

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION  
WESTERN-PACIFIC REGION

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***FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
AND  
RECORD OF DECISION***

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**Proposed Commercial Airline Service at Bishop Airport**

Bishop Airport  
Bishop, Inyo County, California



For further information

Camille Garibaldi  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Western-Pacific Region  
Los Angeles Airports District Office  
777 S. Aviation Blvd., Suite 150  
El Segundo, CA 902457  
(650) 827-7613

**August 12, 2021**

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

**WHAT'S IN THIS DOCUMENT?** This document is the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Record of Decision (ROD) for the proposed introduction of commercial air service to Bishop Airport (BIH) located in Bishop, Inyo County, California. This document includes the agency determinations and approvals for those proposed Federal actions described in the Final Environmental Assessment (EA) dated August 2021. This document summarizes the alternatives considered by FAA in reaching its decision, summarizes the analysis used to evaluate the alternatives, and briefly summarizes the potential environmental consequences of the Proposed Action and the No Action alternative, which are evaluated in detail in the Final EA attached to this FONSI-ROD. This document also identifies the environmentally preferred alternative and the agency preferred alternative.

**BACKGROUND.** On March 2, 2021, the County of Inyo released the *Draft Environmental Assessment for Proposed Commercial Airline Service at Bishop Airport* for public review. The Draft EA addressed the potential environmental effects of commercial passenger air service at Bishop Airport. To allow commercial service to occur, Inyo County seeks issuance of a Class I Operating Certificate pursuant to Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 139, *Certification of Airports* from the FAA. SkyWest Airlines (Operating as United Express) seeks to amend its Operations Specifications to permit the airline to provide scheduled commercial service to BIH. Commercial service operations would be accommodated on Runway 12/30 and declared distances would be implemented to achieve Runway Safety Area dimensions. The Draft EA was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) [42 USC Secs 4321-4335], the implementing regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) [40 CFR Parts 1500-1508]<sup>i</sup>, and FAA Orders 1050.1F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures* and 5050.4B, *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Implementing Instructions for Airport Actions*. Inyo County published the Notices of Availability for the DEA on March 2, 2021 in the *Inyo Register* and on March 4, 2021 in the *Mammoth Times*, and on the County's website at: <https://www.inyocounty.us/services/public-works>, under Bishop Airport - Proposed Commercial Air Service NEPA/CEQA Review. Inyo County held a review and comment period on the draft between March 2, 2021 and April 12, 2021. On April 1, 2021, a public workshop followed by a public hearing were held. These events were held via a Zoom meeting due to the Pandemic restrictions in place. Six comments were received; five written comment letters and one verbal comment was received during the public hearing. FAA accepted the Final EA on August 11, 2021.

**WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?** Read the Finding of No Significant Impact and Record of Decision to understand the actions that FAA intends to take relative to the requested 14 CFR Part 139 Airport Certification and the Operations Specification Amendment.

**WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THIS?** FAA will issue the County of Inyo an Operating Certificate under 14 CFR Part 139 and an Operations Specification Amendment will be approved for SkyWest Airlines to provide scheduled service to BIH. The County may begin to accept commercial airline service and SkyWest Airlines may begin conduct commercial passenger operations to and from BIH.

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<sup>i</sup> CEQ Regulations adopted November 28, 1978. Preparation of the Draft EA was already in progress when the revised CEQ NEPA implementing regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) were promulgated in July 2020 and became effective on September 14, 2020. Accordingly, the EA was prepared in compliance with the previous version of the regulations, 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508 (1978, as amended in 1986 and 2005).

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
AND  
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**PROPOSED COMMERCIAL AIRLINE SERVICE AT BISHOP AIRPORT**

**BISHOP AIRPORT  
BISHOP, INYO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

- 1. Introduction.** This document is a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on the environment and Record of Decision (ROD) (FONSI/ROD) as a result of proposed Commercial Airline Service at Bishop Airport (BIH/Airport), Inyo County, California. Inyo County is the sponsor for Bishop Airport. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) before being able to take the federal actions of approval of a Class I Operating Certificate pursuant to Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 139, *Certification of Airports* (Part 139), for Bishop Airport and an Operations Specifications amendment, pursuant to 14 CFR Part 121, *Operating Requirements: Domestic, Flag, and Supplemental Operations* (Part 121), for SkyWest Airlines operating as United Express (SkyWest Airlines) to provide scheduled commercial passenger service at Bishop Airport.<sup>ii</sup> Inyo County, as the airport sponsor, prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) pursuant to requirements of Section 102(2)(C) of NEPA, Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations at 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508<sup>iii</sup>, and FAA Order 1050.1F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*, and Order 5050.4B, *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementing Instructions For Airport Actions*. Inyo County documented the results of its environmental analysis in a Final EA, which is attached to this FONSI/ROD.
  
- 2. Purpose and Need of the Proposed Action.** As described in Section 1.3 of the Final EA, Inyo County identified unmet demand for commercial air service in the Eastern Sierra region. Inyo County and other regional stakeholders are working together to address the unmet demand and ensure continuity of commercial air service. Accordingly, the purpose of Inyo County's Proposed Action, is to initiate commercial air service at Bishop Airport to meet unsatisfied demand for commercial air service in the Eastern Sierra region. To do so, Inyo County has requested a Class I Operating Certificate pursuant to 14 CFR Part 139, and SkyWest Airlines requested amendment of its Operations Specifications to allow it to provide scheduled commercial service at BIH pursuant to 14 CFR Part 121 from the FAA.

Final EA Section 1.3.1 summarizes the Class I Operating Certificate requirements of 14 CFR § 139.107 which would allow BIH to serve scheduled commercial air service operations. Section 1.3.2 discusses Operation Specifications which provide the conditions under which an air carrier may operate at Part 139 certificated airports. The FAA's statutory mission is to ensure the safe and efficient use of navigable airspace in the United States. The FAA must ensure that BIH meets all safety standards required for the 14 CFR Part 139 Operating Certificate and that the requested SkyWest Airlines operations would be conducted in a manner that will not compromise the safety of air commerce.

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<sup>ii</sup> SkyWest Airlines initially anticipated beginning service at BIH in July 2021. The airline is now proposing to begin service in December 2021, the beginning of the 2022 winter season. The environmental analyses conducted in the EA evaluated calendar year 2022 as the first full year of service. Therefore, the shift in beginning of service to late 2021 does not affect the environmental analyses presented in the EA.

<sup>iii</sup> CEQ Regulations adopted November 28, 1978.

- 3. Proposed Action and Federal Actions.** The Proposed Action, identified in Section 1.4 of the Final EA, includes Inyo County's request for a 14 CFR Part 139 Class I Operating Certificate for Bishop Airport to permit scheduled commercial air service operations to occur at the airport; Inyo County's implementation of declared distances on Bishop Airport Runway 12/30; and SkyWest Airlines Operations Specifications amendment to allow the airline to provide scheduled air service to and from Bishop Airport.

The requested FAA federal actions are:

- Unconditional approval of the Bishop Airport - Airport Layout Plan (ALP) that depicts the declared distances for Runway 12/30 as required under 14 CFR Part 139.
- Approval of a Class I Airport Operating Certificate and the Airport Certification Manual for Bishop Airport pursuant to the requirements of 14 CFR Part 139; and
- Issuance of a C070 Operations Specification amendment pursuant to 14 CFR Part 121 to SkyWest Airlines to allow for scheduled commercial air service to Bishop Airport.

- 4. Reasonable Alternatives Considered.** Chapter 2 of the Final EA, used an alternatives analysis screening to determine each alternatives ability to meet the purpose and need for the Proposed Action. Analysis of the No Action alternative is required pursuant to 40 CFR § 1502.14(d). Paragraph 6-2.1(d) of FAA Order 1050.1F states in part: *"An EA may limit the range of alternatives to the proposed action and no action when there are no unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources."*

Table 2-1, in Section 2.3, provides a summary comparison of the alternatives considered, which were the Proposed Action, Use of Other Inyo County Airports, Non-Aviation Transportation alternative, and the No Action alternative.

The **Proposed Action** alternative, described in Section 2.3.1, is as identified in Section 1.4 of the Final EA and summarized in Section 3 of this FONSI/ROD. Inyo County seeks FAA approval for a 14 CFR Part 139 Airport Operating Certificate for Bishop Airport. A 14 CFR Part 139 Certification requires Inyo County to prepare and submit an Airport Certification Manual detailing how the Airport will comply with the requirements of 14 CFR Part 139 and to pass various inspections of the airfield, Airport Rescue Fire Fighting practice and equipment, fueling facilities, and preparation for nighttime operations. The FAA would also make a determination regarding an amendment request to the Operations Specifications for SkyWest Airlines pursuant to 14 CFR Part 121. The safety and operational criteria that must be satisfied for FAA approval of the amendment include suitable runway and taxiway dimensions to accommodate the aircraft proposed for service, the availability of instrument approach procedures serving the designated runway, and airport facilities suitable for accommodating commercial airline passengers. Runway 12/30 is 7,498-feet long, is designated to serve Airport Reference Code (ARC) C-II aircraft, and would operate as the commercial service runway. The ALP indicates a future ARC C-III designation for Runway 12/30. There are two instrument approach procedures in place for Runway 12 operations and one instrument approach procedure is in place for Runway 30 operations. Section 2.4.1 of the Final EA retained the Proposed Action alternative for further evaluation.

