

Investigation of Soils Placed Behind Caltrans' Abutments

**Caltrans-PEER Seismic Seminar
June 8, 2009**

**Po Lam
Earth Mechanics, Inc.**

Topics:

- How many bridges were investigated?
- How were the bridges selected?
- What type of soil is placed behind the back wall of Caltrans' bridges?
- What were the significant parameters in the study?
- What were the results of the study?
- What is the confidence level in generalizing your results?
- How did the study influence Caltrans' practice?
- What is the expected performance of abutment backfill?

How Many Bridges were Investigated:

Project from 2002-2006, through an UCSD Contract.

- Two Phase Approach:
- Phase I- Screening for Candidate Sites for Borings.
- Phase II- Conduct Site Investigation.
- During Phase I:

Reviewed 90 grew to 115 Bridge Plans and Boring Logs Statewide for Screening for about 20 sites for more In-depth Investigation, including Site Reconnaissance. Reconnaissance Sites grew to 35 sites.

- During Phase II Data led to Scope of Site Investigation for 10 Sites.
- Actual Phase II Scope:
Boring at 11 Sites including 26 Soil Borings, 22 CPTs and 14 PMT
Plus Bulk Sample Testing at 4 Other Sites

Caltrans Abutment Backfill Requirements

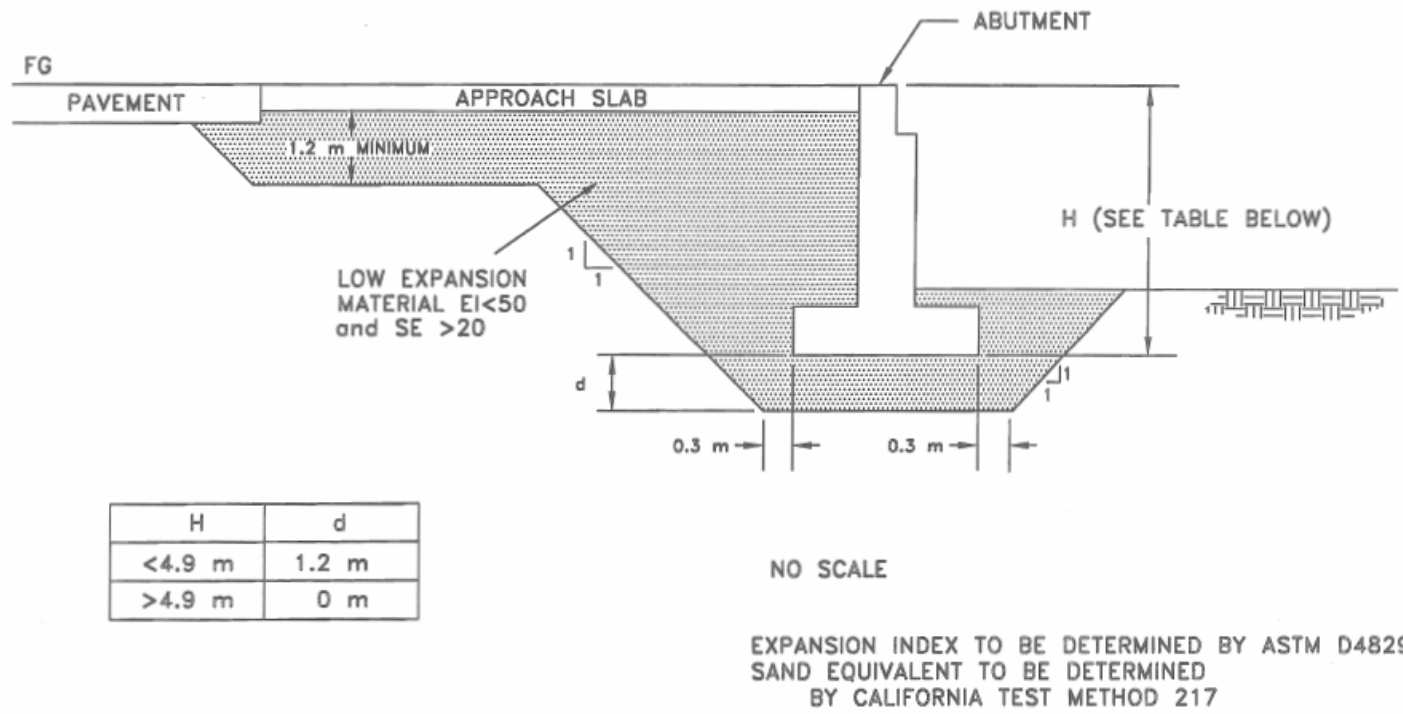


FIGURE 1. CURRENT CALTRANS BACKFILL REQUIREMENTS

- Prior to 1995-96, there is no backfill requirements regarding soil type.
- Caltrans Standard Specifications, 1999a, Sections 19.306 and 19-3.065 contain gradation requirements and a compaction requirement of 95% relative compaction.

