

USACE Technical Representation to the 47th Scientific Group of the London Convention and 18th Scientific Group Meeting of the London Protocol

Impact Statement: The London Convention/London Protocol (LC/LP) is the International Treaty (to which the US is a signatory) governing the disposal of waste and other matter (e.g., dredged material) at sea and serves as the principle international legal instrument underpinning ocean disposal requirements for dredged material outlined in the US Marine Protection Research and Sanctuaries Act (MPRSA). USACE ERDC serves as the key technical resource to the US State Department Delegation to support and defend the use of the US's 108 ocean dredged material disposal areas, ensure compliance with mandatory reporting requirements of the treaty, and to address other environmental concerns (i.e., underwater noise, marine litter and microplastics, munitions and emerging contaminants) under the remit of the treaty.

Dr. David W. Moore (ERDC Environmental Laboratory [EL]) recently attended the 47th Scientific Group Meeting to the London Convention (LC) and the 18th Scientific Group Meeting to the London Protocol (LP) as the USACE Technical Representative to the US State department delegation. The Meetings were held at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) headquarters in London, UK, 15-19 April 2024. The entire US Delegation to LC/LP is shown in Figure 1. A range of issues were discussed at the Meetings including development of guidance for the assessment of marine geoengineering interventions for climate change mitigation and CO₂ sequestration in sub-seabed geological formations, marine litter and microplastics, chemical munitions, underwater noise, and other topics of concern to the contracting parties.

Science Day (a 1-day symposium held during the annual Scientific Group Meeting) was devoted to presentations on carbon sequestration and storage in the marine environment and included presentations on a number of active projects, projects currently in development, and the associated permitting and monitoring strategies that have been deployed or that are under consideration by contracting parties. As chairman of the Intersessional Working Group on Reuse of Waste and Beneficial Use of Dredged Material (BUDM), Dr. Moore presented the Scientific Group with a synthesis report summarizing current state of the science on BUDM. The synthesis document developed by Ms. Jonna Boyda (USACE-ERDC-EL, not in attendance) in collaboration with Dr. Moore was well received with the Scientific Group requesting the Secretariate of the LC/LP (Mr. Frederick Hagg) to publish the document as an LC/LP report and urged the authors to pursue publication in a peer reviewed journal. Dr. Moore also co-chaired the Working Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics and Development of Guidance on the End-of-Life Management of Fiber Reinforced Plastic (FRP) Vessels.



Figure 1. US Delegation to the LC/LP, 15-19 April 2024, London, United Kingdom (UK). (Left to Right seated): Ms. Kirsten Steinke (Bureau of Ocean Energy Management [BOEM]), Ms. Sara Gilliland (US Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds [USEPA OWOW]), Ms. Betsy Valente (USEPA OWOW, Head of Delegation), Mrs. Suzanne Archuleta (US State Department). (Left to Right standing): Ms. Andrea Wilson (Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement [BSEE]), Mr. Joe Maloney (BOEM), Ms. Sena McCrory (USEPA OWOW), Mrs. Shella Biallas (US State Department detailed to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA]), Dr. David Moore (USACE-ERDC Environmental Laboratory [EL] – technical representative), Ms Jen Kenyon (BOEM), and Ms. Alicia Cate (NOAA- Office of Counsel).

This Working Group included delegate representatives from Australia, Canada, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Marshall Islands, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sweden, and the United States; and observers from the Advisory Committee on Protection of the Sea (ACOPS), Greenpeace International, the Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology (IMarEST), and World Organization of Dredging Associations (WODA). The Working Group was charged with finalizing Terms of Reference for an Intercessional Correspondence Group on potential source control measures for reducing/eliminating marine litter and microplastics in LC/LP relevant waste streams (including dredged material) and developing recommended next steps in finalizing guidance for the End-of-Life Management of FRP Vessels. Dr. Moore presented the work group report to the LC/LP Scientific Group and agreed to continue to serve as a Technical Representative to a re-established Intercessional Correspondence Group. Representatives from the contracting parties, intergovernmental, and non-governmental organizations, are shown in attendance at the LC/LP in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Representatives from the contracting parties, intergovernmental, and non-governmental organizations participated in the annual Scientific Group Meeting of the London Convention and London Protocol at the headquarters of the International Maritime Organization, 15-19 April 2024, London, UK.

Funding for ERDC participation was provided through the USACE Dredging Operations and Environmental Research (DOER) and the Advanced Materials and Substances of Emerging Environmental Concern (AMSEEC) Research Programs.

POC: Dr. David W. Moore David.W.Moore@usace.army.mil