

Air National Guard F-15EX Eagle II & F-35A Lightning II Operational Beddowns Environmental Impact Statement



What's inside this Fact Sheet:

- ▶ A review of the proposed action
- ▶ An overview of the public comment process
- ▶ An overview of public comments received during the comments process
- ▶ A summary of what is next in the process

Previous Fact Sheets:

Fact Sheet #1 Included a review of the proposed action public meetings schedule, and link to the project website

Proposed Action

The United States Department of the Air Force and National Guard Bureau (NGB) propose to maintain the combat capability of the Air National Guard (ANG) fighter wings currently flying the F-15C/D aircraft. These aircraft have reached the end of their lifespan and will be retired due to safety and maintenance concerns. These fighter wings include the 104th Fighter Wing (104 FW) at Westfield-Barnes Regional Airport (BAF) in Westfield, Massachusetts (MA); the 144th Fighter Wing (144 FW) at Fresno Yosemite International Airport (FAT) in Fresno, California (CA); and the 159th Fighter Wing (159 FW) at Naval Air Station (NAS) Joint Reserve Base (JRB) New Orleans, in Belle Chasse, Louisiana (LA). The proposal is the beddown, operation, and associated infrastructure construction of one squadron of F-15EX Eagle II (F-15EX) aircraft at two of these fighter wings and one squadron of F-35A Lightning II (F-35A) aircraft at one of the fighter wings. These aircraft would replace the aging F-15C/D fighter aircraft at the selected wings. It is also conceivable that one or more of these fighter wings would retain the legacy F15C/D aircraft for the foreseeable future and implement construction to support these legacy aircraft. It is also possible that the 144 FW could relocate to NAS Lemoore, CA. For more information: www.ANGF15EX-F35A-EIS.com



Public Scoping

Public involvement is an integral part of the Environmental Impact Analysis Process, which requires full disclosure of potential environmental impacts to the public and encourages public involvement. The public has an important role in providing input during this process to help the NGB make more informed decisions about implementing this proposal. The first opportunity for public involvement is the process called "public scoping." The scoping period for this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) began with publication of the "Notice of Intent" in the Federal Register on July 19, 2022, and formally extended through September 2, 2022.

Through the initiation of the scoping process, the NGB notified the public, government agencies, and other interested parties about the proposal, the public scoping period, and associated public meetings. The NGB held virtual and in-person public meetings in August 2022 for each of the alternative locations.

The NGB utilized several methods to notify the public of opportunities for involvement and methods to comment on the proposal. These methods included: an announcement in the Federal Register; mailing of letters and a fact sheet to relevant federal, state, tribal, and local agencies; placement of newspaper advertisements, media press releases, and social media postings; distribution of flyers to nearby community centers and businesses; and a website posting relevant information.

Public Comments

The NGB received a total of 79 written comments from individuals, organizations, and government agencies during the official public comment period (July 19 to September 2, 2022); 33 comments were related to the Fresno location, 5 to Lemoore, 33 to Barnes, 7 to New Orleans, and 1 to unknown. The NGB reviewed public comments received during the scoping period to ensure that relevant concerns are addressed in the Draft EIS. The following is a summary of the most frequent comments received during the comment period:

- ▶ Comments expressing general support or general opposition to the proposed action
- ▶ Comments expressing preference for aircraft model (F-15EX vs F-35A)
- ▶ Comments expressing preference for location and concerns related to socioeconomic impacts, particularly in the case of Fresno and Lemoore, which are relatively near each other
- ▶ Noise and vibration, particularly as it relates to the F-35A
- ▶ Air quality
- ▶ Other environmental resource areas, including wildlife, water, airspace, flight operations, environmental justice, transportation and traffic, domestic animals, and cumulative impacts when considered with other projects in the area

Written Comments are Still Welcome!

Written comments are welcome throughout the Environmental Impact Analysis Process, although they may not be specifically addressed in the Draft EIS as publication of the document nears. Written comments may be submitted in any of the following ways:

- ▶ Via the project website at www.ANGF15EX-F35A-EIS.com
- ▶ Via the project email at NGB.A4.A4A.NEPA.COMMENTS.org@us.af.mil
- ▶ By U.S. Mail to: EIS Project Manager, National Guard Bureau, NGB/A4AM, Shepperd Hall, 3501 Fetchet Ave., Joint Base Andrews MD 20762-5157

Please note that by including your name and address on correspondence, it will be used to compile a mailing list for distributing future information regarding the EIS. Names will appear in the EIS. Phone numbers, emails, and physical addresses will not be published.

What's Next

The Draft EIS is scheduled for release in or around September 2023 and will address public comments identified during the scoping process. However, this schedule may change as this is a fluid process. The Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Draft EIS will be published in the Federal Register at least 15 days prior to the Draft EIS public meetings, which are anticipated in October 2023. At the Draft EIS public meetings, the public will have an opportunity to see the results of the analysis and how the NGB addressed their concerns, ask questions, make statements for the public record, and submit additional comments.

EIS Project Manager
Shepperd Hall
National Guard Bureau
NGB/A4AM
3501 Fetchet Ave.
Joint Base Andrews MD 20762-5157

The EIS Timeline

Notice of Intent Published in Federal Register - July 19, 2022

Scoping Period -
July 19, 2022 through September 2, 2022

Preparation of Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Summer 2023

Public Comment Period

Preparation of Final Environmental Impact Statement - Spring 2024

Notice of Availability of Final Environmental Impact Statement - Spring 2024

30-Day Waiting Period

Record of Decision - Summer 2024

Opportunities for Public Involvement