



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

COMMANDER
UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
250 MAKALAPA DRIVE
PEARL HARBOR HI 96860-3131

IN REPLY REFER TO:

5090
Ser N46/0272
March 11, 2022

Dear Sir or Madam:

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE 2020 GULF OF ALASKA NAVY TRAINING ACTIVITIES DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/OVERSEAS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The U.S. Navy has prepared a Supplement to the December 2020 Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Navy Training Activities Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS), which is now available for review and comment. The Supplement addresses a change in the Study Area and the addition of a new Continental Shelf and Slope Mitigation Area. The Navy welcomes your comments on the Supplement.

Since the release of the Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS on December 11, 2020, and completion of the Northern Edge 2021 exercise, the Navy recognized that the size and shape of the GOA Temporary Maritime Activities Area (TMAA) no longer provides sufficient space for the realistic maneuvering of vessels and aircraft during training exercises. Proposed changes to the Study Area include additional airspace and sea space to the west and south of the TMAA. The area is referred to as the Western Maneuver Area and adds approximately 185,806 square nautical miles to the Study Area (see enclosure 1). This additional space would enable Navy personnel and units to practice more realistic, complex training scenarios in a safer, more efficient manner that would better prepare them to respond to real-world incidents. The TMAA (approximately 42,146 square nautical miles) would remain unchanged and any activities involving active sonar or explosives would, as in the past, occur in this area only. The Navy is not proposing new or increased number of training activities in the Western Maneuver Area, only an expansion of the area the Navy may use for vessel and aircraft maneuvering purposes during exercises. The number of vessels, aircraft, underway steaming hours, events, and flight times remains the same. Although the Study Area has expanded, the conclusions regarding potential impacts have not significantly changed from the 2020 Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS.

In response to agency, tribal, and public comments, the Navy also proposes implementing a new mitigation area within the continental shelf and slope area of the TMAA (approximately 14,600 square nautical miles). The Navy would expand its mitigation measures for explosives detonated at or near the surface and prohibit the use of explosives during training (up to 10,000 feet altitude) in this area to protect marine species and biologically important habitat. The Navy anticipates the implementation of the proposed mitigation area would reduce impacts on marine mammals, fishes, and marine birds.

The Supplement is available on the project website at www.GOAEIS.com, as well as a list of public locations with printed copies of the document. If you need assistance accessing the

5090
Ser N46/0272
March 11, 2022

document, please contact Ms. Julianne Stanford, Navy Region Northwest Public Affairs Office, at julianne.e.stanford.civ@us.navy.mil or 360-867-8525. If you would like additional information or to schedule a project briefing, please contact Ms. Kimberly Kler, GOA Supplemental EIS/OEIS Project Manager, at projectmanager@goaeis.com.

The Navy is accepting comments on the Supplement throughout the public comment period from March 18, 2022, to May 2, 2022. To be considered in the development of the Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS, comments must be postmarked or received online by 11:59 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time **May 2, 2022**. All comments submitted during the comment period will become part of the public record and substantive comments will be addressed in the Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS. Public comments received during the 2020 Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS comment period are still valid; previously submitted comments do not need to be resubmitted.

Comments may be submitted online at www.GOAEIS.com or by mail to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Northwest
Attention: GOA Supplemental EIS/OEIS Project Manager
1101 Tautog Circle, Suite 203
Silverdale, WA 98315-1101

Please visit the project website at www.GOAEIS.com to learn more about the overall project and the Supplement. The Navy will continue to inform and engage the public, stakeholders, and Alaska Native tribes throughout the National Environmental Policy Act process. We also request your help to inform the community about the availability of the Supplement by sharing this information with your staff and interested individuals.

Sincerely,



A. K. HUTCHISON
Captain, U.S. Navy
By direction

Enclosure: 1. Proposed Changes to the Study Area and New Continental Shelf and Slope Mitigation Area for the Gulf of Alaska Navy Training Activities Supplement to the 2020 Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS

Enclosure 1: Proposed Changes to the Study Area and New Continental Shelf and Slope Mitigation Area for the Gulf of Alaska Navy Training Activities Supplement to the 2020 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement

