

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**

**ADOPTION OF THE MISSILE DEFENSE AGENCY’S FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT STATEMENT FOR LONG RANGE DISCRIMINATION RADAR (LRDR)
OPERATIONS, CLEAR AIR FORCE STATION, ALASKA (CAFS)**

And

**RECORD OF DECISION FOR FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION ACTIONS
TO ACCOMMODATE TESTING AND OPERATION OF THE LRDR AT CAFS UNDER
THE MISSILE DEFENSE AGENCY’S MODIFIED OPERATIONAL CONCEPT**

July 6, 2021

INTRODUCTION

The Missile Defense Agency (MDA) prepared a Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with MDA’s proposed modification of operational requirements and procedures for the Long Range Discrimination Radar (LRDR) located at Clear Air Force Station (CAFS), Alaska.¹ The change in the LRDR operation procedures would create a hazard in areas of the National Airspace System where the high-intensity radiated fields (HIRF) from the LRDR operations would exceed FAA certification standards for aircraft electrical and electronic systems. The EIS includes analysis of the potential environmental impacts of the following actions proposed by the FAA to address this hazard (this Record of Decision [ROD] refers to these actions collectively as “the FAA’s Proposed Action”): (1) establishment of six additional Restricted Areas in the vicinity of CAFS; (2) implementation of temporary flight restrictions (TFRs) until the Restricted Areas are in effect; and (3) changes to federal airways and instrument flight procedures to accommodate the new Restricted Areas. As a cooperating agency on the EIS, the FAA coordinated closely with the MDA and actively participated in the preparation of the EIS.

The potential environmental impacts of the FAA’s Proposed Action and the no-action alternative are fully analyzed in the EIS. A summary of the public involvement and agency coordination is contained in the EIS. MDA and the Department of the Air Force (DAF) issued a joint ROD that was published in the Federal Register on June 24, 2021.

In accordance with FAA Order 1050.1F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*, and regulations and guidance of the Council on Environmental Quality, the FAA has conducted an independent evaluation and analysis of MDA’s Final EIS and adopts it for purposes of making its decision regarding the FAA’s Proposed Action.

¹ The Draft EIS and the Final EIS are available on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s EIS database at <https://cdxnodengn.epa.gov/cdx-enepa-ll/public/action/eis/search/search#results> and on MDA’s website at <https://www.mda.mil/system/lrdr> (accessed June 30, 2021).

BACKGROUND

The LRDR will be a component of the layered Missile Defense System (MDS) with the primary mission to provide continuous and precise tracking and discrimination of missile threats launched against the United States. Discrimination is a critical capability of missile defense because it provides data needed to distinguish lethal missiles from debris and decoys. The LRDR will also assist with assessing incoming threats to more effectively and efficiently activate land-based systems to intercept such threats.

In 2014 and 2016, the U.S. Congress directed MDA to deploy the LRDR no later than December 31, 2020.¹ Deployment of the LRDR is a multistep process that includes siting, construction, testing, and integration of the LRDR into the MDS.

In response to the congressional mandate to deploy the LRDR, MDA completed a siting analysis for the LRDR, which selected CAFS out of 50 candidate Department of Defense (DoD) installations in Alaska and identified a preferred site and alternative site out of six potential sites within CAFS (DoD 2016a). MDA and the Department of the Air Force (DAF) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA), dated June 2016, to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of the LRDR at CAFS. The preferred site and alternative site identified in the siting analysis were evaluated along with a No Action Alternative. The 2016 EA resulted in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), and construction of the LRDR began in July 2017, with site infrastructure construction completion anticipated in December 2021.

When the 2016 EA was developed, the operational concept for the LRDR was to maintain the LRDR in a readiness posture with limited operations, and no additional airspace restrictions were anticipated. Due to emerging threats, MDA adapted the LRDR testing requirements and proposes to modify the LRDR operational requirements and procedures to reflect continuous operations. Under the adapted concept evaluated in the Final EIS, the LRDR would operate on a continuous basis.

