

**FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**



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

for the Proposed  
Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)  
Airport Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) Replacement  
at  
Pocatello Regional Airport (PIH), Idaho

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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
AND  
RECORD OF DECISION  
BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW  
AIRPORT TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWER REPLACEMENT AT POCATELLO REGIONAL AIRPORT (PIH), IDAHO**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

This document is the Federal Aviation Administration’s (FAA) Finding of No Significant Impact/Record of Decision (FONSI/ROD) for the proposed Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Airport Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) Replacement at Pocatello Regional Airport (PIH). This FONSI/ROD is based on the information and analysis contained in the attached Final Environmental Assessment (EA), dated July 2024. This Final EA also tiers off of the BIL-funded Final Programmatic EA (BIL ATCT Final PEA) and FONSI/ROD issued in September 2023. This Final PIH EA has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines and requirements set forth by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and the FAA to implement the environmental review and disclosure provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Public Law 117-58), enacted on November 15, 2021, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), appropriated \$25 billion over a five-year period (Fiscal Year 2022-2026) for airport and air traffic control projects. The FAA established the BIL ATCT Replacement Program to utilize the aviation BIL funding to replace existing FAA-owned ATCTs at mainly non-major airports with modern ATCT facilities.

As detailed in the BIL ATCT Final PEA and FONSI/ROD, the FAA identified and analyzed potential environmental impacts for the broad scope of actions planned for ATCT replacement activities. This programmatic approach allows the FAA to review project-specific details and potential impacts during the planning and site selection process for those ATCT projects within the scope of the PEA analysis. The BIL ATCT Final PEA and FONSI/ROD identified the following resource categories as having “no significant impact” (FAA, 2023):

- Air Quality – The proposed action would result in a short-term and temporary increase in emissions and dust (particulate matter) during construction and demolition activities. In addition, a long-term reduction in emissions from reduced energy use is expected from the new ATCT.
- Climate – The proposed action would result in a short-term increase in greenhouse (GHG) emissions during construction and demolition activities, and a long-term reduction in GHG emissions from reduced energy use at the new ATCT.
- Farmlands – The proposed action is not within prime farmland and would not involve the disturbance, conversion, or removal of any prime farmland.
- Hazardous Materials, Solid Waste, and Pollution Prevention – The proposed action would result in short-term and temporary impacts during construction and use of fuels and chemicals, and

short-term and temporary impacts from demolition and removal of waste or other unknown materials from the existing (older) ATCT site.

- Land Use – The proposed action would not require any changes to land use as described in the airport master plan.
- Natural Resources and Energy Supply – The proposed action would result in long-term beneficial impacts from reductions in energy use.
- Noise – The proposed action would result in short-term impacts during construction and demolition activities from equipment and vehicle noise.
- Socioeconomics, Environmental Justice, and Children’s Environmental Health and Safety Risks – The proposed action would result in short-term impacts during construction and demolition from minimal increases in employment, materials, or equipment purchases.

In addition to confirming the above resource categories would have no significant impacts from the Proposed Action, the Final EA included site-specific analyses for the six resource areas not covered by the BIL ATCT Final PEA and FONSI/ROD: biological resources; coastal resources; historical, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources; Department of Transportation Section 4(f) resources; visual effects; and water resources. Since PIH is located within a maintenance area for Particulate Matter 10 air quality standards, a site-specific analysis for Air Quality is included in the Final EA. In addition, the Final EA analyzed cumulative effects in or near the project area. The Proposed Action is not anticipated to result in significant cumulative impacts.

## **II. PROPOSED ACTION**

The FAA’s Proposed Action is to replace the existing ATCT with a modern ATCT at PIH. The following activities are anticipated as part of the Proposed Action:

- Acquisition of a new lease with the airport authority to construct an ATCT in a new location.
- Approval of a new airport layout plan incorporating the relocation of the ATCT.
- Construction and operation of a replacement ATCT, and other associated facility support features such as parking area and security fences.
- Extension and/or relocation of access roads and utilities to the replacement ATCT.
- Installation of modern air traffic control electronic equipment in the replacement ATCT.
- Commissioning of the replacement ATCT, cutover of air traffic services to the replacement ATCT, and decommissioning of the existing ATCT.
- Demolition and disposal of the existing ATCT facility and associated infrastructure.
- Relocation of existing radio communications link repeater to enable project implementation.

## **III. PURPOSE AND NEED OF THE PROPOSED ACTION**

The ATCT serves as an observation facility for air traffic controllers to monitor aircraft take-offs and landings and ground traffic visually and electronically within the PIH airfield. Air traffic controllers within the PIH ATCT facility ensure aircraft are properly separated and enhance the safety of aircraft operations at and in the vicinity of PIH airport.

Section 2 of the Final EA stated the purpose and need of the Proposed Action, which tiers from the purpose and need described in the BIL ATCT Final PEA. The purpose of the Proposed Action is to replace the PIH ATCT with a modern ATCT providing for uninterrupted air traffic control services. The PIH ATCT is an FAA-owned ATCT eligible for replacement under the BIL ATCT Replacement Program.

The Proposed Action for the PIH ATCT would provide for a modern, operationally efficient ATCT that would meet all applicable FAA requirements and improve visibility of the airport property. The replacement ATCT at PIH would enable the installation of modern and required air traffic control equipment, provide adequate space and an enhanced work environment for FAA personnel, lower operating costs, and improve environmental performance, resulting in energy savings, water efficiency, reduced carbon emissions, and improved indoor air quality.

The FAA recognizes the need to provide continual air traffic control services at PIH. The PIH ATCT does not have the ability to accommodate upgrades to the latest air traffic control technologies, lacks the personnel space requirements and modern amenities. Improvements made to rectify this situation would ensure uninterrupted air traffic control services to maintain the safety of the National Airspace System (NAS).

#### **IV. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

Representatives from the FAA and PIH airport conducted siting for this project in conjunction with the FAA's Virtual Immersive Siting Tower Assessment (VISTA). The FAA and PIH airport representatives met virtually to participate in siting activities in accordance with the October 2023 VISTA Siting Process Memo to determine viable and preferred ATCT sites for a potential new ATCT at PIH. The following provides a summary of the alternatives development process and alternatives considered.

**Identification and Evaluation of Potential Alternatives** – The FAA identified criteria to select and evaluate alternatives (as described in Section 3.2 of the BIL ATCT Replacement PEA). These included ATCT technical criteria and other characteristics to meet the purpose and need. The PIH Final EA considered the proposed replacement and/or upgrade of the ATCT for uninterrupted air traffic control services, while improving the safety, efficiency, and resiliency of the NAS.

**Alternatives Analyzed in the Final EA** – In addition to the Proposed Action, the Final EA analyzed the No Action Alternative. Under the No Action Alternative, replacement, and demolition of the existing ATCT and associated facilities would not occur. The existing ATCT would continue to be in use for air traffic control operations. Construction of a new ATCT would not occur, additional space for air traffic operations and new, modern equipment would not be available, and improvements to the safety, efficiency, and resiliency of the NAS would not be realized at PIH. The No Action Alternative, consistent with CEQ regulations and FAA Order 1050.1F, serves as a baseline against which the impacts of Alternative 2 are compared and contrasted in the Final EA. The No Action Alternative would not meet the purpose and need for the project.

**Alternative 2 (Proposed Action)**. The Final EA evaluated this alternative for proposed replacement of the FAA-owned ATCT and associated structures at PIH meeting the purpose and need (described above) for uninterrupted air traffic control services, while improving the safety, efficiency, and resiliency of the NAS. Upon construction and commissioning of the new replacement ATCT and cutover of air traffic

control services, the existing facilities would be decommissioned and demolished, and the sites would be restored to their original condition and transferred back to the Airport sponsor.

## **V. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS AND MITIGATION**

The FAA identified and evaluated potential environmental impacts in the PIH Airport ATCT Replacement Final EA. The Proposed Action will not change flight patterns, altitudes, or aircraft traffic volumes. Noise levels will be unchanged. The Final EA tiers off of the BIL ATCT Final PEA and FONSI/ROD (September 2023) which identified that BIL-funded ATCT replacement is not anticipated to have significant impacts to air quality; climate; compatible land uses; farmlands; hazardous materials, solid waste, and pollution prevention; noise; socioeconomics, environmental justice, and children’s environmental health and safety risks; or natural resources and energy supply. A site-specific evaluation validated that significant impacts are not anticipated to these resource categories.

The Final EA included site-specific analyses for the six resource areas not covered by the findings of the September 2023 Final PEA and FONSI/ROD: historic and cultural resources, visual effects, coastal resources, biological resources, Section 4(f) resources, and water resources. The Final EA also includes a site-specific analysis of air quality and cumulative effects. The Proposed Action is not anticipated to have any impacts to coastal resources; Department of Transportation Section 4(f) resources; historical, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources; and visual effects. Short term construction activities could have temporary, minor impacts to air quality; biological resources; and water resources. The Proposed Action is not anticipated to result in significant cumulative impacts on human health or the environment.

Overall effects of the Proposed Action would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and impacts to climate due to the sustainability features and energy efficient design of the new ATCTs, including energy efficient fixtures, windows, and Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC)/circulation systems. Implementation of the new ATCT with these sustainability features would decrease energy consumption on a per square-foot basis as compared to the existing ATCT.

Best management practices and mitigation measures were identified in the Final EA; none are necessary to reduce potentially significant impacts below applicable significance thresholds. Based on the analysis within this Final EA, the FAA has determined there would be no significant impact to the human environment from implementation of the Proposed Action.

## **VI. FINDING**

After careful and thorough consideration of the facts contained herein and the attached Final EA, the undersigned finds that the Proposed Action is consistent with existing national environmental policies and objectives as set forth in Section 101 of NEPA and other applicable requirements and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment or otherwise include any condition requiring consultation to Section 102(2)(C) of NEPA. As a result, FAA will not prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

Based on the administrative review of this project, I certify, as prescribed by 49 U.S.C. 44502(b) that implementation of the Proposed Action is reasonably necessary for use in air commerce.

Having met all relevant requirements for environmental considerations and consultation, and under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator of the FAA, I approve the Proposed Action described in the Final EA and in this FONSI/ROD and authorize the Proposed Action to be undertaken at such time as other requirements have been met.

PREPARED BY:

Patrick Walsh  
FAA Air Traffic Organization  
Engineering Services Lead (AJW-2W16E)  
Western Service Area

APPROVED BY:

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Grady Stone  
Regional Administrator  
FAA Northwest Mountain Region

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**RIGHT OF APPEAL**

This FONSI/ROD presents the Federal Aviation Administration's final decision and approvals for the actions identified, including those taken under provision of 49 U.S.C. Subtitle VII, Parts A and B. This FONSI/ROD constitutes a final order of the Administrator and is subject to the exclusive judicial review by the U.S. Circuit Courts 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 in accordance with the provisions of 49 U.S.C. Section 46110. Any person 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. 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.