Database Compiled in Phase I

Table 1. Bridge Database

Date: 1/19/2005 3:58:15 P

MK/EMI

ID#	Bridge No.	Bridge Name	County	Route	Date Built	Have Plans?	Visited	Candidate for Drilling?	Comments	# of Lanes	Rdwy Width	Latitude	Longitude	Location Description
86	57-0791 S	"E" Street On-Ramp	San Diego	I-5	1992	Y	N	N?	drill thru conc. appr. Slabs	2	11, 13.7	32.6396	-117.0998	Chula Vista, I-5/route 54 intersection
17	23-0213	Allison Drive OC	Solano	I-80	1997	Y	N			4	28	38.3615	-121.9693	Vacaville, just south of Nut Tree Factory
87	57-0935	Ammo Rd OC	San Diego	I-15	1982	Y	N	N		2	8.5	32.8751	-117.1070	Miramar Marine Corps Airstation--Difficult to pinpoint
29	39-0154	Arbutus Rd OC	Merced	I-5	1971	Y	N			2	24.1	36.9643	-120.8824	~7 mi SW of Los Banos
72	54-1107	Archibald Ave Offramp SEP	San Bernardino	I-10	1996	Y	Y	N		2	11.2	34.0676	-117.5933	North of Ontario Airport
51	53-1204	Atlantic Ave OC	Los Angeles	I-405	1963	Y	Y	Y*		4	28	33.8153	-118.1851	Long Beach
54	53-1986	Balboa Boulevard OC	Los Angeles	I-5	1971	Y	N	N	no struct. Plans, T/C diff. @ north abut	2	12.2	34.3209	-118.4964	LA, near I-5/I-210
33	44-0124	Bardin Rd OC	Monterey	US-101	1955	Y	N			2	8.5	36.6610	-121.6230	Near Salinas Municipal Airport--CANT FIND SPECIFIC ON MAP
21	28-0083 S	Barrett Ave UC	Contra Costa	I-80	1997	Y	Y	Y	busy, may require TC	1	7.3	37.9355	-122.3268	Richmond over Barrett Ave
53	53-1605	Barrington Ave	Los Angeles	I-10	1963	Y	Y	N		10	42.7	34.0296	-118.4441	LA, just west of I-10, I-405 intersection
23	34-0047 S	Bay Shore Ave UC	San Francisco	US-101	1950	Y	Y	N	No LOTB avail, busy loc, TC req'd, permit	2	7.9	37.71592	-122.3985	San Francisco, US-101 south of 280
114	51-0234	Beckstead OC	Santa Barbara			N	Y	Y	Collected bulk sample			34.4738	-120.2090	Santa Barbara
43	52-0247	Borchard Rd OC	Ventura	US-101	1962, 1992	Y	N	N	T/C not feas.	2	11.3	34.1844	-118.9256	7.1 mi west of LA County line in Ventura County
34	44-0131 L	Boronda Rd OC	Monterey	US-101	1965	Y	N	N	has MSE walls	2	12.3	36.7220	-121.6599	Salinas
65	54-0415	Bridge Across Colorado River at	San Bernardino	I-40	1966	Y	N	Y?	req. T/C	4	18.3	34.71696	-114.48657	Colorado River Crossing on I-40 at CA/AZ border
50	53-1203	California Ave OC	Los Angeles	I-405	1964	Y	Y	Y		2	17.1	33.8143	-118.1806	Signal Hill
92	57-1083 R/L	Camino Ruiz UC	San Diego	SR-56	2002	Y	Y	Y				32.9580	-117.1553	San Diego, on SR-56 between I-5 and I-15
100	57-1077 L	Carmel Valley Rd UC	San Diego	SR-56	2004	N	Y	Y	Drilled 2/7/04. Collected bulk sample			32.9487	-117.2031	San Diego, on new SR-56 between I-5 and I-15
89	57-0991 S	Carmel Valley UC	San Diego	I-5	1996	Y	Y	Y		2	11.9	32.9326	-117.2410	Del Mar, north of I-5/I-805 merge
48	53-1200	Cherry Ave OC	Los Angeles	I-405	1964	Y	Y	Y*		4	25.6	33.8135	-118.1676	Long Beach
108	53-1353	Coldwater Canyon	Los Angeles	SR-101	1971	Y	Y	Y	Drilled 4/19/04			34.1569	-118.4137	101 over Coldwater Canyon
56	53-2264	Colorado Boulevard SEP	Los Angeles	SR-134	1975	Y	N	N		5	26.5	34.1457	-118.1549	Pasadena

Site Explored Bridges in Phase II

Table 2. Bridge Sites Investigated

Date: 1/19/2005 3:59:06 PM MK/EMI

ID#	Bridge No.	Bridge Name, County	Drilled	Abut Wall Height	Borings/SPT			CPT			PMT		
					No.	Depth (ft)	Setback (ft)	No.	Depth (ft)	Setback (ft)	No.	Depth (ft)	Setback (ft)
27	37-0609	Rte 87/880 SEP Santa Clara	Drilled 1/30/04	13.6 12.2	B-1 B-2	31.5 31.5	42.5 45.0	CPT-1 CPT-2	30.0 30.0	44.5 47.0			
101	57-1078 S	Gonzalez Creek Off-Ramp San Diego	Drilled 2/7/04	8.0	04-1	25.5	2.0	04-1C	17.4	7.0			
100	57-1077 L	Carmel Valley Rd UC San Diego	Drilled 2/7/04, Collected bulk sample	8.0	04-2	22.8	8.0	04-2C	25.0	8.0			
106	55-0257	Harbor Blvd UC (Widen) Orange	Drilled 2/28/04	27.3 10.0 27.3	04-3 04-4	21.5 21.5	13.0 2.0	04-3C 04-4C 04-5C	15.0 20.0 20.0	13.0 3.7 5.0			
107	55-0414	Tustin Ave OC (Widen) Orange	Drilled 3/6/04	20.3 25.4 25.4	04-6 04-7 04-8	21.5 21.5 11.5	5.5 6.5 18.0	04-6C 04-7C 04-8C	20.0 20.0 16.0	16.0 16.0 16.0			
108	53-1353	Coldwater Canyon Los Angeles	Drilled 4/19/04		04-9 04-10	16.5 16.5	5.0 5.0	04-9C 04-10C 04-10P	14.3 14.9 10.0	5.0 5.0 10.0	04-9P 04-9P 04-10P	7.5 12.5 10.0	5.0 5.0 5.0
109	33-0250	Patterson Slough Fremont	Drilled 6/17/04	5.5 5.5	04-11A 04-12A	21.5 21.5	3.0 3.0	04-11C 04-11C 04-11C	20.0 20.0 20.0	3.0 3.0 3.0	04-11P 04-12P 04-12P	5.0 5.0 5.0	3.0 3.0 3.0
110	35-0083	Route 101/84 SEP San Mateo	Drilled 8/13/04		04-14A 04-13A	21.5 21.5	6.0 9.0	04-14C 04-13C	28.0 20.0		04-14P 04-13P	7.5 7.5	6.0 9.0

ID#	Bridge No.	Bridge Name, County	Drilled	Abut Wall Height	Borings/SPT			CPT			PMT		
					No.	Depth (ft)	Setback (ft)	No.	Depth (ft)	Setback (ft)	No.	Depth (ft)	Setback (ft)
112	04-0236	Painter St Humboldt	Drilled 7/1/04	12.3 11.5 12.3	04-15A 04-16A	15.5 14.0	5.0 4.0	04-15C 04-15D 04-16C	14.0 9.5 12.5	4.0 5.0 5.0	04-15P 04-16P 04-16P	8.0 12.5 12.5	5.0 2.0 2.0
111	58-0215	Meloland Rd OC Imperial	Drilled 8/20/04	13.0 13.0	04-17A 04-18A	21.5 21.5	3.0 2.5	04-17C 04-18C	30.0 4.0	3.0 3.0	04-17P 04-18P 04-18P	11.0 7.5 11.5	3.0 2.5 2.5
114	51-0234	Beckstead OC Santa Barbara	Collected bulk sample		04-19	3.0							
84	56-0318	Spruce Street OC (Replace) Riverside	Collected bulk sample		04-20	3.0							
81	56-0380	Jackson St OC (Replace) Riverside	Bulk sample collected		04-21	3.0							
113	53-0687	Santa Clara River (Replace) Los Angeles	Collected bulk sample, Drilled 6/5-6/04		04-22 04-23 04-24	3.0 25.0 25.0	3.0 5.0	04-23C 04-24C	25.0 25.0	5.0 7.0	04-23P 04-24P	5.5 7.5	4.0 4.0
116	42-0388	Maple Ave UC Fresno	Collected bulk sample		04-25	10.0							
Total Count of Bridges Selected: 15				Total Counts: 26 Boreholes			22 CPT's			14 PMT's			

*) Depth is in ft below existing grade. Setback is distance in ft behind back face of abutment wall.