MDA, in cooperation with DAF and FAA, analyzed the adapted LRDR performance testing requirements and associated activities in an EA dated July 2020. The 2020 EA evaluated the environmental effects of time-constrained performance testing and associated temporary flight restrictions (TFRs). The EA resulted in a joint FONSI by MDA and DAF in July 2020, and a separate FONSI and Record of Decision by FAA in August 2020. MDA began time-constrained performance testing of the LRDR on March 31, 2021.

THE FAA'S PROPOSED ACTION

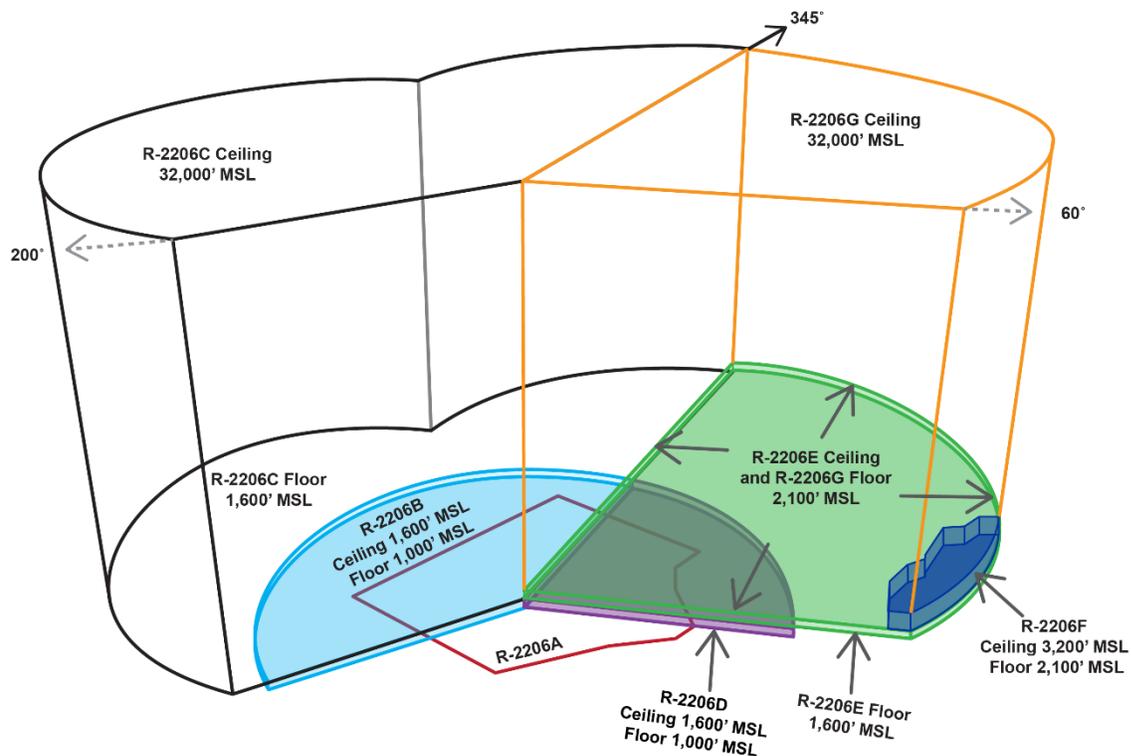
These actions are described below, and more detailed information about the changes to airways and procedures is provided in the Final EIS, Section 3.1, Airspace Management.

¹ See the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2014, Public Law 113-66, Section (§) 235, and the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2016, Public Law 114-92, § 1684.

Proposed Restricted Areas

Under the Proposed Action, the existing restricted airspace at CAFS would be expanded by adding six new Restricted Areas to prevent aircraft from being exposed to LRDR-generated HIRF at levels exceeding FAA certification standards for aircraft electrical and electronic systems. The existing R-2206, with a minor modification,² would be renamed R-2206A, and the six new Restricted Areas would be identified as R-2206B through R-2206G. The proposed Restricted Areas are described in detail in Section 2.1.2.1 of the Final EIS. Figure 2.1-2 of the Final EIS, showing a perspective depiction of the proposed Restricted Areas, is reproduced below.

