



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 4
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April 26, 2016

National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Kennedy Space Center
Environmental Management Branch, TA-A4C
Kennedy Space Center, FL 32899

ATTN: Mr. Donald Dankert

Re: Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (DPEIS) on Kennedy Space Center, Center-Wide Operations; CEQ No.: 20160059

Dear Mr. Dankert:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the subject document and is commenting in accordance with Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has prepared this Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) to evaluate the potential environmental impacts from the proposed center-wide Kennedy Space Center (KSC) operations, activities, and facilities for the next 20 years. The Center Master Plan (CMP) is to provide the overall management guidance for KSC from 2016 to 2032. The implementation of the CMP will facilitate a 20-year transformation from a single, government user launch complex to a multi-user spaceport.

The EPA understands that the DPEIS presented three (3) descriptions of the alternatives: The Proposed Action would transition to a multi-user spaceport, whereas a number of new facilities would be constructed to include two seaports and horizontal and vertical launch and landing facilities. There would also be planned changes in the acreage of designated land use categories at KSC. We further understand that Alternative 1 was introduced as a direct response to concerns expressed in comments received during the PEIS public scoping period in June 2014, as well as other observations and data acquired from stakeholders and other agencies during the scoping process.

The EPA understands that Alternative 1 is similar to the Proposed Action but has differences in the location and size of the vertical and horizontal launch and landing facilities. Also, the two new seaports identified in the Proposed Action would be removed from the plan. Under the 'No Action' plan, KSC management will continue to emphasize delicate NASA programs and would not transition in the coming years towards a multi-user spaceport.

The NASA program would continue to be operated as an independent entity to a significant degree, funded separately, and managed for activities and buildings in support of its own programs.

This PEIS outlines and broadly describes NASA's actions associated with KSC's proposed programs in limited detail that are known at the present time. The EPA acknowledges that three programmatic alternatives outlined in this PDEIS are described with their potential environmental effects in general terms. At such time, as specific project details and proposed locations become available, the EPA recommends that specific future NEPA documents be tiered from this programmatic document as the principal NEPA document. Also note that under the Section 404 Clean Water Act permitting authority, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would require the applicant to avoid and minimize and then provide compensatory mitigation for unavoidable impacts resulting from construction (dredging and filling) in jurisdictional wetlands. The impacts and specific details required for potential permitting should be provided in these subsequent NEPA documents. The EPA recommends that any proposed actions (including cumulative actions) in the future having adverse direct or indirect impacts on wetlands or other jurisdictional waters of the U.S. must seek avoidance and minimization first before making a determination for compensatory mitigation.

Overall, the EPA has rated the Preferred Action in the DPEIS as 'LO', or lack of objections, which indicates that the review has not identified any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the preferred action (alternative). The EPA requests a copy of the Final PEIS and Record of Decision when they become available. If you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact Mr. Larry Gissentanna at 404-562-8248 or gissentanna.larry@epa.gov of the NEPA Program Office.

Sincerely,



Christopher A. Militscher
Chief, NEPA Program Office
Resource Conservation and Restoration Division