**Use of Other Inyo County Airports** alternative, Section 2.3.2, considered the potential to introduce commercial air service at other airports within Inyo County. Inyo County operates three General Aviation airports in addition to Bishop Airport. These airports are Independence Airport with a 3,533-foot long runway; Lone Pine Airport with a 3,992-foot long runway, and Shoshone Airport has a 2,380-foot long runway. There are no instrument approach

procedures at these airports and establishment of new instrument approach procedures are not possible at Independence or Lone Pine Airports. Establishment of new instrument flight procedures at these airports is not possible because the runways at each of the three County airports are not long enough to meet the operational criteria for the proposed ARC C-II aircraft. Evaluation of the Use of Other Inyo County Airports alternative determined that use of another County airport would not meet the purpose and need for the Proposed Action. The Use of Other Inyo County Airports alternative was not retained for further consideration.

Section 2.3.3 of the Final EA described the **Non-Aviation Transportation** alternative. This alternative excluded commercial air service into BIH and focused on surface transportation, such as bus and train service. The Eastern Sierra region is not currently served by passenger rail service. Amtrak offers Amtrak Thruway bus service to Mammoth Lakes from Reno, Nevada. Amtrak does not serve the city of Bishop or any other locations in the Eastern Sierra region south of Mammoth Lakes. The Eastern Sierra Transit Authority operates bus routes along Highway 395 to connect Mammoth Lakes, Bishop and other Eastern Sierra communities to Reno, Nevada and Lancaster, California. The Non-Aviation Transportation alternative was eliminated from further consideration since it does not meet the purpose and need to accommodate unmet demand for commercial air service in the Eastern Sierra region. The Non-Aviation Transportation alternative was not retained for further consideration.

Under the **No Action** alternative, described in Section 2.3.4, FAA would not issue a 14 CFR Part 139 Class I Operating Certificate for Bishop Airport, and FAA would not issue an amendment to SkyWest Airlines Operations Specification for use at BIH. Bishop Airport would continue to operate as a General Aviation airport. Regional demand for commercial air service within the Eastern Sierra region would remain unmet. In accordance with CEQ regulations at 40 CFR § 1502.14, the No Action alternative was retained for consideration in Section 2.4 of the Final EA. The No Action alternative provides a point of comparison against other alternatives to allow for the identification of potential environmental impacts.

The No Action and Proposed Action alternatives were retained for detailed analysis.

- 5. Assessment.** The potential environmental impacts and possible adverse effects were identified and evaluated in the Environmental Consequences Chapter, Chapter 4 of the Final EA. The Final EA has been reviewed by the FAA and found to be adequate for the purpose of the proposed Federal action. The FAA determined that the Final EA adequately describes the potential impacts of the Proposed Action and No Action alternatives. No new issues surfaced as a result of the public review process. Comments received focused on the environmental resource categories of Air Quality, Socioeconomic, Noise, and Cumulative Impact.

Final EA, Chapter 3 – Affected Environment, described the existing physical, natural, and human environmental conditions within the area that could be directly or indirectly, affected by the Proposed Action and No Action alternatives. Chapter 3, Section 3.1.2 eliminated Coastal Resources; Farmlands; Department of Transportation Act, Section 4(f); and Water Resources (Wetlands, Floodplains, and Wild and Scenic Rivers) from consideration because these resources would not be affected by either the Proposed Action or No Action alternatives.

Final EA, Chapter 4 – Environmental Consequences analyzes environmental impact categories: Air Quality; Biological Resources; Climate; Hazardous Materials, Solid Waste, and Pollution Prevention; Historical, Architectural, Archaeological, and Cultural Resources; Land Use; Natural Resources and Energy Supply; Noise and Noise-Compatible Land Use; Socioeconomic Impacts, Environmental Justice, and Children’s Environmental Health and

Safety Risks; Visual Effects; Water Resources (Groundwater and Surface Water); and Cumulative Impacts. For applicable environmental resource assessments, such as Air Quality and Noise and Noise-Compatible Land Use, FAA approved aviation forecasts described in Chapter 1, Section 1.2.2, BIH Aviation Forecasts and detailed in Appendix D to the Final EA were utilized. As noted, the aviation forecasts, approved prior to the Pandemic, are believed to be a reasonable estimate of predicted future aviation activity at the airport. The study years for the environmental impact analyses were 2022 and 2028; details are provided in Chapter 4, Section 4.1.2.