Figure 2.1-2 of the Final EIS. Perspective Depiction of Proposed Restricted Areas



R-2206A (existing R-2206; red), R-2206B (light blue), R-2206C (outlined in black), and R-2206G (outlined in orange) would operate continuously. R-2206D (purple), R-2206E (green), and R-2206F (dark blue) would be active only during the following periods:

² The longitude of the northeast corner of the existing R-2206 would be moved by 1 second to maintain a 100-foot buffer of the Alaska Railroad. The legal descriptions of the proposed Restricted Areas are provided in Appendix C.

- Prescheduled maintenance or calibration activities every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday for a 2-hour period beginning at 2:00 a.m. and ending at 4:00 a.m. local Alaska time;
- Prescheduled test or tracking events with notice provided via Notice to Airmen (NOTAM); and
- As necessary in response to national security events, which may not allow sufficient time to publish a NOTAM.

During these times, MDA would allow access by emergency aircraft and medical evacuation flights, as well as aircraft in emergency circumstances, into and out of Clear Airport. The emergency access process, including communication methods, would be defined in a Letter of Procedure coordinated between MDA, CAFS, DAF, and FAA. MDA is working with DoD, FAA, and DAF to identify appropriate notification procedures, which would also be included in the Letter of Procedure, to alert aircraft when R-2206D, R-2206E, and R-2206F are active outside of prescheduled periods, including methods of rapidly notifying pilots of changes in Restricted Area status. The MDA is currently analyzing several options with DoD, the FAA, and DAF to have a notification system in place, tested, and operational by September 30, 2022. Options they are considering include a light system at the airport, radio broadcast (Common Traffic Advisory Frequency [CTAF] type so they can broadcast to local pilots), and real-time data that is sent directly into cockpits (e.g., Automatic Dependent Surveillance - Broadcast [ADS-B], etc.). The proposed Restricted Areas would not become effective until the notification system is in place, tested, and operational. The FAA currently anticipates a December 29, 2022 effective date for the proposed Restricted Areas. To meet this effective date, MDA would have to notify the FAA of the complete implementation of the notification system by September 30, 2022.

Temporary Flight Restrictions

To accommodate LRDR testing before the proposed Restricted Areas are established, FAA would temporarily restrict flight in the same airspace and with the same prescheduled times of use as for the proposed Restricted Areas as described in Table 2.1-1 in the Final EIS.³ Legal descriptions of the proposed TFRs are provided in Section 1.2 of Appendix C of the Final EIS.

During the effective period of the TFRs, aircraft would be restricted from transiting the airspace defined by the TFRs. The FAA would reroute Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) flights around the boundaries of the TFRs. The FAA would issue NOTAMs providing notice of the unavailability of airways J-125 and V-436. J-125 would be unavailable via NOTAM between Anchorage (Navigational Aid [NAVAID]: ANC) and Nenana (NAVAID: ENN), and V-436 would be unavailable via NOTAM between the PUYVO waypoint and ENN. IFR flights currently using the federal airway V-436 would either be rerouted onto V-438, which has a higher altitude floor (i.e., 11,000 feet MSL) than V-436 and would require supplemental oxygen, or be rerouted to the

³The boundaries of the TFRs would be the same as defined in Table 2.1-1. of the Final EIS with the exception that for the TFR corresponding to proposed R-2206F, the boundary “along a path 1/2 NM west of Highway 3, Parks Highway” would be defined using points of latitude and longitude (see Appendix C of the Final EIS for detailed description).

path shown with a red dashed line on Figure 2.1-3 of the Final EIS. This path is referred to in the Final EIS as the West Reroute. IFR flights currently using J-125 would also be rerouted to the West Reroute. Flights cleared for direct flight from Anchorage to Deadhorse would be radar vectored to avoid the TFRs, and Visual Flight Rules (VFR) pilots would detour around the TFRs.

Clear Airport access would be limited every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday from 2:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m. local Alaska time. MDA, CAFS, DAF, and the FAA would coordinate a Letter of Agreement with emergency service providers to enable safe access, landing, and departure at Clear Airport when the airport has limited access. As part of this agreement, MDA would modify HIRF-generating activities to the extent necessary to accommodate emergency flights into and out of the airport.

