CHAPTER 11.0 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

NEPA offers no specific guidance with respect to growth-inducing impacts. However, Section 15126(g) of the CEQA guidelines require an EIR to discuss how the project may "foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing . . . in the surrounding environment . . . [and] the characteristic of some projects which may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment."

Overall, the alternatives evaluated by the LTMS are based on meeting existing and reasonably foreseeable dredging and transportation needs in the San Francisco Bay. As such, the actions alternatives themselves are unlikely to cause substantial regional growth impacts. There are several elements of the LTMS action alternatives, however, that may cause more localized growth impacts.

The implementation of a regional strategy that meets the LTMS goals and objectives listed in Chapter 2 may provide opportunities for growth in industries dependent on maritime activities, such as deep-draft cargo shipping, military facility operations, commercial fishing, ship repair, recreational fishing, ferries, recreational boating and tourism. The LTMS approach could affect growth in dredging dependent industries in two major ways: (1) through the planning for adequate capacity for dredged material from new work projects; and (2) through a streamlined dredged material management framework. Both of these outcomes could increase regulatory certainty and facilitate the removal of dredging-related obstacles to growth in maritime industries, spurring development that otherwise may not have occurred.

To plan for a reasonable estimate of potential future dredging, this EIS/EIR assumes that growth will occur and new-work projects will be conducted, resulting in an estimated material volume from new-work projects that is twice that of currently planned projects (see section 3.1.2.2). The additional new material could come from the expansion of existing ports and channels or the development of new maritime facilities. Disposal capacity developed as a result of the LTMS may increase the likelihood that new work projects will be undertaken, leading to increased employment and development in maritime industries.

Bay Area ports will likely seek to maintain or increase their competitive position in relation to other West Coast ports by developing deeper channels and berths to accommodate increasingly larger cargo ships. Should terminal operations at the ports increase, on-shore activities such as freight handling, trucking, and intermodal rail services would also likely increase, leading to job growth in those related sectors. However, such economic growth depends on many factors unrelated to dredging, such as macro-economic factors, commodity shipping patterns, and marketing efforts. In addition, any demands for additional employees resulting from these activities can be expected to be met by the local populations (USACE and the Port of Oakland 1993).

Other new-work projects could include expansion of ship building facilities, bulk shipping terminals, or commercial fishing capacity, as well as new private marinas and residential communities such as Bel Marin Keys, in Marin County. There are, however, many factors other than the availability of disposal capacity that contribute to the practicability of such new dredging projects. At this point it is impossible to project the number, location, and scope of such projects. Any growth-inducing impacts from individual new-work projects will be appropriately addressed in site-specific environmental reviews.

While it is impossible to predict military dredging needs and expenditures in the future, current plans for Bay Area military facility consolidation and existing base closures make growth in that sector unlikely. Removing uncertainties about dredging may make the Bay Area more attractive for expanding existing military facilities or developing new ones, but dredging issues will likely play a very small role in future siting or expansion decisions.

The growth-inducing effect of regulatory certainty on other dredging-dependent industries is even less clear. Commercial fishing, ship repair, and tourism and recreation-based industries may realize economic benefits through faster project approval and reduced regulatory burdens. However, it is unlikely that such benefits alone could result in substantial growth in any particular industry or location within the LTMS study area. These industries make up less than one-half of one percent of total regional maritime economic activity (LTMS 1990a).

By contrast, the analysis relies on high estimates of maintenance dredging based on historic averages. These estimates include continued maintenance dredging at five military facilities slated for closure. These facilities, therefore, are expected to remain in

operation, although the distinct future uses and dredging requirements are not currently known.

Therefore, under these assumptions, employment at these facilities cannot be expected to increase due to dredging.

There should be no substantial growth-inducing impacts associated with developing additional upland or wetland reuse sites. However, the availability of material for Delta levee repair and maintenance may contribute to increased restoration and repair activities beyond those currently performed. These activities would not be considered growth, rather, they would represent accelerated maintenance of an existing development type (levee work). It is more likely that dredged material for levee repair will provide a replacement for other (upland) material sources.