ID#	Bridge No.	Bridge Name, County	Drilled	Abut Wall Height	Borings/SPT			CPT			PMT		
					No.	Depth (ft)	Setback (ft)	No.	Depth (ft)	Setback (ft)	No.	Depth (ft)	Setback (ft)
112	04-0236	Painter St Humboldt	Drilled 7/1/04	12.3 11.5 12.3	04-15A 04-16A 04-16C	15.5 14.0 12.5	5.0 4.0 5.0	04-15C 04-15D 04-16C	14.0 9.5 12.5	4.0 5.0 5.0	04-15P 04-16P 04-16P	8.0 12.5 12.5	5.0 2.0 2.0
111	58-0215	Meloland Rd OC Imperial	Drilled 8/20/04	13.0 13.0	04-17A 04-18A	21.5 21.5	3.0 2.5	04-17C 04-18C	30.0 4.0	3.0 3.0	04-17P 04-18P 04-18P	11.0 7.5 11.5	3.0 2.5 2.5

Final Documentation Report

By Earth Mechanics,
Inc.
Jan. 18, 2005



Research
Documentation
to Caltrans/UCSD
2005



June 8, 2009

Field Boring Program Documentation

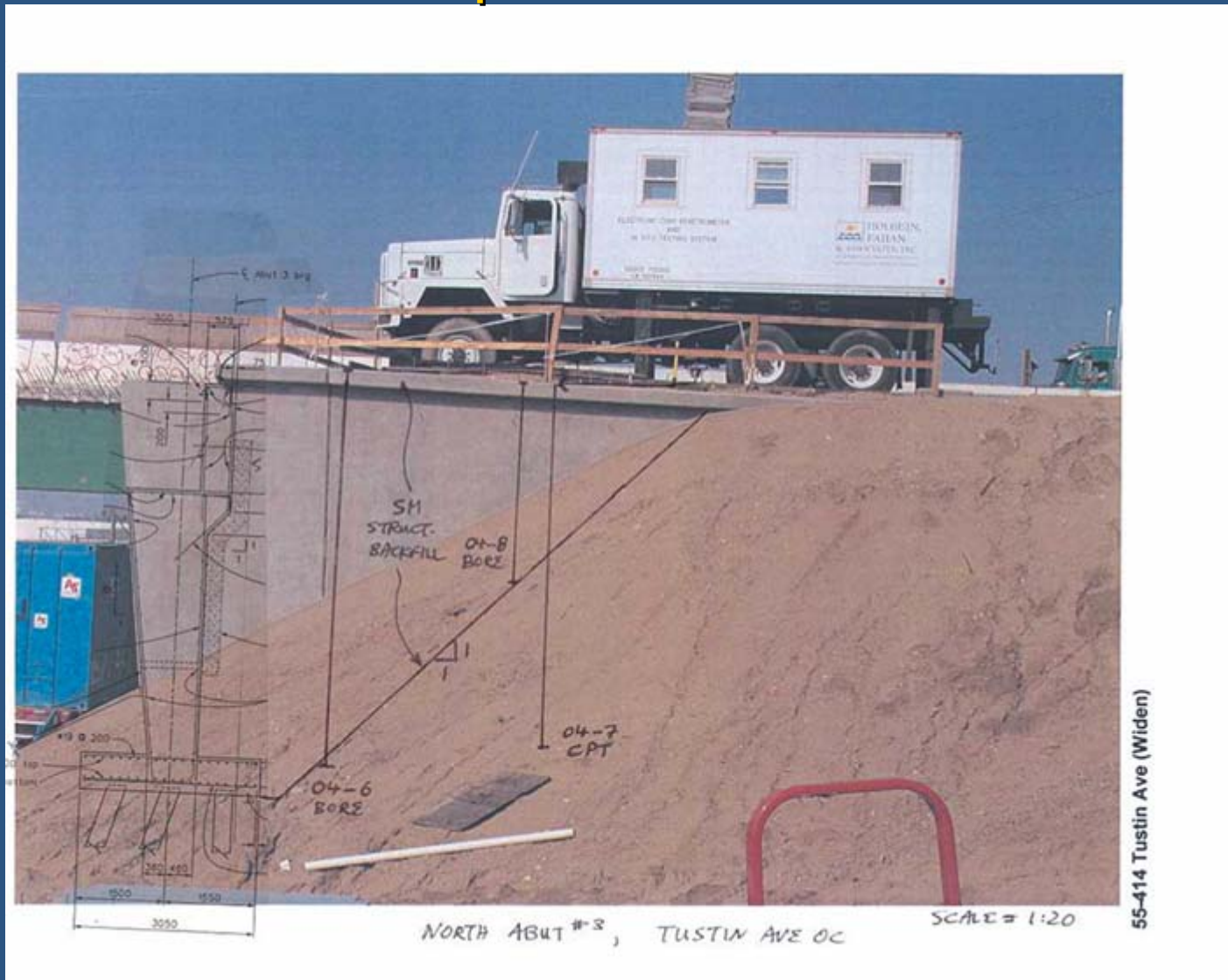
Caltrans Bridge 58-0215, Meloland Rd. OC, Imperial Co.



7-1-04, Painter St, West Abutment
PC Exploration Drilling 04-15A

Soil Borings with Sampling

Verification of Compliance for New Constructions



Backfill Testing behind Bridge Abutment

Caltrans - PEER Seismic Seminar
- Abutment Session

June 8, 2009

10

Seismic Cone Penetrometer Tests

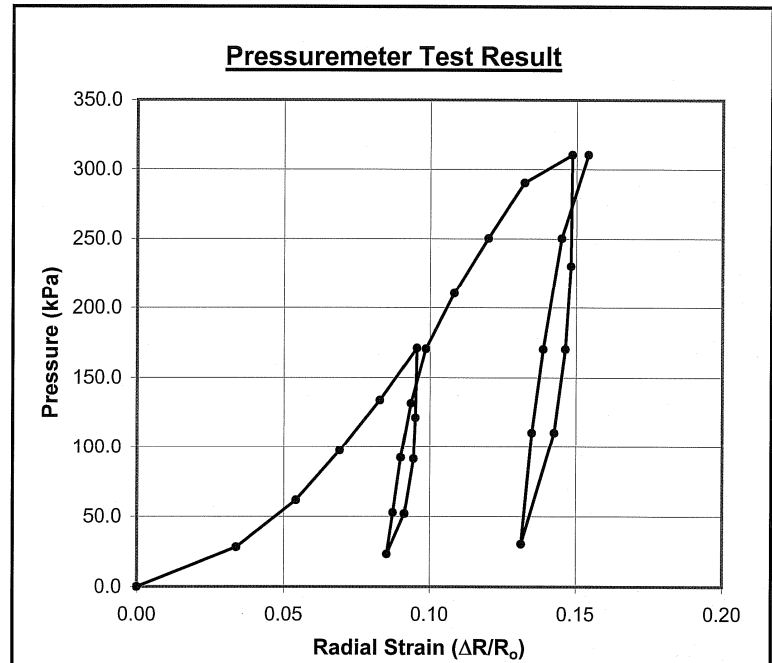


Cone Penetrometer Testing with Seismic Wave Velocity Measurement


Pressuremeter Tests



7-1-04, Painter St, West Abutment
PMT boring 04-15D



Boring No.:	04-18P
Location:	Meloland Overcrossing, Abut#3 Imperial County
Test Date:	8/20/04
Test Depth:	7.5 ft
Soil Type:	Silty Sand with Gravel

 Earth Mechanics, Inc. Geotechnical and Earthquake Engineering	CALTRANS-UCSD / Abutment Research	
	Project No : 02-165	Date : 12/22/2004

In-hole Pressuremeter Testing

Laboratory Triaxial Tests

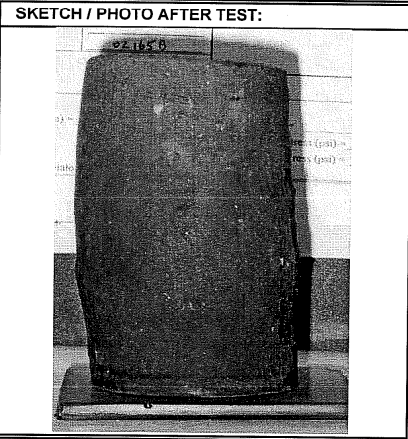
UNCONSOLIDATED UNDRAINED TRIAXIAL TEST ASTM D2850

Project Name: UCSD \ Abutment Research\Carmel Valley Rd UC\San Diego Co. **Project No.:** 02-165
Boring No.: 04-1 **Tested by:** J.R. **Date:** 07/21/04
Depth (ft): 8.5 **Checked by:** _____ **Date:** _____
Sample No.: 4A **Sample Type:** Remolded
Soil Description: Brown, SM/ML **Comments:** _____

	1	2	3	Average:
Diameter (in.):	2.429	2.432	2.43	2.430
Height (in.):	4.930	4.875	5.000	4.935

Moisture Content Calculation	
Wt. Wet Sample + Container (g) :	173.95
Wt. Dry Sample + Container (g) :	161.7
Container (g) : No. _____	8.48
Moisture Content (%) :	8.0

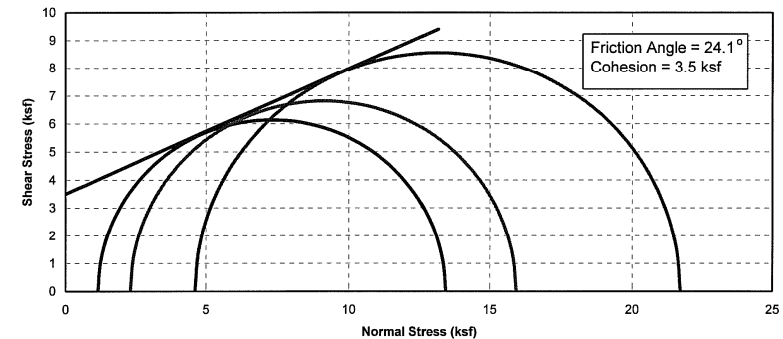
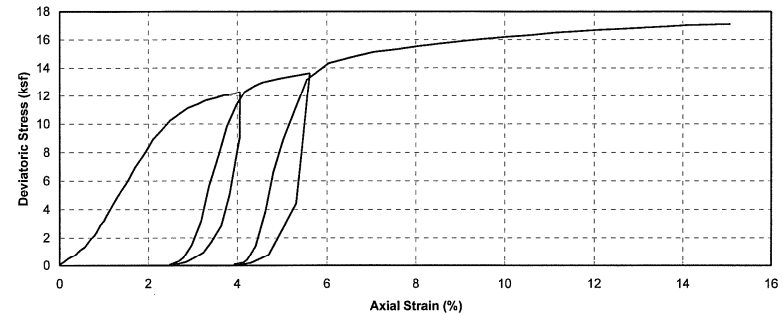
Density and Saturation	
Wt. Wet Sample + Container (g) :	
Container (g) :	
Wet Density (pcf) :	125.0
Dry Density (pcf) :	115.7
Void Ratio :	0.456
% Saturation :	47.4
Gs=2.70 (assumed)	



Shear		At Failure	
Cycle	1, 2, 3	Cycle	1, 2, 3
Confining Stress (ksf) :	1.14, 2.3, 4.6	Deviator Stress (ksf) :	12.29, 13.64, 17.12
Deformation Rate (% / min) :	4	Eff. Minor Principal Stress (ksf) :	1.14, 2.3, 4.6
Failure Criterion: the maximum deviator stress		Eff. Major Principal Stress (ksf) :	13.43, 15.93, 21.72
		Axial Strain (%) :	4.1, 5.6, 15.1



Earth Mechanics, Inc.
Geotechnical and Earthquake Engineering



Boring No.	Sample No.	Depth (ft)	Soil Type	Dry Density (pcf)	Moisture Content (%)	Conf. Stress (ksf) Cycle 1, 2, 3	Max. Dev. Stress (ksf) Cycle 1, 2, 3	Initial Saturation (%)
04-1	4A	8.50	Brown, SM/ML	115.7	8.0	1.14, 2.3, 4.6	12.29, 13.64, 17.12	47.4

Earth Mechanics, Inc. Geotechnical and Earthquake Engineering		Caltrans\UCSD \ Abutment Research UNCONSOLIDATED UNDRAINED TRIAXIAL TEST (ASTM D2850)	
Project No. :	02-165	Date :	07/21/04

Determination of Cohesive Strengths - Silty Sand

Caltrans - PEER Seismic Seminar
- Abutment Session

June 8, 2009

14

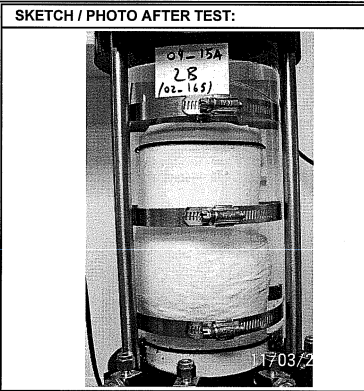
Determination of Cohesive Strengths – Sand with Gravel

UNCONSOLIDATED UNDRAINED TRIAXIAL TEST ASTM D2850

Project Name: UCSD \ Abutment Research \ Painter Street, Humboldt Co **Project No:** 02-165
Boring No.: 04-15A **Tested by:** J.R. **Date:** 11/03/04
Depth (ft): 2.5-7 **Checked by:** **Date:** 11/03/04
Sample No. B-0, S-1, S-2B, S-3A **Sample Type:** composite
Soil Description: Dense coarse sand w/ gravel **Comments:**

	1	2	3	Average:	
Diameter (in.):	2.862	2.862	2.862		2.862
Height (in.):	5.750	5.750	5.750		5.750

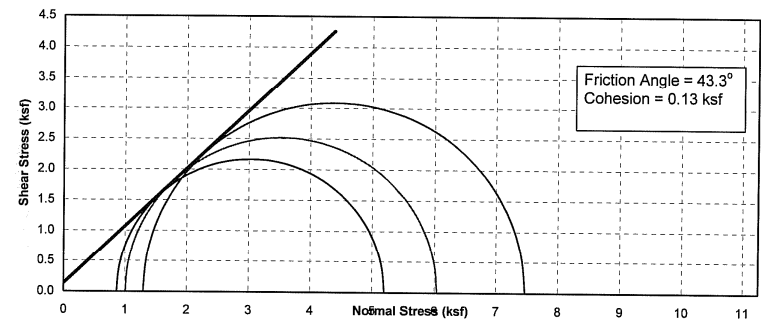
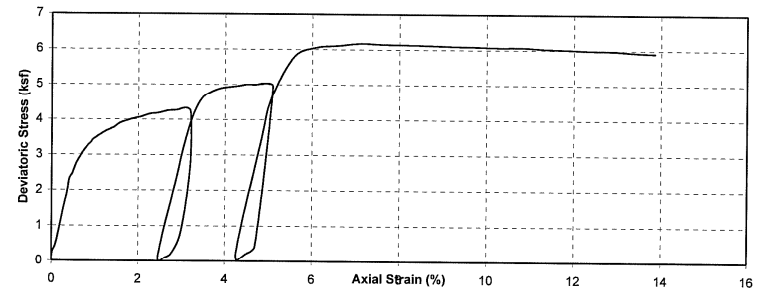
Moisture Content Calculation	
Wt. Wet Sample + Container (g) :	
Wt. Dry Sample + Container (g) :	
Container (g) :	No. _____
Moisture Content (%) :	4.0



Density and Saturation	
Wt. Wet Sample + Container (g) :	
Container (g) :	
Wet Density (pcf) :	134.7
Dry Density (pcf) :	129.5
Void Ratio :	0.301
% Saturation :	35.9

Gs=2.70 (assumed)

Shear	Cycle			At Failure	Cycle		
	1,	2,	3		1,	2,	3
Confining Stress (ksf) :	0.87,	1.01,	1.3	Deviator Stress (ksf) :	4.33,	5.04,	6.18
Deformation Rate (% / min) :	4			Eff. Minor Principal Stress (ksf) :	0.87,	1.01,	1.3
Failure Criterion:				Eff. Major Principal Stress (ksf) :	5.2,	6.04,	7.47
the maximum deviator stress				Axial Strain (%) :	3.1,	4.9,	7.1



Boring No.	Sample No.	Depth (ft)	Soil Type	Dry Density (pcf)	Moisture Content (%)	Conf. Stress (ksf)	Max. Dev. Stress (ksf)	Initial Saturation (%)
04-15A	Composite	2.5-7	Dense coarse sand w/ gravel	129.5	4.0	0.87 1.01 1.3	4.33 5.04 6.18	35.9

Earth Mechanics, Inc.		Caltrans \ UCSD \ Abutment Research	
Geotechnical and Earthquake Engineering		UNCONSOLIDATED UNDRAINED TRIAXIAL TEST	
Project No. :	02-165	Date :	11/03/04
		(ASTM D2850)	