The existing IFR arrival and departure procedures at Healy River Airport would be available through processes defined in the same Letter of Agreement described above for Clear Airport. Air traffic using two departure procedures at Fairbanks International Airport (MCKINLEY TWO DEPARTURE and PUYVO THREE DEPARTURE) would be coordinated by the FAA to maintain safe separation from the TFRs. The portion of the TAGER EIGHT ARRIVAL procedure at Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport between ENN and Talkeetna (NAVAID: TKA) that uses V-436 would also be unavailable by NOTAM during the TFRs. The FAA would send aircraft direct to the TAGER waypoint where they could resume their approach to Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport.

Federal Airways and Instrument Flight Procedures

Establishment of the proposed Restricted Areas would necessitate changes to federal airways (J, T, and V routes) and instrument flight procedures. These include:

- Establishment of a new federal airway, T-399;
- Amendment of J-125 and V-436; and
- Amendment of six instrument flight procedures:
 - Two departure procedures at Fairbanks International Airport,
 - One departure and two arrival procedures at Healy River Airport, and
 - One arrival procedure at Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport.

These changes are described in more detail, along with explanations of airspace management terminology, in the Final EIS, Section 3.1, Airspace Management, and Appendix C: Airspace Management – Supporting Documentation and Methodology.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the FAA's Proposed Action is to make changes in airspace management to accommodate the operation of the LRDR. The FAA's Proposed Action is needed to protect aviation from the hazard posed by the HIRF resulting from operation of the LRDR.

ALTERNATIVES

In addition to the FAA's Proposed Action, the Final EIS also analyzes the environmental effects of the No-Action Alternative. Under the No Action Alternative, the LRDR would be operated in a manner that would contain HIRF within the existing R-2206, except during a national security crisis. FAA would not take any new actions to limit aircraft outside of the existing R-2206, except as necessary. The No Action Alternative would not meet the congressional mandate to fully support the defense of the U.S. from emerging threats. The LRDR would not meet current operational requirements for the MDS and would not have the ability to adapt to rapidly evolving adversary tactics and technologies. The No Action Alternative, which is the environmentally preferable alternative, would not satisfy the purpose or need for the Proposed Action.

When MDA's Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS was published in the Federal Register on May 17, 2019 (84 FR 22479), MDA had developed a two-tier design for expanding the existing R-2206 to allow for continuous operation of the LRDR. This was the alternative presented to the public and stakeholder groups during scoping. During scoping, MDA and the FAA determined that the two-tier alternative could result in numerous potential impacts.

In order to eliminate or minimize potential impacts associated with the two-tier alternative, MDA and the FAA redesigned the proposed Restricted Areas as part of the Proposed Action. This new design offers greater operational flexibility compared to the two-tier alternative and would decrease impacts on VFR flights. In addition, the restricted airspace was adjusted at key locations to reduce impacts on local air traffic and the Clear Airport. These adjustments included allowing greater access to the airspace overlying the Parks Highway, a feature that is commonly used as a visual navigational aid. With these design changes and applying the selection standards (described in Section 2.1.2.1 of the Final EIS), MDA and FAA determined that the Proposed Action would have fewer impacts than the two-tier alternative and concluded that the two-tier alternative should not be carried forward for further analysis in the EIS.

PUBLIC, AGENCY, AND TRIBAL INVOLVEMENT

The public participation process started with publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS in the Federal Register on May 17, 2019, which started the scoping process. The NOI was also mailed or emailed to identified stakeholders. A copy of the NOI is provided in Appendix B of the Final EIS. Stakeholder groups and the general public were encouraged to provide comments on the Proposed Action through a variety of methods during the scoping process.

During the scoping period, MDA held public scoping meetings in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Anderson, Alaska. The meetings were advertised with printed notices in the Anchorage Daily News, the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, and the Federal Register. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) Tribal Coordinator also made efforts to contact the Tribes and Village Corporations in the project vicinity to communicate information about the public meetings. The meeting arrangements were designed to accommodate the needs of elderly, handicapped, non-English-speaking, minority, and low-income populations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. § 12101–12213, Executive Order (EO) 12898, and U.S. Department of Transportation Order 5610.2(a). A total of 94 attendees signed in at the public

scoping meetings, and most of the attendees were pilots, area residents, and emergency personnel. Table 1.8-1 of the Final EIS provides an overview of the public scoping meetings.