**A. Air Quality.** Section 4.2.1 of the Final EA presents the Air Quality Analysis that were prepared using FAA Order 1050.1F and the FAA *Aviation Emissions and Air Quality Handbook* (Version 3, Update 1) as guidance. The emission inventory, detailed in Appendix G-1, was developed using the most recent version of FAA's Aviation Environmental Design Tool (AEDT), Version 3c, and California Air Resources Board's Emission Factor 2017 (EMFAC2017) web database for motor vehicles. Table 4-2 presents an emissions inventory and next change for the Proposed Action and No Action alternatives. Implementation of the Proposed Action alternative would not result in an exceedance of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards or increase the frequency or severity of any air quality violations in the Great Basin Valleys Air Basin. Approval of the Proposed Action would not result in a significant air quality impact.

**B. Biological Resources.** Section 4.3 of the Final EA describes the potential impacts to biological resources (including fish, wildlife, and plants). Biological resources within the General Study Area were identified using information collected during field surveys conducted in the Action Area delineated for use in the preparation of the Biological Assessment that is contained in Appendix H of the Final EA. Section 4.3.3.2, of the Final EA, states no federally listed threatened, endangered, or candidate species (federally-listed species) occur within or immediately surrounding the Action Area shown in Figure 3-2. Additionally, no designated critical habitat areas are located within one mile of the Action Area. Under the Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, the FAA determined the Proposed Action will have "*no effect*" on federally listed species.

**C. Climate.** Section 4.4 of the Final EA considered the potential incremental change in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission from the no action to proposed action for disclosure. The GHG emission inventories accounted for the direct and indirect emissions from airside sources (aircraft operations and ground support equipment) and landside sources (area, energy, and mobile). Table 4-3 compared the Proposed Action and No Action alternatives. The Proposed Action would result in an approximate 1,510 metric tons (MT) increase in carbon (CO<sub>2</sub>) equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) in 2022 and approximately 2,224 MT of CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2028. In comparison, California estimates for 2018 the latest year for which emission data is available was 425.3 million MT of CO<sub>2</sub>e and the U.S. gross CO<sub>2</sub>e estimate totaled 6,457 million MT CO<sub>2</sub>e. The Proposed Action's contribution to GHG emissions would comprise a miniscule fraction of the reported California and U.S. emissions. Approval of the Proposed Action alternative would not result in a significant climate impact.

**D. Hazardous Materials, Pollution Prevention and Solid Waste.** Section 4.5 of the Final EA notes that there are no National Priority List or Resource Conservation and eight Recovery Act sites within or adjacent to the General Study Area shown in Figure 3-1. None of the RCRA sites are physically located in the Airport boundary. The Proposed Action would result in an increase in airside activity. However, FAA does not anticipate changes in the handling, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. FAA anticipates an increase in fueling and maintenance activities resulting from the Proposed Action. Best management practices (BMPs) will be utilized to minimize the potential for spills on Airport property and implement

pollution prevention activities consistent with the requirements of Advisory Circular 150/5210-22, *Airport Certification Manual (ACM)*, Section 139.321 – Handling and Storing of Hazardous Substances and Materials. The Bishop-Sunland Landfill accepts hazardous materials and has sufficient capacity to operate until 2064. A minor increase in solid waste disposal is expected as a result of the introduction of airline passengers, airline and support employees, and ground transportation services. The Bishop-Sunland Landfill has a maximum permitted capacity of 160 tons of solid waste per day and a cease operation date of 2064; its remaining capacity is estimated to be 3.3 million cubic yards. The Proposed Action when compared to the No Action alternative would not result in significant impacts to hazardous materials, pollution prevention, and solid waste.

**E. Historic, Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Resources.** As described in Section 4.6 of the Final EA, the Proposed Action does not include ground disturbance or change to the existing approach and departure procedures at Bishop Airport. The FAA established an Area of Potential Effect (APE) pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.4(a)(1). The APE depicted in Figure 3-3, includes Runway 12/30 with a 500-foot buffer and Taxiway A. Records search indicated the presence of three cultural resources within or intersected by the APE. The resource intersected by the APE is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). According to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, a proposed project has an effect on a historic property when that project may alter characteristics of the property that may qualify it for inclusion in the NRHP.

Under the No Action alternative, Bishop Airport would continue operations as a General Aviation airport with approximately 26,000 total operations annually. The Proposed Action forecast includes an additional 1,462 operations in 2022 and 6,576 operations in 2028 (up to three and six daily round-trip flights in 2022 and 2028, respectively).

Pursuant to Executive Order 13175, DOT Order 5301.1, and FAA Order 1210.20, the FAA determined that the Proposed Action would not significantly or uniquely affect Native American tribes, therefore consultation was not warranted. On November 5, 2020, the FAA consulted verbally with the California State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding the APE, the archival records search results, and the FAA determination that the Proposed Action would not alter, directly or indirectly, any of the identified resources intersected by the APE. Therefore, the FAA Proposed Action would have “*no potential to cause effects*” (36 CFR § 800.3(a)(1)). The California SHPO agreed that the Proposed Action would not affect historic properties and formal consultation under Section 106 of the NHPA was not warranted.

No impact to historic, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources would occur with approval of the Proposal Action alternative.

**F. Land Use.** The evaluation included review of the general plans and zoning ordinance of Inyo County and the City of Bishop, as well as applicable local land use management plans such as the City of Los Angeles - Department of Water and Power *Owens Valley Land Management Plan*. Chapter 3, Section 3.7.2 of the Final EA references the Inyo County commitment to maintain land use consistency for airport operations as required by 49 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 47106(a)(10), a copy of the letter is provided in Appendix E-1. Section 4.7.3.2 details the consistency of the Proposed Action with the surrounding land uses designations. Introduction of commercial air service at Bishop Airport is consistent with the Inyo County General Plan Circulation Element and the City of Bishop General Plan Mobility Element. Both plans identify the introduction of commercial air service as an action to be supported by local land use policies. No land use conflicts were identified with the introduction of commercial air service at Bishop Airport.

**G. Natural Resources and Energy Supply.** Section 4.8 of the Final EA addresses Natural Resources and Energy Supply. Section 4.8.3.2 estimates that the Proposed Action would result in an approximate three percent increase in total annual operations by 2028. The additional operations and associated activity would place a proportionate demand on energy supply. This increase is minimal and would not exceed local supplies as described in Section 4.8.4. No significant impact to natural resources or energy supplies are anticipated.

**H. Noise and Noise-Compatible Land Use.** Section 4.9 of the Final EA describes anticipated noise impacts resulting from the Proposed Action and the No Action alternatives. Section 4.9.3 of the Final EA discusses the potential impacts associated with the No Action alternative and Proposed Action alternatives in 2022 and 2028. Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) contours were prepared using FAA model AEDT 3c, the most recent version available at the time the analysis was conducted. Table 4-4 provided a summary of the forecasted aircraft operations used to model noise for both the Proposed Action and No Action alternatives. Analysis of the Proposed Action considered commercial air service operations in 2022, utilizing the Bombardier CRJ-700 an ARC C-II aircraft, and in 2028 the use of Embraer 175-LR an ARC C-III aircraft. The Noise Analysis Technical Report is provided in Appendix J of the Final EA. No change to the existing flight routes and arrival and departure instrument procedures would occur.

Under the No Action alternative the estimated 26,006 annual operations result in a Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) 65 decibel (dB) noise contour that is contained entirely within the airport property, as shown in Figures 4-1 and 4-2. The Proposed Action, described in Section 4.9.3.2 of the Final EA is expected to result in 27,216 and 27,948 annual operations in 2022 and 2028, respectively. The resultant CNEL contours are shown in Figures 4-3 and 4-4 of the Final EA. The CNEL 65 dB contours remain entirely within the airport property boundary. No noise-sensitive land use impacts are identified. The Proposed Action would not result in a noise impact to wilderness areas. No noise and noise-compatible land use impacts would occur with approval of the Proposed Action.