Determination of Cohesive Strengths – Sand with Gravel

**Table 4 SOIL TYPE CATEGORIES
CT-UCSD/ABUTMENT RESEARCH PROGRAM**

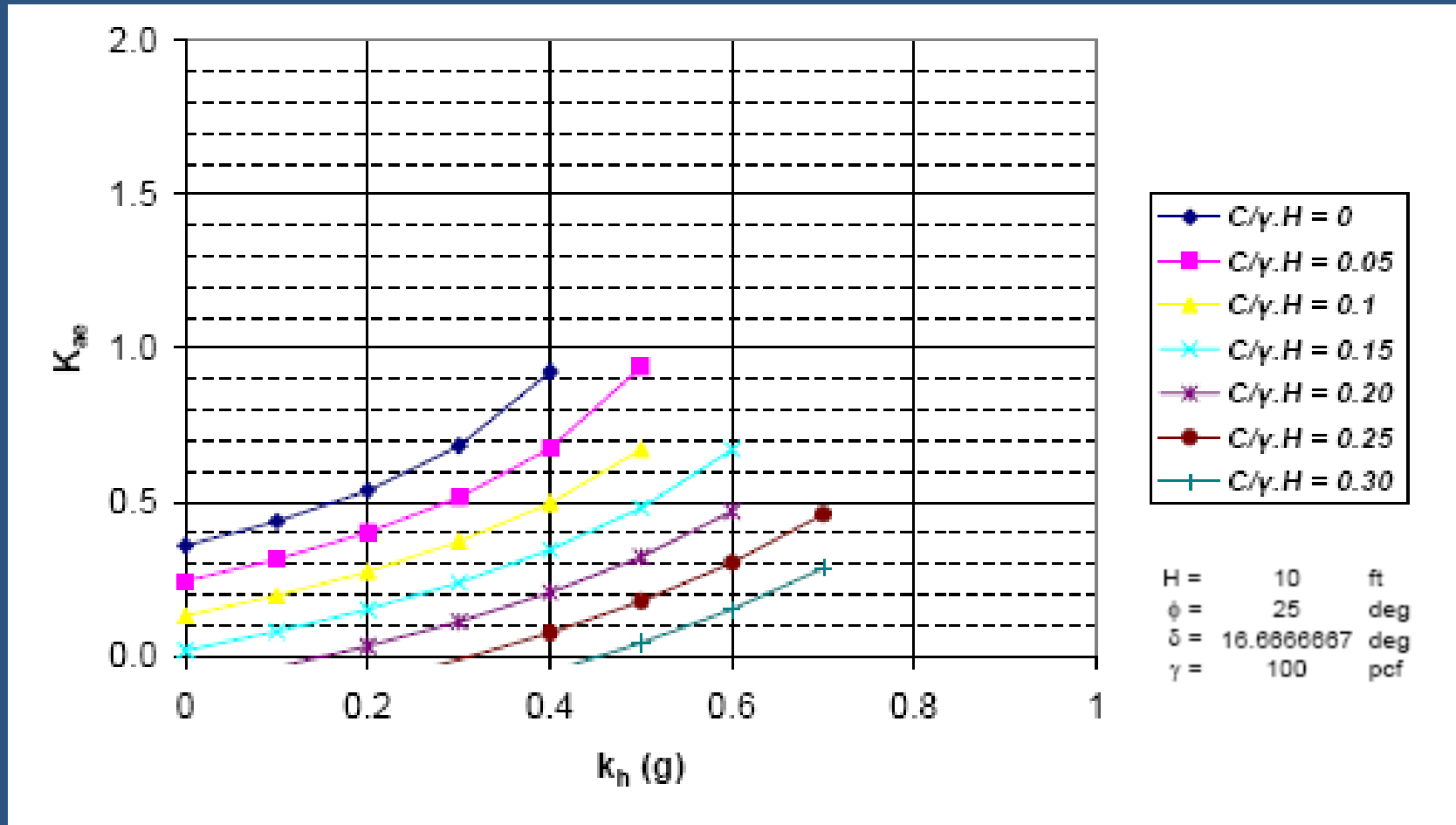
Soil Type Categories		Number of bridges	Number of samples tested	Depth (ft)	Sand grain size	Plasticity	SPT Blow-count	Field Moisture Content	Field Dry Density	Grain Size Distribution			Plasticity	Sand Equivalent	Expansion Index	Compaction		Shear strengths of compacted soil (95% R.C.)			Shear wave velocity	Secant Modulus	Secant Modulus
							N _{SPT}	w	ρ _d	Gravel	Sand	Fines	PI	SE	EI	γ _{d,max}	w _{opt}	ρ _d	φ	c	v _s	initial E _s	reload E _r
							(bpf)	(%)	(pcf)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(-)	(-)	(pcf)	(%)	(pcf)	(deg)	(ksf)	(fps)	(MPa)	(MPa)
I	DENSE TO VERY DENSE SANDS WITH GRAVEL	2	2	2.5-7.5	coarse	none-low	52-59	3-6	120	8-25	70-79	5-13	<5 (0)	37-43 (40)	0-7	NM	NM	125-130 (125)	35-43 (38)	0.13-0.3 (0)	700-1,000 (800)	2-4	10-15
II	MEDIUM DENSE SILTY SANDS, SOME WITH GRAVEL	9	10	0-9.5 (0-5)	fine-coarse	none-low	9-15	5-14	105-120	1-28	60-87	12-35	5-10 (8)	21-52 (34)	0-2	109-127	8-12	116-127 (120)	24-35 (33)	0.25-1.5 (0.5)			
III	MEDIUM DENSE CLAYEY SANDS, SOME WITH GRAVEL	4	4	5-10	medium coarse	low	20-44	7-15	113-114	0-8	50-60	35-50	6-14 (10)	11	0	NM	NM	116-125 (120)	22.5-24 (23)	1.3-6 (2)			
IV	STIFF-HARD CLAYS WITH FINE TO COARSE-GRAINED SANDS, SOME WITH SILTS	5	10	5-12.5	fine-coarse	medium-high	18-35	14-29	90-116	0-3	25-35	62-75	12-11 (22)	0-3 (0)	20-77	114-122	17-22	106-122 (110)	0-17 (6)	1-8 (3.5)			

Typical parameters are in ()
NM=Not measured

Interpreted Backfill Properties

Most Significant Aspects of Backfill Property for Design

- Cohesive Strength Parameter for Design, Especially for Sandy and Gravelly Soils for the Seismic Load Case



Influence of c on Earth Pressure Coefficient for Cohesionless Soils

Caltrans - PEER Seismic Seminar

- Abutment Session

How Reasonable is a zero c Assumption?



THANK YOU!