Section 1.8.3 of the Final EIS details the Draft EIS public comment process. MDA's Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS was published in the *Federal Register* on October 28, 2020. Stakeholder groups and the public were encouraged to provide comments on the Draft EIS during the 52-day public comment period, which began on October 30, 2020, and concluded on December 21, 2020. During this time, public comment meetings were held virtually and consisted of an online open house and a telephone public meeting. Details about the online open house and telephone public meeting were published and announced in local news media to encourage public participation and review.

The online open house was a website linked to MDA's project website that featured a three-dimensional concept with posters and videos about the Proposed Action and results of the environmental analysis presented in the Draft EIS.

In all, MDA received comments on the Draft EIS from 10 parties, which included agencies, individuals, and organizations. One organization commented twice. In addition, MDA received comments on the 2020 EA for the LRDR performance testing that raised concerns also relevant to the Proposed Action in the EIS.

Appendix H in the Final EIS contains a table with summaries of the public and agency comments received on the Draft EIS and, as applicable, the locations in the Final EIS where each comment is addressed. In some cases, the information responding to the comment was already included in the Draft EIS, and in other cases, text was added or revised in response to the comment. Copies of the comments received in written form, with personally identifiable information redacted, are provided in Appendix I of the Final EIS.

MDA, as the lead federal agency, and DAF have consulted with the Alaska State Historic Preservation Office and federally recognized Tribes as required by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Section 106. Appendix A, Agency Consultation and Correspondence, in the Final EIS contains correspondence documenting the agency consultation for this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The following summarizes the results of FAA's independent evaluation of the information and analysis in the Final EIS regarding the potential environmental impacts of the FAA's Proposed Action.

Air Quality

Potential effects of the FAA's Proposed Action on air quality are addressed in Section 3.2 of the Final EIS. FAA Order 1050.1F, Exhibit 4-1, states the FAA's significance threshold for air quality: "The action would cause pollutant concentrations to exceed one or more of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), as established by the Environmental Protection Agency under the Clean Air Act for any of the time periods analyzed, or to increase the

frequency or severity of any such existing violations.” The Environmental Protection Agency’s General Conformity Rule does not apply to the FAA’s Proposed Action because the potential air quality impacts would occur entirely within the Denali Borough, which is an attainment area for all criteria pollutants. Increases in annual emissions of all criteria pollutants would be well below the 100 tons per year *de minimis* thresholds in the General Conformity Rule. Based on the analysis in the Final EIS, which the FAA has independently evaluated, the FAA’s Proposed Action would not significantly affect air quality.

Biological Resources (including fish, wildlife, and plants)

The potential effects of the FAA’s Proposed Action on biological resources are addressed in Section 3.3 of the Final EIS. FAA Order 1050.1F, Exhibit 4-1, states the FAA’s significance threshold for Biological Resources (including fish, wildlife, and plants): “The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service determines that the action would be likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a federally listed threatened or endangered species, or would result in the destruction or adverse modification of federally designated critical habitat.” The FAA’s Proposed Action would have negligible effects on ground-based wildlife because most of the changes to VFR flights would be above 500 feet AGL and most of the changes to IFR flights would be above 4,000 feet AGL, and the numbers of aircraft would not increase. There are no sensitive wildlife areas that would be introduced to new disturbance from low-flying aircraft as a result of changes in instrument flight procedures or detours of VFR aircraft around TFRs or the proposed Restricted Areas. Increases in flight paths would pose a slightly increased risk of bird strikes. No threatened or endangered species occur within the study area. Other than the slightly increased risk of bird strikes by aircraft, the FAA’s Proposed Action would not adversely impact any special status species, including bald and golden eagles, and migratory birds. Based on the information and analysis in the Final EIS, which the FAA has independently evaluated, the FAA’s Proposed Action would not have significant impacts in this category.

Coastal Resources

Alaska does not have a federally approved coastal management program or defined coastal zones, therefore this environmental impact category is not relevant to the FAA’s Proposed Action.