**I. Socioeconomic Impacts, Environmental Justice and Children's Environmental Health and Safety Risk** are discussed in Section 4.10 of the Final EA. The Socioeconomic Impacts analysis is presented in Section 4.10.1 of the Final EA. No physical development that would disrupt or divide the local community would occur with approval of the Proposed Action. While it is anticipated that the Proposed Action would include employment opportunity it is anticipated that initially 12 to 16 new positions would result in 2022 with an additional two positions 2028. Seasonal variances may occur. It is likely that the slight increase in employment opportunities at the Airport, as well as an increase in tourist traffic in the local area due to the introduction of commercial air service would likely induce some local economic growth with a corresponding change in the community tax base and potential benefit to the Eastern Sierra region. An extensive relocation of community business that would result in an economic hardship would not occur. As stated in Section 1.2 of the Final EA, regional stakeholders have indicated that several taxi and shuttle services that provide transportation between Mammoth Yosemite Airport (MMH) and the Mammoth Mountain resort area have expressed interest in shuttle opportunities between Bishop Airport and the Town of Mammoth Lakes and Mammoth Mountain resort area. The change in service would likely produce greater income for the business and the community in which they are based. The contribution of surface traffic to and from the Airport associated with the Proposed Action would be minor, representing less than one percent of traffic volume at the intersection of Highway 395 and State Route 163 (West Line Street).

The Environmental Justice analysis is located in Section 4.10.2. Three Census block groups within the GSA are identified as environmental justice communities. Census block group



60270004004 meets the minority population and income thresholds; Census block groups 60270004002 and 60270004003 meet the income threshold characterized as a low-income community. Under the No Action alternative, operation of the Bishop Airport continues with approximately 26,006 aviation operations (general aviation, military, and cargo) occurring annually in 2022 and 2028. No impact to minority or low-income populations would occur. Similar to the No Action alternative, the Proposed Action would occur within the GSA that includes three environmental justice communities. In 2022, 27,216, and in 2028, 27,948 aviation operations are forecast to occur. No significant environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Action were identified in any of the environmental resource categories considered in the Final EA. Therefore, the Proposed Action would not result in disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects to the identified environmental justice communities.

Children's Environmental Health and Safety Risks is addressed in Section 4.10.3. Chapter 3, Section 3.10.3.3, no children's schools, child daycare facilities, or other facilities, such as public parks, where children congregate are located within the GSA. The Air Quality analysis in Section 4.2 and the Noise and Noise-Compatible Land Use analysis in Section 4.9 identified no impacts that might affect the health of children. The Proposed Action does not lead to hazards that would lead to a disproportionate health or safety risk to children.

The Final EA I, Section 4.10, identified no significant Socioeconomic Impacts, Environmental Justice, and Children's Environmental Health and Safety Risks impacts.

**J. Visual Effects.** Section 3.11.3 of the Final EA described the existing conditions (2019) of the Bishop Airport. In summary the Airport is surrounded by open space with very little vegetation because of the desert climate. Existing light sources at the Airport primarily include runway and taxiway lights and lighted directional signage, an lighted rotating beacon, security lighting along Airport Road for the FedEx Ground facility, lighting of the terminal area buildings, parking area streetlights, and urban light from the city of Bishop. Analysis of the Visual Effect environmental consequences in Section 4.11.3.1 of the Final EA identifies that no new sources of light emission or effects to the visual character of the surrounding area or Airport would occur under the No Action alternative. Section 4.11.3.2 of the Final EA identifies that the Proposed Action does not include any physical development that would introduce new fixed lighting sources at the Airport. Any new light would be the direct result of aircraft operations. Based upon the predicted schedule of operations evening flights would be limited. Due to the distance of the nearest residential development, land uses, and the intermittent nature of the aircraft operations it is unlikely to cause a noticeable source of light emissions. No visual effect impacts would occur with approval of the Proposed Action alternative.

**K. Water Resources (Surface Water and Groundwater).** Section 3.12 of the Final EA provides the Regulatory Context and existing conditions related to surface waters and groundwater within the GSA. Surface waters include the North Fork Bishop Creek, Rawson Canal, and Bishop Creek Canal. Additionally, a small freshwater pond is present near the northwest corner of the GSA, approximately 1,700 feet from the Runway 12 threshold. Two groundwater wells are within the Airport property boundary, one for domestic water use and one for fire suppression. There is no municipal water service at the Airport. Under the No Action alternatives, described in Section 4.12.3.1 of the Final EA, general aviation, military, and cargo operations would continue. Operational characteristics that affect surface waters and ground water would not change. The Proposed Action is analyzed in Section 4.12.3.2 of the Final EA. No construction activities are associated with the Proposed Action, therefore no alteration of surface waters is anticipated. The two on-airport wells would continue to supply water to the Airport and its passengers. With the Proposed Action introduction of commercial air service an increase in water consumption is expected. The existing wells would be able to

meet the additional demand for water generated by the Proposed Action. No additional wells are needed to meet the future demand anticipated with the Proposed Action. No significant impact to Water Resources – surface water and groundwater are expected to occur.

