

Draft FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE NEW
MH-139 ALERT FACILITY AND WASH RACK
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
Joint Base Andrews-Naval Air Facility, MD

Lead Agency: Department of the Air Force

Name of Action: Construction and Operation of a new MH-139 Alert Facility and Wash Rack at Joint Base Andrews-Naval Air Facility (JBA), MD

Description of Proposed Action: The Proposed Action is to construct and operate an approximately 21,000 square-foot (SF) two-story Alert Facility located east of Fairbanks Street, north of the Airfield Transient Ramp, and an approximately 7,900 SF Wash Rack located east of 1st Street, south of Hangar 2.

The Alert Facility and Wash Rack are for the support of the 1st Helicopter Squadron MH-139 Grey Wolf helicopters. The 2022 Installation Development Plan (IDP) and Environmental Assessment (EA) for JBA outlined future projects planned for fiscal years 2022 through 2026, which included the development of proposed bed-down support facilities for the MH-139 at JBA. The EA, which implemented the 2022 IDP, resulted in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). This 2023 EA for the MH-139 Alert Facility and Wash Rack covers site specific updates to these project plans that occurred since the signing of the 2022 IDP EA and FONSI.

The construction of the Alert Facility would include mission control spaces, crew quarters, restrooms, laundry facilities, storage rooms, kitchen equipment, indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, fire detection and suppression systems, utilities, exterior lighting, security systems, a back-up generator, landscaping, concrete walkways, stormwater management and antiterrorism/force protections (AT/FP). The proposed location for the new Alert Facility is a developed site and the Limit of Disturbance (LOD) would be approximately three acres. The existing 8,100 SF Alert Facility (Building 1911) is located on the proposed site and would be demolished prior to construction of the new Alert Facility. Temporary facilities consisting of a maximum of three trailers would continue scaled-down operations during construction and would be located in an open space adjacent to the proposed Alert Facility LOD. These facilities would be removed once the new Alert Facility is operational.

The construction of the Wash Rack would include a fully enclosed wash rack pad, a 240 SF utility storage building, a sediment trap and holding tank, an oil-water separator, and connection systems for water and sanitary sewer. Additional support systems would include fire detection/protection, utilities, site improvements, landscaping, concrete facility aprons, and walkways. The proposed location for the new Wash Rack was previously cleared and is currently maintained as a mowed area. The total acreage of the LOD for the Wash Rack would be approximately two acres.

Facility design would be compatible with applicable Department of Defense (DoD), U. S. Air Force (USAF), and base design standards. Local materials and construction techniques would be used when cost effective. The facilities would be designed as permanent construction in

accordance with DoD United Facilities Criteria (UFC) 1-200-01, *General Building Requirements*, UFC 1-200-02, *High Performance and Sustainable Building Requirements*, and UFC 3-260-01 *Airfield and Heliport Planning and Design*. The project would comply with DoD AT/FP requirements per UFC 4-010-01 *DoD Minimum Antiterrorism Standards for Buildings* and Air Force Instruction (AFI) 32-9010, *Management and Reporting of Air Force Space and Building Services in OSD Assigned Facilities and in the Washington DC Area*.

Alternatives Evaluated: In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1970, an EA is being prepared to evaluate the potential environmental, cultural, transportation and socioeconomic impacts associated with the Proposed Action.

NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations mandate the consideration of reasonable alternatives for the Proposed Action. “Reasonable alternatives” are those that also could be utilized to meet the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action. Per the requirements of 32 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §989, the USAF Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP) regulations, selection standards are used to identify alternatives for meeting the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action.

The USAF evaluated several alternatives for the Alert Facility and the Wash Rack, but eliminated all but one because they did not meet the selection standards JBA set for the new facilities, or legal or DoD requirements.

As required, a No Action Alternative was also included in the EA which reflects the status quo and serves as a benchmark against which Federal actions can be evaluated. Under the No Action Alternative, the new Alert Facility and the new Wash Rack would not be constructed and the existing Alert Facility would continue to support the Alert Crew mission and personnel. The No Action Alternative would not meet current and projected mission requirements and would not be able to provide the necessary facilities for the new MH-139 helicopter.

Anticipated Impacts: The Proposed Action is expected to result in short-term minor adverse impacts to surface water and stormwater; wildlife; noise; air quality and greenhouse gases. It is expected to result in both short- and long-term, minor adverse impacts to soils and topography; vegetation; infrastructure and utilities; and traffic and transportation. It is expected to result in long-term, negligible impacts to surface water and stormwater; wildlife; and noise. It is expected to result in short- and long-term minor beneficial impacts to socioeconomics. No impacts are expected to land use; geology; groundwater, floodplains, coastal zone, and wetlands; rare, threatened and endangered species; hazardous and toxic materials and waste; cultural resources; safety and occupational health, environmental justice and protection of children; and airspace.

The No Action Alternative would have long-term adverse impacts to utilities as a result of the continued deterioration of the existing Alert Facility. There would be no impacts to the locations for the proposed Wash Rack and temporary facilities locations as site conditions would remain unchanged.

Public Involvement: Per the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800); Section 7 of the Endangered

Species Act (ESA) and implementing regulations; the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA); and Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA); findings of effect and request for concurrence were transmitted to the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Because the Proposed Action is located within Maryland's Coastal Zone, a consistency determination was drafted, and sent to the Maryland Coastal Zone Management Program for review. JBA also initiated consultation with the following agencies for the proposed project: Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Maryland State Clearinghouse Office of Planning, Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), Prince George's County Department of Planning, National Capital Parks-East, and National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC). JBA did not coordinate with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) because no marine resources will be impacted from this project.

Consultation for Section 106 was submitted 21 February 2023. Concurrence indicating a finding of no effect for the construction of the new Alert Facility and Wash Rack was sent by the MHT on 21 March 2023. On 25 May 2023, a report was generated through the Information for Planning and Conservation (IPaC) system, the USFWS online system for searching for species protected under the ESA, which noted that one protected species – the Northern Long-Eared Bat (NLEB) – has the potential to occur within the vicinity of the Proposed Action areas. USFWS consultation provided on 05 September 2023 determined that the project was “not likely to adversely affect” the NLEB and no further Section 7 consultation was required.

A Notice of Availability (NOA) was published in the *Maryland Independent* and *The Enquirer-Gazette*. The NOA was also provided to interested agencies/parties on 8 December 2023.

Following the NOA, the Draft EA and Draft FONSI were made available for public review for 30 days starting on 8 December 2023 online on the JBA environmental website, <https://www.jba.af.mil/About/Environmental-Mission/>.

Finding of No Significant Impact: *Anticipated Wording: After a review of the EA, I have determined that the Proposed Action evaluated may be selected for implementation. I have concluded that implementation of the Proposed Action will have no significant impacts to the natural environment, cultural resources or human environment. Based upon the aforementioned, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.*

Date: _____

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