Climate

The potential effects of the FAA’s Proposed Action on climate are addressed in Section 3.4 of the Final EIS. As recognized in the FAA’s National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) procedures, there are no significance thresholds for aviation GHG emissions, and it is not currently useful for the NEPA analysis to attempt to link specific climate impacts to a proposed action or alternative given the small percentage of emissions aviation projects contribute. The FAA’s Proposed Action would result in a maximum increase of approximately 7,100 metric tons per year of CO₂e annually. This is approximately 0.00011 percent of the total 6,456.72 million metric tons of CO₂e emissions reported for the U.S. in 2017. Based on the information and

analysis in the Final EIS, which the FAA has independently evaluated, the FAA's Proposed Action would not significantly affect climate.

Department of Transportation Act, Section 4(f)

Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (now codified at 49 USC § 303) provides that the Secretary of Transportation may approve a transportation project that requires the use of any publicly owned land from a public park, recreation area, or wildlife or waterfowl refuge of national, state, or local significance; or land from any publicly or privately owned historic site of national, state, or local significance, only if there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such land and the program or project includes all possible planning to minimize harm resulting from the use. Because the FAA's Proposed Action is not a transportation project, Section 4(f) is not applicable.

Farmlands

Because no prime farmland and other important farmlands would be affected by the Proposed Action, this environmental impact category is not relevant to FAA's Proposed Action.

Historical, Architectural, Archeological, and Cultural Resources

The FAA impact category of Historical, Architectural, Archeological, and Cultural Resources is addressed in Section 3.6 of the Final EIS. MDA, as the lead federal agency for consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, conducted the consultation. The Alaska State Historic Preservation Office concurred in MDA's finding of "no historic properties affected." See Appendix A of the Final EIS. Based on the information and analysis in the Final EIS, which the FAA has independently evaluated, the FAA's Proposed Action would not have significant impacts on historical, architectural, archaeological, or other cultural resources.

Land Use

The potential effects of the FAA's Proposed Action on land use are discussed in Section 3.7 of the Final EIS. The FAA has not established a significance threshold for land use. The determination that significant impacts exist usually depends on whether the Proposed Action would result in other impacts exceeding thresholds of significance which have land use ramifications.

The change in aircraft use patterns as a result of establishing the proposed Restricted Areas would not change land uses on the ground in a way contrary to land use plans, and no land use categories would change at CAFS or elsewhere. Access to the private airstrips beneath the proposed Restricted Areas would not be affected. Some access to and use of the land under the Restricted Areas by general aviation pilots could be reduced. IFR aircraft rerouted due to the TFRs, or following new or amended airways, could be either more or less noticeable to some landowners or backcountry travelers, depending on their locations. These changes would be

minor and would affect relatively few people. The FAA's Proposed Action would not be incompatible with existing and planned land uses outside of CAFS, with the exception that the CAP Glider Academy would no longer be able to operate at Clear Airport and would be relocated, likely to a location that could be beneficial to the program. Based on the information and analysis in the Final EIS, which the FAA has independently evaluated, the FAA's Proposed Action would not significantly affect land use.

Natural Resources and Energy Supply

The FAA has not established a significance threshold for this category, which is discussed in Section 3.8 of the Final EIS. The increased daily aviation fuel demand from changes to flight paths would represent a small volume compared to the overall consumption of fuel by air traffic passing through the airspace study area. Additionally, no new aviation fuel storage tanks or changes to existing tanks would be required to supply new demand induced by the flight path changes. The additional fuel usage associated with the FAA's actions would not result in a noticeable increase in regional aviation fuel demand. Based on the analysis in the Final EIS, which the FAA has independently evaluated, the FAA's Proposed Action would not result in significant impacts on natural resources and energy supply when compared to the No Action alternative.

Noise and Noise-Compatible Land Use

This impact category is addressed in Section 3.9 of the Final EIS. Based on the analysis discussed in that section, the FAA's Proposed Action would not cause significant noise impacts.