**L. Cumulative Impacts.** Section 3.13 of the Final EA identifies the Past, Present and Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions considered in the Cumulative Impacts analysis of Section 4.13 of the Final EA. The evaluation considered Air Quality, Biological Resources; Climate; Hazardous Materials, Solid Waste, and Pollution Prevention; Historical Architectural, and Cultural Resources; Land Use; Natural Resources and Energy Supply; Noise and Noise-Compatible Land Use; Socioeconomic Impacts, Environmental Justice, and Children's Environmental Health and Safety Risks; Visual Effects; and Water Resources (Surface Waters and Groundwater) environmental impact categories. No significant cumulative impacts were identified.

## **6. Environmentally Preferred Alternative and FAA Preferred Alternative**

Analysis documented in the Final EA determined there would be no significant environmental impacts from approval of the Proposed Action. The No Action alternative has slightly fewer environmental effects than the Proposed Action alternative and thus would be the environmentally preferred alternative. However, the No Action alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action. Thus, the FAA's preferred alternative is the Proposed Action, because it meets the Purpose and Need of the Proposed Action with minimum adverse environmental effects. Further, it also meets FAA's statutory mission to ensure the safety and efficiency in air commerce by ensuring that Bishop Airport meets the safety standards required for Inyo County to receive a Class I Operating Certificate for the Airport pursuant to 14 CFR Part 139, and ensuring that amendment of the SkyWest Airlines Operations Specifications for scheduled commercial air carrier service at Bishop Airport would not compromise the safety of air commerce.

## **7. Public Participation.**

The public scoping workshops for the early identification of potential environmental issues were held in-person on January 22, 2020 in Bishop, California and on January 27, 2020 in Mammoth Lakes, California. Comments submitted during the workshops are provided in Appendix F-2 of the Final EA. On March 2, 2020, the Draft EA was released for public review. Inyo County published notices of availability of the Draft EA in *Inyo Register* on March 2, 2021 and the *Mammoth Times* on March 4, 2021. Inyo County made the Draft EA available on their website in the Current Projects-Environmental Documents at <https://www.inyocounty.us/services/public-works>, in the Bishop and Mono County libraries, and the Inyo County Department of Public Works. Copies of the document were also available to the public upon request. The public was encouraged to review and comment on the Draft EA. A virtual public workshop and virtual public hearing were held on April 1, 2021. The public workshop and hearing were held via a Zoom meeting due to the Pandemic. Public review of the Draft EA ended on April 12, 2021. Six comments were received; five written comment letters and one verbal comment received during the public hearing. No new issues surfaced as a result of the public review process. A copy of the newspaper Affidavit of Publication is provided in Appendix F-2.3 to the Final EA.

## **8. Inter-Agency Coordination.**

In accordance with 49 USC § 47101(h), the FAA has determined that no further coordination with the U.S. Department of Interior or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is necessary

because the Proposed Action does not involve construction of a new airport, new runway or major runway extension that has a significant impact on natural resources including fish and wildlife; natural, scenic, and recreational assets; water and air quality; or another factor affecting the environment.

## **9. Reasons for the Determination that the Proposed Action will have No Significant Impacts.**

The attached Final EA examines each of the various environmental resources that were deemed present at the project location, or had the potential to be impacted by the Proposed Action. The proposed unconditional approval of the portion of the Bishop Airport ALP that depicts the declared distances for Runway 12/30; approval of a Class I Airport Operating Certificate and Airport Certification Manual for Bishop Airport pursuant to 14 CFR Part 139; and issuance of a C070 Operations Specification amendment to SkyWest Airlines pursuant to 14 CFR Part 121 to allow for scheduled commercial air service to Bishop Airport would not involve any environmental impacts, that would exceed the threshold of significance as defined by FAA Orders 1050.1F and 5050.4B. Based on the information contained in the Final EA, the FAA has determined that the Proposed Action is the most feasible and prudent alternative. The FAA has decided to implement the Proposed Action as described in Section 3 of this FONSI.

## **10. Agency Findings.**

The FAA makes the following determination for this project based on information and analysis set forth in the Final EA and other portions of the administrative record.

