Vanessa Blodgett, District Planner

Date: March 3, 2026