Socioeconomics, Environmental Justice, and Children's Environmental Health and Safety Risks

Socioeconomics

Socioeconomic impacts are discussed in Section 3.11 of the Final EIS. The direct economic impacts of the FAA's Proposed Action, which would result from increased flight distances, would be spread across the entire potentially affected aviation industry in Alaska. The only direct impact of the FAA's Proposed Action would be to the CAP Glider Academy, which would need to relocate. The FAA's related changes to airways and instrument flight procedures would not affect the provision of public services associated with aviation in the study area communities. If CAP is able to negotiate a long-term arrangement to allow the CAP Glider Academy to operate at Ladd Army Airfield or Fort Greely and provide participants with no-cost lodging or camping options and discounted meal service, the economic impacts on the Glider Academy would be minimized. Arrangements for relocating the CAP Glider Academy had not been completed as of the date of the Final EIS, and costs associated with the new location were not known. Based on the information and analysis in the Final EIS, which the FAA has independently evaluated, the FAA's Proposed Action would not have significant impacts in this category.

Environmental Justice and Children's Health and Safety Risks

Based on the discussion of Environmental Justice and Children's Health and Safety Risks in Section 3.11 of the Final EIS, which the FAA has independently evaluated, the FAA's Proposed Action would not result in any significant impacts in these categories.

Visual Effects

Based on the discussion of visual effects in Section 3.13 of the Final EIS, which the FAA has independently evaluated, the FAA's Proposed Action would not have significant visual effects. The detours in VFR air traffic to avoid TFRs and the proposed Restricted Areas would result in slight changes to the visual environment in the Anderson area. Changes to VFR air traffic and IFR flight paths would not be noticeable from key views and would not impact any identified cultural resources. Consequently, the FAA's Proposed Action would have no direct adverse impacts on existing visual resources or viewers.

Water Resources

Wetlands and Floodplains

The FAA's Proposed Action would not create a physical disturbance or create ground disturbance that would impact wetlands or floodplains; therefore, this impact category is not applicable.

Surface Waters and Groundwater

The FAA's Proposed Action would not impact surface water or groundwater; therefore, this impact category is not applicable.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

There are no designated wild and scenic rivers located within the proposed Restricted Areas, TFRs, or below areas where aircraft may be rerouted; therefore, this impact category is not applicable.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are discussed in Section 3.15 of the Final EIS. MDA, in coordination with DAF and the FAA, identified past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the region of CAFS, the existing R-2206, and the proposed airspace where most changes to aircraft flight patterns would occur as a result of the Proposed Action. Based on the FAA's independent evaluation, the FAA's Proposed Action would not result in significant cumulative impacts.

MITIGATION

Based on the information and analysis in the Final EIS, which the FAA has independently evaluated, no specific mitigation commitment by the FAA is warranted.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

MDA conducted public outreach via scoping meetings and stakeholder meetings with aviation associations and local elected officials to determine the range of actions, alternatives, and potential areas of impact that should be addressed in the EIS. Stakeholder groups and the general public were encouraged to provide comments on the Proposed Action during a 45-day scoping period ending July 5, 2019. During the scoping period, MDA held public scoping meetings in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Anderson, Alaska.

A total of 42 formal comments were received during the scoping comment period. The main themes expressed in scoping comments were:

- Incompatibility of the Proposed Action with Clear Airport operations and potential for growth. Clear Airport is located adjacent to CAFS.
- Navigational safety risks, including aircraft separation distances, pilots no longer having use of Windy Pass (a mountain pass between Interior and Southcentral Alaska), and pilots not being able to use the George Parks Highway (Parks Highway) and Nenana River as navigational aids.
- Added flight time and expense to navigate around the proposed Restricted Areas and increasing limitations on flight options.
- Impacts on the U.S. Air Force Auxiliary Civil Air Patrol Alaska Wing Glider Academy (CAP Glider Academy) for youth at Clear Airport.
- Potential risks to human health and impacts on cellphone reception from the LRDR.
- Impacts on wildlife.
- Potential impacts on private airstrips and property values due to reduced accessibility.

MDA emailed a letter to stakeholders on April 7, 2020, that explained design revisions to the proposed LRDR operations and included an update on the NEPA process. Stakeholders were encouraged to provide input about potential impacts on aviation activities or environmental resources from the proposed airspace restrictions necessary for operation of the LRDR. In addition, MDA received comments on the 2020 EA for the LRDR performance testing that raised concerns also relevant to the Proposed Action in the EIS. The main comment topics not already included in the above list were:

- Environmental impacts from increases in aircraft emissions.
- Impacts on subsistence resources and activities.
- Relocation of Clear Airport not properly considered.
- Contact information for requesting LRDR “shutdown” in case of emergency.
- Economic impacts on air service companies.

