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## **40. Erie Pier Capacity**

### **Recommended Actions:**

Indefinitely extend the life of the Erie Pier Dredged Materials Processing Facility by processing and reusing as much dredged material as possible and, if necessary, relocating non-reusable dredged materials to an inland disposal facility.

### **Implementors:**

US Army Corps of Engineers and the Seaway Port Authority of Duluth with assistance and advice from the Harbor Technical Advisory Committee (HTAC) of the Metropolitan Interstate Committee (MIC)

### **Actions Taken:**

8/95: Response from MIC and US Army Corps of Engineers.

11/00: The Corps did a 20 Year Dredged Materials Management Plan that recommended dredged materials be used to create habitat enhancement at the 21st Avenue West slip area. In reviewing the project proposal, the MPCA identified a number of water quality concerns and issues that need to be addressed prior to issuing an approval (401 Certification) for the project. The Corps environmental assessment for the project did not adequately address these issues and further assessment will be necessary by implementors before the MPCA can consider 401 Certification. The biggest issue related to existing contamination in the project area and whether creating a wetland habitat in the area would sufficiently address the contamination. If Erie Pier capacity is reached dredging will have to stop. This will result in lake carriers being forced to lighten their loads which will greatly increase their shipping costs. The Port Authority has removed some dredged materials for projects. A pilot study by the Corps has used the nutrient rich dredged materials to reclaim mining sites on the Iron Range. The cost of transporting the dredged material to the Range is high. One suggestion being explored is putting the dredged material in the empty taconite railroad cars for transport back to the Range. Also, Hallett Dock Company has started a "pilot" processing facility at Erie Pier to produce topsoil. They will investigate the feasibility/profitability of an on-going operation and have had a lot of inquiries and interest in the product (mixture of dredged materials with peat).

### **Project Status:**

This project does not appear to have a plan in place to address the problems stated. A plan of action needs to be established.