

**Early Notice and Public Review of a Proposed Activity
in a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard Designated Floodplain**

To: All interested Agencies, Groups and Individuals

This is to give notice that the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under 24 CFR Part 50 has determined that the following proposed action under the HUD Fiscal Year 2023 Economic Development Initiative (EDI) Community Project Funding (CPF) Grant B-23-CP-AL-0018 is located in the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) floodplain, and HUD will be identifying and evaluating practicable alternatives to locating the action within the floodplain and the potential impacts on the floodplain from the proposed action, as required by Executive Order 11988, as amended by Executive Order 13690, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 in Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands. The proposed project location is 2001 Ezra Trace Boulevard in the City of Mobile, Mobile County, Alabama. The extent of the FFRMS floodplain was determined using the freeboard approach (base flood elevation plus 2 feet).

The purpose of the proposed improvements is to modernize the support facilities at the McDuffie Terminal site and to prepare the site and a portion of the Mobile River for an anticipated increase in bulk cargo or container ship traffic. The improvements are needed to reconstruct several derelict buildings and infrastructure and to provide a continuous pier and river depth from the existing McDuffie Terminal Dock 3 northward to the existing Choctaw Point Container Terminal Dock 2.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Rate Insurance Map (FIRM), the McDuffie Terminal Improvements project area is located within Flood Zone AE, the Coastal High Hazard Area (Flood Zone VE), and the Limit of Moderate Wave Action (LiMWA). Approximately 43.45 acres of the project area is in Flood Zone AE, and 3.12 acres is in Flood Zone VE. In addition, approximately 6.43 acres of the project area are in the LiMWA. There are no wetlands in the project area.

The McDuffie Terminal Improvements project consists of the demolition of existing derelict buildings and obsolete infrastructure that was previously associated with a coal barge loading operation at the site. A new dock and new buildings will be constructed at the site and a 3.9-acre area within the Mobile River adjacent to the McDuffie Terminal will be dredged to accommodate future bulk cargo or container ship traffic. The obsolete buildings that will be removed include a one-story concrete block electrical building, two two-story metal workshops, a one-story metal office / washroom, a single-story masonry mechanical / electrical warehouse, a one-story foam office / washroom building, and a one-story masonry washroom / lunchroom. The obsolete infrastructure that will be removed includes coal conveyors and hoppers, slurry channels and pump station pits, a sheet pile wall and rip rap, and a barge loadout dock and pier along the Mobile River. The new construction will include a new electrical building, fabrication shop, an employee assembly building and a new 1,268-foot dock along the Mobile River.

The new buildings will be located within Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) AE, defined as the area that will be inundated by the flood event having a 1-percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year (aka, 100-year flood plain and base flood area). designed and constructed with finished first floor elevations at or above the FFRMS elevation. A concrete truck transit area, grading, filling, and drainage improvements will also be constructed to prepare the site for future use. While the new dock sections and related elements will be located within both SFHA VE, (part of the coastal high-hazard area) and the Limit of Moderate Wave Action (LiMWA), they meet the definition of Functionally Dependent Uses under 24 CFR §55.2(b)(7) and the prohibition on activities in areas of coastal high hazard and moderate wave action [§55.8(a)(3)] does not apply. Once the project is constructed, a continuous dock will exist from the existing McDuffie Terminal Dock 3, upriver to the existing Choctaw Point Container Terminal Dock 2. The new dock will consist of a reinforced concrete pier and landside combination wall and will include a rail system to accommodate ship-to-shore cranes, a fender system to protect the structure, bollards, and other standard pier features. Land disturbance will be required to demolish the existing obsolete buildings and obsolete infrastructure and to construct the proposed improvements. The 3.9-acre area within the Mobile River will be dredged to a depth of approximately 54 feet to match the depth of adjacent ship channel and to accommodate future ship traffic. Except for portions of the new dock and dredging within the Mobile River, all work

associated with the McDuffie Terminal Improvements project is located on property owned by the ASPA. No additional property will be required to construct the improvements.

Historically, the entirety of the site has been cleared and developed and has been an active industrial site for many years. Less than 1 percent of the site is vegetated. There are no forested areas or naturally vegetated areas on-site and is maintained as such. Along the periphery of the site there are a few individual species of Chinese tallow trees (*Triadica sebifera*), red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), and sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*). The shrub stratum consists of a few eastern Baccharis (*Baccharis halimifolia*), Chinese tallow, sweet gum, and wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*). Herbacious species consist of cogon grass (*Imperata cylindrica*), bahia grass (*Paspalum notatum*), hilograss (*Paspalum conjugatum*), and crabgrass (*Digitaria bicornis*). Vegetation along the armored shoreline consists of cogon grass, eastern baccharis, earleaf greenbrier (*Smilax auriculata*), and sawtooth blackberry (*Rubus argutus*). Potential impacts to surface water quality are possible as a result of the proposed project. Construction activities (e.g., clearing of vegetation, re-grading existing ground surface, handling construction materials) are anticipated to change some pervious surfaces to impervious surfaces which could change the rate of infiltration. Best Management Practices (BMPs) will treat storm water runoff sufficiently to comply with State Water Quality standard in accordance with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting process.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in floodplain and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Commenters are encouraged to offer alternative sites outside of the floodplain, alternative methods to serve the same project purpose, and methods to minimize and mitigate project impacts on the floodplain. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about floodplain can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks and impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in floodplain, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by HUD at the following address on or before October 10, 2025

Chuck Melton, Region IV Field Environmental Officer
C/O Anita Garrett, Senior CPD Representative
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
The Plaza Building
417 20th Street North, Ste. 700
Birmingham, AL 35203

Comments may also be submitted via email at Chuck.A.Melton@hud.gov. The HUD Approving Official is Karen Morris, Director, Office of Community Planning and Development. A full description of the project may also be reviewed from 8 am to 4:30 pm at 417 20th Street North, Ste. 700, Birmingham, AL 35203

Date: September 25 , 2025