- Concerns that reroutes in rising terrain would be longer than anticipated and that reroutes for lower-altitude air traffic are unnecessary.
- Mitigation of LRDR impacts not addressed.
- Concerns that the NEPA process and established FAA practices were not followed with respect to construction of the LRDR prior to analysis of potential impacts and establishment of temporary flight restrictions (TFRs), respectively.
- Stakeholder groups and the public were encouraged

Stakeholder groups and the public were encouraged to provide comments on the Draft EIS during the 52-day public comment period that ended December 21, 2020. Public comment meetings were held virtually, including an online open house and a telephone public meeting. Comments on the Draft EIS were received from 10 parties, which included agencies, individuals, and organizations. One organization commented twice. The main comment topics were:

- Support for the NEPA process and how scoping was carried out.
- Opposition to expanding the restricted airspace at CAFS.
- Adverse impacts of relocating the CAP Glider Academy.
- Concerns about the LRDR's risk to human safety.
- Concerns that the proposed Restricted Areas would increase risk in an area already dangerous for pilots.
- Climate change and air quality impacts and mitigation.
- Need for communication process if R-2206D, R-2206E, and R-2206F are activated outside of normal operations or the times announced in a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM).
- Need for communication process if a pilot needs to make an emergency landing at Clear Airport while R-2206D, R-2206E, and R-2206F are active.
- Socioeconomic importance of aviation in Alaska.
- Requests for changes to proposed Restricted Areas such as simplifying, raising floors, or splitting R-2206C.
- Expected drastic increase in summer air traffic into Healy Airport.

Outreach shortly before and during the Draft EIS comment period also included six briefings to local officials and stakeholder groups via telephone or virtual meeting.

The Notice of Availability of the Final EIS was published in the Federal Register on May 7, 2021 (86 FR 24599-24600).

DECISIONS AND ORDERS

Adoption

The FAA has conducted an independent evaluation of the Final EIS. Based on its independent evaluation, the FAA has determined that the Final EIS adequately addresses the FAA's Proposed Action and meets the applicable standards in FAA Order 1050.1F and regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality implementing NEPA (40 CFR parts 1500-1508). Accordingly, the

FAA adopts the Final EIS and takes full responsibility for the scope and content that addresses the FAA's Proposed Action.

Decision and Approval

After careful and thorough consideration of the facts contained herein, the undersigned finds that the FAA's Proposed Action is consistent with existing national environmental policies and objectives as set forth in Section 101 of NEPA and other applicable environmental requirements.

The undersigned has carefully considered the FAA's statutory mandates under 49 USC 40103(b) to ensure the safe and efficient use of the national airspace system and to establish security provisions that will encourage and allow maximum use of the navigable airspace by civil aircraft consistent with national security, as well as the other aeronautical goals and objectives discussed in the Final EIS. The undersigned finds that the FAA's Proposed Action provides the best approach for meeting the purpose of, and need for, that action, and that all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from that alternative have been adopted.

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to the undersigned by the Administrator of the FAA, the undersigned approves and authorizes all necessary agency action to implement the FAA's Proposed Action.

This decision signifies that applicable Federal environmental requirements relating to the FAA's Proposed Action have been met. The decision enables the FAA to implement that action.

Approved: _____

Date: _____

Angela McCullough
Vice President, Mission Support Services
Air Traffic Organization
Federal Aviation Administration

Right of Appeal

This ROD constitutes a final order of the FAA Administrator and is subject to exclusive judicial review under 49 U.S.C. §46110 by the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia or the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the circuit in which the person contesting the decision resides or has its principal place of business. Any party having a substantial interest in this order may apply for review of the decision by filing a petition for review in the appropriate U.S. Court of Appeals no later than 60 days after the order is issued in accordance with the provisions of 49 U.S.C. §46110. Any party seeking to stay implementation of the ROD must file an application with the FAA prior to seeking judicial relief as provided in Rule 18(a) of the Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure.