

APPENDIX A – PROJECT-SPECIFIC REVIEW CHECKLIST

This checklist may be used to determine whether a proposed projects falls under the scope of the space launch and reentry programmatic consultation and therefore does not require a project-specific review. A project-specific review is not required if the activities conducted are as described in the programmatic consultation’s proposed action, occur within the action area, and comply with all relevant PDCs (see Proposed Action and Action Area).

Examples of when an action agency might need to coordinate a project-specific review include: operations using a new launch site, construction of a new launch site, a new launch or reentry vehicle that does not fall under the vehicle envelopes as described in the proposed action, vessels, tugs, or dronships that do not fall under the vessel specifications as described in the proposed action, substantial changes in technology or operations, or when activities will not occur within the action area, or cannot fully comply with the applicable PDCs.

When evaluating whether a project satisfies the requirements of this programmatic, the action agency should consider all activities of the proposed action and effects caused by proposed action. The action agency should also consider all areas where activities will occur, including pre-flight activities (e.g., vessels, aircraft, launch site, etc.), in-flight impacts (e.g. sonic booms, expended stages, components, or debris, etc.), and recovery operations (e.g., vessels, debris salvage, barge landings, etc.). In other words, the areas to be considered should include all areas that may be affected, directly or indirectly, by the project and not merely the immediate area of the launch or landing (see 50 CFR §402.02).

If an action agency has any uncertainty that a proposed activity falls within the scope of this programmatic consultation or needs a project-specific review, they should contact the NMFS Office of Protected Resources ESA Interagency Cooperation Division. Project-specific review requests should be sent by email to nmfs.hq.esa.consultations@noaa.gov with the subject line “Project Specific Review Request OPR-2025-02196 Space Launch and Reentry Program” and include the following information: a project description that details the proposed operations, including details on the activities that the action agency identified do not fall under this programmatic or are unsure whether they fall under this programmatic, where and when the activities will occur, the number or frequency of the proposed operations, any PDCs that may not be fully implemented, any proposed changes to those PDCs, or additional measures, and determination of effects to ESA-listed species and critical habitat that could result from the project. Requests for a project-specific review should be submitted at least six months in advance of the proposed activity to allow time for completion of a formal ESA section 7 consultation if one is required.

General requirements for projects that fall within the scope of the space launch and reentry programmatic consultation, as described in the Proposed Action and Action Area section (see section for details):

- ☐ The Federal action is one of the following:
 1. FAA commercial space transportation license or permit for launch or reentry operations: license to operate a launch site, license to operate a reentry site, experimental permit, or vehicle operator license;

2. USSF authorization for launch operations at CCSFS or VSFB (non-FAA-licensed operations); or
 3. NASA authorization for launch operations at KSC or WFF (non-FAA-licensed operations).
- ☐ The proposed activities must be within the following parameters, and adhere to the listed requirements:
1. Weather balloon deployment
 - ☐ Five to 15 weather balloon deployments per launch
 - ☐ Radiosonde, which does not use a parachute
 - ☐ Pre-launch vessel or aircraft surveillance
 - ☐ Surveillance vessels up to a maximum of 200 ft (61 m) in length
 - ☐ Launches
 - ☐ Launches occur only at launch sites listed in Table 1
 - ☐ Launch vehicles adhere to the launch vehicle specifications in Table 2, and do not exceed a total engine thrust of 6.5 million lbs or generate sonic booms over 50 psf during ascent or landing
 - ☐ Launch abort tests
 - ☐ Launch abort tests only occur in the Atlantic Zone 2 (see Figure 5)
 - ☐ Launch failure or anomalies
 - ☐ Expended stages, components, or debris
 - ☐ Launch vehicles of a maximum size as listed in Table 2
 - ☐ Reentry vehicles of a maximum size of 30 ft (9.1 m) in length and 15 ft (4.6 m) in diameter
 - ☐ Fairings of a maximum size of 75 ft (22.9 m) in length and 30 ft (9.1 m) in diameter
 - ☐ Components of a maximum size of 15 ft by 15 ft by 15 ft (4.6 m by 4.6 m by 4.6 m)
 - ☐ Interstage adapters of a maximum size of 15 ft (4.6 m) in length and 23 ft (7 m) in diameter
 - ☐ Debris of smaller size than stages, components, and interstage adapters.
 - ☐ Explosive events
 - ☐ Occur at minimum 11 ft (3.4 m) above the surface of the ocean
 - ☐ Explosive weight (calculated from the amount of remaining propellant and its explosive yield) will not exceed 55,800 kilograms (123,018 lbs)
 - ☐ Explosive events will only occur in the Atlantic portion of the action area at least 100 mi (160.9 km) from any major land mass (see Figure 5)
 - ☐ Reentries
 - ☐ Reentry vehicles adhere to the reentry vehicle specifications of a maximum size of 30 ft (9.1 m) in length and 15 ft (4.6 m) in diameter, and do not generate sonic booms of over 3 psf
 - ☐ Recovery of stages, components, or debris
 - ☐ Reentry vehicles of a maximum size of 30 ft (9.1 m) in length and 15 ft (4.6 m) in diameter
 - ☐ Fairings of a maximum size of 75 ft (22.9 m) in length and 30 ft (9.1 m) in diameter
 - ☐ Barges and dronships up to a maximum of 400 ft (122 m) in length

- ☐ Vessels and tugs up to a maximum of 200 ft (61 m) in length
- ☐ Drogue parachutes do not exceed 200 ft² (18.6 m²) in size and do not exceed a suspension line length of 75 ft (22 m)
- ☐ Parafoils do not exceed 3,000 ft² (278.7 m²) in size and do not exceed a suspension line length of 50 ft (15.2 m)
- ☐ Main parachutes do not exceed 10,600 ft² (984.8 m²) in size and do not exceed a suspension line length of 150 ft (45.7 m)
- ☐ Pilot parachutes do not exceed 13.5 ft (4.1 m) in diameter, do not exceed a suspension line length of 8.75 ft (2.7 m), and are only used for the new SpaceX capsule
- ☐ All activities will occur within the action area as described in the programmatic and the area-based PDCs (see section below). No operations except vessel and aircraft transit will occur outside the areas depicted in Figures 1–11
- ☐ Only vessel or aircraft transit will occur within 5 NM of the U.S. coast (vessel transit will not occur in other countries' waters)
- ☐ Nothing will be expended or disposed of over coral reef areas
- ☐ No operations will occur in a National Marine Sanctuary, or affect National Marine Sanctuary resources, without the appropriate authorization, permit, or consultation
- ☐ If there is a launch failure, operators will follow their emergency response cleanup procedures
- ☐ All personnel associated with space launch and reentry operations will understand the ESA-listed species and critical habitat, and MMPA-protected species, that may be present in the operating area
- ☐ All vessel operators will look out for and attempt to avoid collision with ESA-listed and MMPA-protected species
- ☐ A dedicated observer, who can recognize ESA-listed and MMPA-protected species, will be on board for all vessel activity and monitor for ESA-listed and MMPA-protected species
- ☐ The dedicated observer will a) alert the vessel operators to implement the appropriate vessel speed restrictions and vessel avoidance measures, and b) gather relevant data on ESA-listed and MMPA-protected species including date, time, GPS location, species, number of animals, distance and bearing from the vessel, direction of travel, behavior, effects to the animals from space launch and reentry operations, any effects including injury and mortality observed in launch, landing, or recovery areas, and other relevant information
- ☐ When an ESA-listed or MMPA-protected species is observed, the vessel will:
 - ☐ Maintain a minimum distance of 150 ft (45.7 m) from sea turtles
 - ☐ Maintain a minimum distance of 300 ft (91.4 m) from all other ESA-listed and MMPA-protected species
 - ☐ If the distance from the vessel to the ESA-listed or MMPA-protected species becomes less than the distance specified in these PDCs, reduce vessel speed and shift the engine to neutral. Do not engage the engines until the animals are clear of the area and transit route
 - ☐ Reduce vessel speed to 10 knots or less when mother/calf pairs or groups (more than two individuals) of marine mammals are observed

- ☐ Attempt to remain parallel to (e.g., when animals are bow-riding), or move the vessel away from, an ESA-listed or MMPA-protected species' course while the vessel is in transit and avoid excessive speed or abrupt changes in direction until the animal(s) have left the area or transit route
- ☐ Aircraft will maintain a minimum height of 1,000 ft (304.8 m) above ESA-listed or MMPA-protected species and avoid flying in circles, or other types of harassing behaviors, above them
- ☐ Any ESA-listed or MMPA-protected species collision(s), injury(ies), mortality(ies), entanglement(s), or stranding(s) will be reported immediately to the appropriate contacts
- ☐ Action agencies will report annually on the nature of their activities, as covered under this programmatic consultation, including but not limited to locations of the activities, effects to ESA-listed species and critical habitat, implementation of PDCs, and implementation of conservation recommendations

Additional requirements for projects that occur in the Pacific Ocean (see Figure 2, Figure 3, and associated shapefiles for confirmation), as described in the Proposed Action and Action Area section (see section for details):

- ☐ Operations in Zone 2 are limited to the number of maximum annual operations described in Table 3
- ☐ Operations in Zone 3a are limited to vessel transit only from December 1 through April 30
- ☐ Operations in Zone 4 are limited to vessel transit and barge landings only
- ☐ No operations will occur around Isla Guadalupe and surrounding waters
- ☐ No operations will occur over areas with sea ice cover off Alaska
- ☐ Steller sea lion critical habitat in:
 - Alaska
 - ☐ No operations will occur within the aquatic zone that extends 20 NM (37 km) seaward in State and Federally managed waters from the baseline or basepoint of each major rookery and major haulout that is west of 144° W longitude
 - ☐ No operations will occur within the aquatic zone that extends 3,000 ft (0.9 km) seaward in State and Federally managed waters from the baseline or basepoint of each major rookery and major haulout in Alaska east of 144° W longitude
 - ☐ No operations will occur within the air zone that extends 3,000 ft (0.9 km) above the terrestrial zone of each major rookery and major haulout in Alaska (measured vertically from sea level)
 - ☐ No vessel operations will occur within 3 NM (5.6 km) of all Steller sea lion rookeries west of 150° W longitude
 - ☐ In the unlikely event that debris is expected to occur over or land within the air or aquatic critical habitat zones, debris should be monitored and cleaned up if in the water. If debris lands within 3 NM (5.6 km) of a rookery west of 150° W longitude, or if debris occurs on a major rookery or major haulout (i.e., on land), notify the appropriate contacts
 - California and Oregon

- ☐ No operations will occur in an aquatic zone that extends 3,000 ft (0.9 km) seaward from major rookeries
- ☐ No operations will occur in an air zone that extends 3,000 ft (0.9 km) above the terrestrial zone of major rookeries (measured vertically from sea level)

Additional requirements for projects that occur in the Gulf (see Figure 4 and associated shapefiles for confirmation), as described in the Proposed Action and Action Area section (see section for details):

- ☐ Operations in Zone 2 are limited to the number of maximum annual operations described in Table 3
- ☐ Operations in Zone 3 are limited to vessel transit only
- ☐ No operations will occur within Rice's whale core distribution area
- ☐ No operations will occur within 20 NM (37 km) of the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary or listed coral reef areas
- ☐ Vessels will slow to 10 knots or less and maintain a minimum distance of 1,500 ft (457.2 m) from Rice's whale. If a whale is observed but cannot be confirmed as a species other than a Rice's whale, the vessel operator must assume that it is a Rice's whale
- ☐ Vessels will maintain speeds to 10 knots or less in Rice's whale proposed critical habitat

Additional requirements for projects that occur in the Atlantic Ocean (see Figure 5, Figure 6, and associated shapefiles for confirmation), as described in the Proposed Action and Action Area section (see section for details):

- ☐ Operations in Zone 2 are limited to the number of maximum annual operations described in Table 3
- ☐ Operations in Zone 3b are limited to vessel transit only, from November 1 through April 30
- ☐ Operations in Zone 3c are limited to vessel transit only, from January 1 through July 31
- ☐ Operations in Zone 5 (off North Carolina and Florida) will not include any disposals or expended stages, expended components, or debris
- ☐ Operations in Zone 5a will not include any disposals or expended stages, expended components, or debris between November 1 through April 30
- ☐ Operations in Zone 5b will not include any disposals or expended stages, expended components, or debris between April 1 through November 30
- ☐ Vessels will slow to 10 knots or less and maintain a minimum distance of 1,500 ft (457.2 m) from North Atlantic right whales
- ☐ Vessels will comply with the Right Whale Ship Strike Reduction Rule and reduce speeds to 10 knots or less in Seasonal Management Areas or in Right Whale Slow Zones
- ☐ Check various communication media for general information regarding avoiding vessel strikes and specific information regarding North Atlantic right whale sightings in the area. These include NOAA weather radio, U.S. Coast Guard NAVTEX broadcasts, and Notices to Mariners
- ☐ Aircraft will maintain a baseline minimum height of 1,500 ft (457.2 m) above North Atlantic right whales

- ☐ Launch abort tests will not occur in designated critical habitat for the North Atlantic right whale, Seasonal Management Areas, or Slow Zones, and will not occur between November 1 through April 30

Additional requirements for projects that occur in the Caribbean (see Figure 7 and associated shapefiles for confirmation), as described in the Proposed Action and Action Area section (see section for details):

- ☐ Operations in Zone 4 are limited to vessel transit and barge landings only
- ☐ Operations in the Exuma Sound are limited to vessel transit, barge landings, and fairing recoveries