

United States Air Force, 30th Space Wing, Vandenberg Air Force Base, California

**DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
For
Property Transfer and Infrastructure Demolition
Air Force Downrange Facilities at Molokai, Hawaii**

1.0 Name of Action

The United States Air Force (USAF) Downrange Facilities, located on Molokai, Hawaii (Molokai Facilities) served as a high frequency (HF) receiver site for radio communications to the Hawaiian area of the Western Range (WR). The facility was operated by the USAF 30th Space Wing (30 SW), based at Vandenberg Air Force Base (VAFB) in California beginning in 1965. Prior to use by the USAF 30 SW, the site was utilized by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) since 1961. In August 2007, the USAF determined that the service provided by the instrumentation and 363.673 acres of land at the Molokai Facilities was no longer necessary to support 30 SW activities. The USAF is currently in the process of terminating their lease (General Lease 254, commencement date of January 1, 1998) with the State of Hawaii Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL).

2.0 Description of the Proposed Actions and Alternatives

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action involves the termination of the lease of the property by the USAF and the need to decommission (i.e., demolish, remove, and/or dispose of) the instrumentation and transfer leased Federal property and existing structures onsite back to DHHL, as desired by DHHL.

In accordance with the lease agreement between the USAF and DHHL, the property must be returned to its original condition prior to transfer. Based on the lease agreement, the land is required to be returned to DHHL to pre-existing original conditions and this is why action at the site is required and why the EA is required. All site improvements constructed by the USAF and/or their predecessor agency, the FAA, including instrumentation and supporting infrastructure, must be demolished and removed from the site; however, the DHHL has expressed interest in keeping the buildings. Therefore, under the Proposed Action the three buildings would not be demolished, as desired by DHHL. The following structures/improvements and ancillary instrumentation will be part of the decommissioning:

- Antenna-related concrete anchors, piers, wooden support poles, ground screens, and associated underground conduit, cabling, and hardware will be removed. Re-vegetation of disturbed soil areas will be performed as a soil erosion minimization measure.
- Contamination will be remediated to acceptable contaminant levels in accordance with Federal, State, and local regulations. Contamination includes hazardous materials, creosote-treated poles, asbestos containing materials (ACM), lead-based paint (LBP), canec, and soils impacted with metals, polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Remediation activities will address solid waste debris piles (and ozone-depleting substance [ODSs] or greenhouse gas [GHGs]), creosote-treated poles, and PCBs.

- Solid waste/debris piles, associated with unauthorized dumping activities on the site, will be properly disposed of in a landfill or recycled, if appropriate.

Alternative Action

The Alternative Action consists of property transfer and remaining antenna infrastructure and building demolition. Costs (mitigation/abatement vs. demolition) will play a role in determining the selected action. Therefore, in addition to decommissioning of the structures/improvements and ancillary instrumentation described above, the Alternative Action includes building demolition as detailed below:

- Building 1 (Receiver Building), a two-story concrete structure, with a basement under part of the ground floor with associated concrete slabs will be removed.
- Building 2 (Generator/Storage Building), a one-story concrete structure with associated concrete slabs will be removed.
- Building 3 (Vehicle Storage Shed/Garage), a one-story corrugated metal structure with associated concrete slabs will be removed.
- The cesspool associated with Building 1 will be removed and closed.
- Re-vegetation of disturbed soil areas will be performed as a soil erosion minimization measure.
- Contamination will be remediated to acceptable contaminant levels in accordance with Federal, State, and local regulations. Contamination includes hazardous materials creosote-treated poles, ACM, LBP, canec, PCBs, and soils impacted with metals, PAHs and PCBs.
- Solid waste/debris piles, associated with unauthorized dumping activities on the site, will be properly disposed of in a landfill or recycled, if appropriate.

No Action

This alternative would maintain the status quo for the Molokai Facilities. Current conditions would remain unchanged. This action is actually not a viable option because the USAF no longer has a need for the site, is in the process of terminating its lease, and is required by its lease agreement with the DHHL to return the property to its original condition prior to transfer.

3.0 Summary of Environmental Consequences

Based on the Significance Criteria delineated in Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR) §11-200-12(b), it is anticipated that the property transfer and infrastructure demolition (the Proposed Action) would not have a significant impact on the environment for the following reasons:

1. There would be no irrevocable loss or destruction of any natural or cultural resource. The impact on flora and fauna and other natural resources is minimal considering the area is already highly disturbed. In addition, the biological survey found no threatened or endangered species occurring onsite. A few native plant species were encountered, and every effort will be made during construction so that only non-native plant species will be removed. Additionally, the archaeological and cultural assessments determined that the project area is not accessed for traditional and customary subsistence hunting, based on past and present archeological studies and oral history sources. The project

site has three historic features. An archaeological monitoring plan will be prepared and implemented during earthwork activities.

2. The range of beneficial uses of the environment would not be curtailed. The current use of the environment would remain unchanged by the Proposed Action.
3. The Proposed Action is consistent with Chapter 344 Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) State Environmental Policy and the National Environmental Policy Act. The Proposed Action is consistent with State and Federal environmental and planning policies.
4. Economic and social welfare of Hoolehua, nearby communities, and the State of Hawaii would not be adversely affected by the Proposed Action.
5. The Proposed Action will not substantially affect public health.
6. The Proposed Action will not involve secondary impacts, such as population changes or effects on public facilities.
7. There is no degradation of environmental quality. The Proposed Action is within the project site; therefore, the environmental quality of the area should remain unchanged or, possibly, improve due to remediation of possible contaminated soils and hazardous materials.
8. Cumulative impacts upon the environment are not significant; nor does the Proposed Action involve a commitment for larger actions. Construction will be organized in such a manner as to limit impacts on the surrounding area.
9. The Proposed Action will not substantially affect rare, threatened, or endangered species, or their habitats in the project site. There are no rare or endangered species, or critical habitat in the project area.
10. Air quality, ambient noise levels, and water quality will not be adversely affected. The Proposed Action will not violate State or National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Significant amounts of green house gases will not be generated, and refrigerants will be recovered. Noise levels during construction will be within allowable standards. Upon project completion, air, noise, and water quality are expected to remain at current levels, if not improve. Both the USAF and USACE have had the opportunity to address the conformity analysis applicability or necessity, and have no significant concerns.
11. Environmentally sensitive areas will not be affected by the Proposed Action. There are no environmentally sensitive areas, such as floodplains, tsunami zones, beaches, erosion-prone areas, geologically hazardous land, estuary, fresh water, or coastal waters, in the project site.
12. The Proposed Action will not substantially increase energy consumption.

4.0 Finding of No Significant Impact

Based on the findings of the Environmental Assessment (EA), the Proposed Action would have no significant impacts to human health or the natural environment. Therefore, issuance of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is warranted, and preparation of an Environmental

Impact Statement (EIS), pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Public Law 91-190) is not required.

The USAF and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) have determined that the Infrastructure Demolition and Property Transfer of the USAF Downrange Facilities at Molokai will have no significant impact on the human environment. This FONSI is based on the attached EA which has been independently evaluated by the USAF and USACE and determined to adequately and accurately discuss the need, environmental issues, and impacts of the Proposed Action and appropriate mitigation measures. It provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an EIS is not required. The USAF and USACE take full responsibility for the accuracy, scope, and content of the attached EA.

Date of Approval

NINA M. ARMAGNO, Colonel, USAF
Commander
30th Space Wing, Vandenberg Air Force Base
U.S. Air Force