UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 8
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12/18/2014

Ref: 8EPR-N

Ms. Judith Keith, AFCEC/CZN
2261 Hughes Ave., Ste 155
JBSA Lackland AFB, Texas 78236-9853

Re: Powder River Training Complex Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) CEQ # 20140334

Dear Ms. Keith:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 8 reviewed the Powder River Training Complex (PRTC) Final EIS developed by the United States Air Force (Air Force). Our review was pursuant to our responsibilities and authority under Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Section 309 of the Clean Air Act directs the EPA to review and comment in writing on the environmental impacts of any major federal agency action.

Project Background

Final EIS analyzes the potential environmental consequences of a proposal to improve airspace for training, primarily, B-1 aircrews at Ellsworth Air Force Base (AFB), South Dakota, and B-52 aircrews at Minot AFB, North Dakota. PRTC alternatives have been modified in the Final EIS to incorporate mitigations in response to public, agency, and tribal comments from the proposal presented in the 2010 Draft EIS. The modified proposal incorporates mitigations designed to avoid, minimize, rectify, or otherwise reduce anticipated impacts. The proposed PRTC would provide for realistic training altitudes, employment of chaff and defensive flares, and simulation of realistic combat. The Final EIS evaluates Modified Alternatives A, B, and C, and the No Action Alternative.

EPA Evaluation

The FEIS shows the careful consideration of project impacts by the Air Force. The Final EIS is well organized and provides a thoughtful analysis of environmental impacts and consequences. The EPA has no objections to this project moving forward with the environmental protection measures identified in the Final EIS.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (303) 312-6704. You may also contact Lisa Lloyd, NEPA lead reviewer, at (303) 312-6537 or by email at lloyd.lisa@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Philip S. Strobel
Acting Director, NEPA Compliance and Review Program
Office of Ecosystems Protection and Remediation

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