- a. FAA finds, the proposed project is reasonably consistent with existing plans of public agencies for development of the area [49 U.S.C. § 47106(a)].** The Proposed Action is consistent with the plans, goals and policies for the area, including the County of Inyo General Plan. The Proposed Action is also consistent with the applicable regulations and policies of federal, State and local agencies.
- b. FAA finds the proposed project is reasonably necessary for use in air commerce or in the interests of national defense [49 U.S.C. § 44502(b)].**
- c. Independent and Objective Evaluation:** As required by the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR § 1506.5) the FAA has independently and objectively evaluated this Proposed Action. As described in the Final EA, the Proposed Action and the No Action alternatives were studied extensively to determine the potential impacts and appropriate mitigation measures for those impacts. The FAA provided input, advice, and expertise throughout the analysis, along with administrative and legal review of the project.
- d. Biological Resources.** Section 5 of this FONSI/ROD, and Sections 3.3, 4.3, and Appendix H of the Final EA present the analysis and determination related to biological resources including federally listed threatened, endangered, or candidate species, and designated critical habitat within the Action Area. Under the provision of Section 7 of the federal *Endangered Species Act* (16 U.S.C. § 1531 *et seq*) the FAA determined that the Proposed Action would have *no effect* on federally-listed species or critical habitat.
- e. Historic, Archaeological, Architectural and Cultural Resources.** As discussed in Section 5 of this FONSI/ROD and Sections 3.6 and 4.6 of the Final EA, the Proposed Action would not include ground disturbance or change to existing instrument approach

procedures, therefore, the FAA determined the undertaking does not have the potential to cause effects on historic properties. Verbal consultation with the California State Historic Preservation Office resulted in concurrence with the evaluation approach and FAA determination.

## 11. Decision and Orders.

Based on the information in this FONSI/ROD and supported by detailed discussion in the Final EA, the FAA has selected the proposed unconditional approval of the portion of the Bishop Airport ALP that depicts the declared distances for Runway 12/30; approval of a Class I Airport Operating Certificate and Airport Certification Manual for Bishop Airport pursuant to 14 CFR Part 139; and issuance of a C070 Operations Specification amendment to SkyWest Airlines pursuant to 14 CFR Part 121 to allow for scheduled commercial air service to Bishop Airport as the FAA's Preferred Alternative. The FAA must select one of the following choices:

- Approve agency actions necessary to implement the Proposed Action, or
- Disapprove agency actions to implement the Proposed Action.

Approval signifies that applicable federal requirements relating to the proposed issuance of a Class I Operating Certificate for Bishop Airport pursuant to 14 CFR Part 139 and issuance of a C070 Operations Specification amendment pursuant to 14 CFR Part 121 to SkyWest Airlines to allow for scheduled commercial service to Bishop Airport have been met. Approval permits Inyo County and SkyWest Airlines to proceed with commercial passenger air service to and from Bishop Airport. Disapproval would prevent Inyo County and SkyWest Airlines from implementing the Proposed Action at Bishop Airport. Bishop Airport would continue operations as a General Aviation airport.

Under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, I find that the Proposed Action is reasonably supported. I, therefore, direct that action be taken to carry out the agency actions discussed more fully in Section 3 of this FONSI/ROD.

1. Unconditional approval of the portion of the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) that depicts the declared distances for Runway 12/30 as required under 14 CFR Part 139,
2. Approval of a Class I Airport Operating Certificate and the Airport Certification Manual for Bishop Airport pursuant to the requirements of 14 CFR Part 139, and
3. Issuance of a C070 Operations Specification amendment pursuant to 14 CFR Part 121 to SkyWest Airlines to allow for scheduled commercial air service to Bishop Airport.

This order is issued under applicable statutory authorities, including 49 USC §§ 40101(d), 40103(b), 40113(a), 44701, and 44706.

I have carefully and thoroughly considered the facts contained in the attached EA. Based on that information, I find that the proposed Federal action is consistent with existing national environmental policies and objectives as set forth in Section 101(a) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and other applicable environmental requirements. I also find the proposed Federal Action will not significantly affect the quality of the human

environment or otherwise include any condition requiring consultation pursuant to section 102 (2)(C) of NEPA. As a result, FAA will not prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for this action.

**APPROVED:**

RAQUEL GIRVIN

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GIRVIN  
Date: 2021.08.12 10:50:11 -07'00'

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Raquel Girvin  
Regional Administrator,  
Western-Pacific Region, AWP-1

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**DISAPPROVED:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Raquel Girvin  
Regional Administrator,  
Western-Pacific Region, AWP-1

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*RIGHT OF APPEAL*

*This FONSI/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 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.*