

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Environmental Assessment for Long Range Discrimination Radar Performance Testing, Clear Air Force Station, Alaska

BACKGROUND: The Missile Defense Agency (MDA), in cooperation with the Department of the Air Force (DAF) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with conducting time-constrained performance testing and associated activities for the Long Range Discrimination Radar (LRDR) located at Clear Air Force Station (CAFS), Alaska. The LRDR system supports defense of the United States (U.S.) and the congressional mandate to deploy the LRDR to protect the U.S. against long-range missile threats by December 31, 2020. A work delay at CAFS has impacted the deployment date for the LRDR.

The attached EA, which is hereby incorporated in its entirety by reference, was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended; the President's Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500–1508); MDA NEPA Implementing Procedures; the DAF Environmental Impact Analysis Process promulgated at 32 CFR Part 989; and FAA Order 1050.1F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES: The Proposed Action is to conduct time-constrained performance testing of the LRDR capabilities and functions to verify that it functions according to design requirements and meets operational needs prior to integration into the U.S. layered Missile Defense System for continuous operation, and to limit use of affected airspace, through a Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR), during performance testing. The TFR would affect airspace where the performance testing would result in high-intensity radiated fields (HIRF) levels that exceed FAA certification standards for aircraft electrical and electronic systems needed for safety of flight.

MDA would conduct performance testing during constrained time periods for approximately 16 hours daily for 12 to 18 months. From October 1 through April 30, the 16 hours of performance testing would begin at 4 p.m. and end the following morning at 7:59 a.m. Alaska Daylight Time or Alaska Standard Time. From May 1 through September 30, the 16 hours of performance testing would begin at 8 p.m. and end the following day at 11:59 a.m. Alaska Daylight Time. MDA would begin this testing starting in fall 2020, but no earlier than October 1, 2020.

Radio frequency energy generated by LRDR performance testing would exceed FAA HIRF certification standards in airspace outside of the existing Restricted Area at CAFS, R-2206. Therefore, FAA would limit use of affected airspace, through a TFR where performance testing would cause HIRF levels that exceed FAA certification standards during performance testing of the LRDR. Two zones of airspace (Zone 1 and Zone 2) would be subject to the FAA's TFR during LRDR performance testing. These zones surround and partially encompass existing R-2206. The TFR would occur on different days and times in the two zones and would include

restricting visual flight rules flights, issuing a Notice to Airmen providing notice of unavailable instrument flight rules arrival/departure procedures, and rerouting certain instrument flight rules flights.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE: Time-constrained performance testing of the LRDR capabilities and functions would not occur within the timeframe required to meet operational requirements, and MDA would not be able to verify that the LRDR functions according to design requirements and meets operational need. MDA would only be able to test the LRDR in such a way that would contain HIRF within the existing R-2206. No new actions would be taken to limit use of affected airspace. MDA would not meet the congressional mandate to deploy LRDR to protect the U.S. against long-range missile threats because verification of LRDR's capabilities would be incomplete. However, a work delay at CAFS has impacted the deployment date for the LRDR.

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES: In assessing the environmental impacts of the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative, potential effects to 13 environmental categories including airspace, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hazardous materials and wastes, health and safety, land use, natural resources and energy supply, noise, socioeconomics, environmental justice, visual effects, and water resources were analyzed in the attached EA. No significant impacts of an adverse nature from the Proposed Action or the No Action Alternative were identified for any environmental categories.

Cumulative impacts for the Proposed Action were evaluated for the same environmental categories. Following review of the Proposed Action in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, no significant cumulative impacts of an adverse nature were identified.

PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT: A Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Proposed Final EA and unsigned proposed Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for public review and comment was published in local newspapers and posted in local areas. Copies of the Proposed Final EA and unsigned proposed FONSI were placed in local public locations, sent to local governments and organizations, and posted on the MDA internet site at <https://www.mda.mil/system/lrdr>. The public comment period extended from May 4, 2020, through June 2, 2020.

CONCLUSION: The environmental analysis described in the EA, and referenced herein in its entirety, concluded there would be no significant impacts of an adverse nature associated with implementing the Proposed Action. Preparing an environmental impact statement is not required. MDA and DAF are issuing a FONSI. The FONSI determination was made in accordance with all applicable environmental laws.

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ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact.

APPROVE:

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July 17, 2020

DATE

APPROVE:

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July 22, 2020

DATE

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