

**PROPOSED FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR  
PACIFIC SPACEPORT COMPLEX–ALASKA  
MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM FLIGHT TEST SUPPORT  
SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**AGENCY:** Missile Defense Agency

**ACTION:** Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

**BACKGROUND:**

This Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been prepared by the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) to analyze the impacts of new test scenarios integrating a sea-based weapon system and air-breathing targets (i.e., missiles with an engine requiring the intake of air for combustion of fuel) from the Pacific Spaceport Complex Alaska (PSCA) with intercepts over the broad ocean area (BOA) into the flight test scenarios described in the MDA 2017 *Pacific Spaceport Complex Alaska Ballistic Missile Defense Flight Test Support Environmental Assessment*. The overall number and frequency of flight tests described in the MDA PSCA 2017 EA would not change. The MDA PSCA 2017 EA, which is hereby incorporated by reference, considered flight tests of various Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) systems from the PSCA, to include Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), Patriot Weapon System (Patriot), and similar defensive weapon systems.

**DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION:**

The MDA proposes to enhance ongoing intercept flight tests conducted at the PSCA by integrating the sea-based Aegis BMD with the land-based weapon systems being tested at the PSCA and to engage air-breathing targets in addition to the ballistic missile targets previously analyzed. In the new test scenarios, target and intercept debris for some of the flight tests may fall closer than 10 nautical miles (nm) from land near Kodiak Island. The Proposed Action would differ from the MDA PSCA 2017 EA in three main respects:

1. Proposed integrated flight tests could include an Aegis BMD ship operating in the Pacific BOA, integrating its flight test activities with land-based defensive weapon systems located at the PSCA. The ship could launch interceptor missiles as part of the tests.
2. In addition to ballistic missile targets evaluated in the MDA PSCA 2017 EA, proposed flight tests could include air-breathing targets to be engaged by an Aegis BMD ship operating in the BOA and/or by land-based defensive weapon systems located at the PSCA.
3. For some nominal flight tests, target missile and intercept debris may fall closer than 10 nm from any land area at or near Kodiak Island. The MDA currently has two such tests planned, but the number and timeframe for such tests are subject to change due to mission priorities.

**ALTERNATIVE CONSIDERED:**

The No Action Alternative would be not to incorporate a sea-based weapon system and additional air-breathing target vehicles into integrated flight tests conducted at the PSCA for the Proposed Action. Activities described in the FAA's EAs (1996, 2016) and the MDA PSCA 2017 EA and FONSI would continue.

## **SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES:**

**System Transport and Preflight Preparations:** The MDA concluded that pre-test activities would have little or no adverse effects on vegetation and wildlife, including protected species, and critical or other environmentally sensitive habitats.

**Flight Test Activities and Post Flight Operations:** Impacts to biological resources resulting from the Proposed Action would not be significant. Some vegetation and common wildlife species could be damaged/injured when Rocket Assisted Take Off bottles fall or when they are recovered, but no rare, special-status, or sensitive vegetation or sensitive wildlife occurs in the potential drop zone and no significant impacts would occur. No incidental take of birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act or Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act is expected. As concluded by the MDA for the No Action Alternative, launches as a result of the Proposed Action are not expected to result in take of any Marine Mammal Protection Act listed species (including harbor seals) and would have negligible to no impact on these species.

All launch activities under the Proposed Action would take place in accordance with the avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures as required by PSCA operations procedures and programmatic consultations. No environmentally sensitive habitats occur on PSCA and proposed launch activities at PSCA would not impact any environmentally sensitive habitats. No special-status wildlife are expected to be exposed to direct contact from falling debris. Based on animal densities and debris characteristics, animal exposure to direct contact was estimated. Falling debris is extremely unlikely to affect marine mammals, Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed species, or environmental sensitive habitats in the region of influence.

**Socioeconomics:** For subsistence resources, commercial fishing routes and recreational fishing, routine pre-flight preparation and post-flight activities would not limit any fishing activities and closures during flight tests would be infrequent and temporary. The Proposed Action is the continuation of testing activities that have been ongoing for more than a decade. No impacts to traditional subsistence practices or resources are predicted to result from the Proposed Action.

**Broad Ocean Area:** Transit of the Aegis BMD will not significantly alter the amount of vessel traffic in the region of influence. Due to the sparse and patchy distribution of marine organisms in the BOA, the mobility of marine organisms, and the limited nature of the increase in vessel traffic, no impacts on marine organisms in the BOA are expected from vessel traffic as a result of the Proposed Action. MDA has concluded that the launch activities in the BOA would not affect ESA-listed cetaceans, pinnipeds, sea turtles, fish, or birds in the BOA, would not alter the suitability of any biologically important areas for marine mammal or seabird use, and would not reduce the quality or quantity of Essential Fish Habitat. No significant cumulative impacts would occur.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING ACTIONS:**

### **Socioeconomics:**

- Local fishing vessels would serve as boundary boats during the safety closure periods to warn other mariners of the hazard area and notify the PSCA and the U.S. Coast Guard of any craft within the hazard area. A Notice to Airmen would be issued concurrently with a Notice to Mariners, imposing flight restrictions in the overhead safety and hazard zones.

**Broad Ocean Area:**

- As part of vessel operations for the Proposed Action, standard operating procedures developed by the U.S. Navy to avoid and reduce potential effects to marine mammals and sea turtles would be implemented (within safety requirements). These standard operating procedures include training lookouts and watchstanders to identify and locate nearby marine mammals and sea turtles; maintaining minimum buffer zones (1,500 feet) for surface vessel approach to marine mammals; and maneuvering to avoid interactions and collisions with marine species, including changing speed and/or direction as dictated by environmental conditions and safety requirements.

**PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT:** A Notice of Availability of the Proposed Final SEA and unsigned Proposed FONSI for public review and comment was published in local newspapers. Copies of the document were posted on the MDA website at <https://www.mda.mil/about/nepadocuments.html>. The 30-day public comment period closed on May 24, 2021. Comments received were considered prior to a decision being made on whether to sign the FONSI.

**POINT OF CONTACT:** The point of contact at MDA for question, issues, and information relevant to the SEA is:

Missile Defense Agency  
Attention: Ms. Nora Hawk  
MDA/MSR Environmental  
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**CONCLUSION:** An analysis of the Proposed Action to continue conducting BMD flight tests at PSCA and within the BOA concluded that its implementation would not have a significant environmental impact on the human and natural environment, either by itself or cumulatively with other actions. After thoroughly considering the facts herein, the undersigned finds that the Proposed Action is consistent with existing environmental policies and objectives set forth in NEPA and its implementing regulations. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

**APPROVE:**

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

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LAURA M. DeSIMONE, SES  
Executive Director  
Missile Defense Agency