

Air National Guard F-15EX Eagle II & F-35A Lightning II Operational Beddowns Environmental Impact Statement



What's inside this Fact Sheet:

- Current EIS Timeline
- Review of Draft EIS and public comment period
- Dates and locations of upcoming public meetings and how to submit comments
- Next steps following the public comment period

Previous Fact Sheets:

- Fact Sheet #1 included a review of the Proposed Action, public meetings schedule, and link to the project website
- Fact Sheet #2 included an overview of the public scoping process and public comments to consider for the Draft EIS

Proposed Action

The United States Department of the Air Force (DAF) and the National Guard Bureau (NGB) propose to maintain the combat capability of the Air National Guard fighter wings currently flying the F-15C/D aircraft. These aircraft have reached the end of their lifespan and will be retired due to safety and maintenance concerns. These fighter wings (that are not already undergoing similar evaluation) include:

- 104th Fighter Wing (104 FW) at Westfield-Barnes Regional Airport in Westfield, Massachusetts;
- 144th Fighter Wing (144 FW) at Fresno Yosemite International Airport in Fresno, California; and
- 159th Fighter Wing (159 FW) at Naval Air Station (NAS) Joint Reserve Base (JRB) New Orleans, in Belle Chasse, Louisiana.

The proposal is the beddown, operation, and associated infrastructure construction of one squadron of F-15EX Eagle II (F-15EX) aircraft at two of these fighter wings and one squadron of F-35A Lightning II (F-35A) aircraft at either the 104 FW or the 159 FW. These aircraft would replace the aging F-15C/D fighter aircraft at the selected wings. It is also conceivable that one or more of these fighter wings would retain the legacy F-15C/D aircraft for the foreseeable future and construction associated with that alternative would be implemented to support the current legacy aircraft.

Background

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires all federal agencies to analyze potential environmental consequences of any proposal before making a decision as to its implementation. The analysis for this proposal is presented in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which encourages public and external government agency involvement.

The Draft EIS

Taking into consideration the public and agency comments received during the public scoping period, which occurred from July 19, 2022, through September 2, 2022, the NGB has prepared the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS is a comprehensive document that contains the following:

- In-depth description of the Proposed Action
- Technical descriptions of the Existing Conditions
- Quantitative and qualitative analyses of potential impacts to various resources
- Projected environmental impact from implementing any of the alternatives

Public involvement is a fundamental element to the successful implementation of the NEPA process. The public has an important role in providing input during this process to help DAF make more informed decisions to implement this aircraft beddown. The NGB is at the second phase of public involvement in this process, which consists of a review period for the Draft EIS. The formal public review period for the Draft EIS begins with publication of a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register on **February 16, 2024**, and will extend through **April 5, 2024**.

Public and Agency Review of the Draft EIS

The Draft EIS has been made available via the website to persons and agencies, and hard copies of the document have been placed at the libraries listed on the back of this fact sheet. A public comment period will take place from **February 16, 2024**, to **April 5, 2024**, during which time the public is invited to review the Draft EIS and provide their comments on the analysis in writing or at the public meetings. All relevant comments received during the comment period will be reviewed, and incorporated as appropriate, into the Final EIS for DAF consideration during its decision-making process.

Public Meetings

You're invited to attend a public meeting to learn more about the proposal, talk with agency representatives one-on-one, and submit verbal or written comments on the Draft EIS. All members of the public and press are invited to attend the public meetings, which will be held virtually and in person locally on the following dates and locations:

Virtual Public Meetings:

These meetings will begin with a presentation, followed by a question-and-answer session with project team members, and a formal hearing to receive public comments on the Draft EIS.

BELLE CHASSE, LA, Tuesday, March 5, 2024, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. CST

WESTFIELD, MA, Wednesday, March 6, 2024, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. EST

FRESNO, CA, Thursday, March 7, 2024, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. PST

In-person Public Meetings:

These meetings will include informational poster stations with project team members available to answer questions, followed by a presentation and formal hearing to receive public comments on the Draft EIS.

FRESNO, CA, Thursday, March 14, 2024, 5 to 7 p.m. PDT, Piccadilly Inn
5115 E. McKinley Ave, Fresno, CA 93727

WESTFIELD, MA, Tuesday, March 19, 2024, 5 to 7 p.m. EDT, Westfield
Intermediate School, 350 Southampton Rd., Westfield, MA 01085

BELLE CHASSE, LA, Thursday, March 21, 2024, 5 to 7 p.m. CDT, Belle Chasse
Auditorium, 8398 LA-23, Belle Chasse, LA 70037

If you'd like to submit a question in advance of the virtual meetings, fill out the question form on the project website or send an email. Virtual meeting links will be posted on the project website. Individuals requiring reasonable accommodations or members of the media with a query may send an email to: NGB.A4.A4A.NEPA.COMMENTS.org@us.af.mil. Visit the project website to let us know you're planning to attend one of the public meetings. Fill out a speaker sign-up form if you'd like to provide an oral comment at one of the public meetings. For more information visit www.ANGF15EX-F35A-EIS.com

William Strickland
EIS Project Manager
National Guard Bureau
NGB/A4AM
Shepperd Hall
3501 Fetchet Ave.
Joint Base Andrews MD 20762-5157

Air National Guard F-15EX Eagle II & F-35A Lightning II Operational Beddowns Environmental Impact Statement Public Meetings

Comments are Welcome!

The Draft EIS is available on the project website or can be viewed at one of the public libraries listed below. Verbal comments can be made at one of the public meetings. Written comments or requests for a copy of the Draft EIS can be submitted in one of the following ways: Via the project website at www.ANGF15EX-F35A-EIS.com, via the project email at NGB.A4.A4A.NEPA.COMMENTS.org@us.af.mil, by mail to: William Strickland, EIS Project Manager, National Guard Bureau, NGB/A4AM, Shepperd Hall, 3501 Fetchet Ave., Joint Base Andrews MD 20762-5157, or at one of the public meetings.

Please note that by including your name and address on correspondence, it will be used to compile a mailing list for distributing future information regarding the EIS. Names will appear in the EIS. Phone numbers, emails, and physical addresses will not be published. By including your name and address, it will become part of the EIS administrative record.



Scan QR code for
project website

The Next Step Following the Public Comment Period in the NEPA Process: Preparation of the Final EIS

Public comments received from now until **April 5, 2024** will be considered by DAF before determining final decisions. The resulting analysis will then be presented in the Final EIS. The Final EIS will be made available to the public for 30 days. After the 30-day period, the Record of Decision will then be issued, which will identify which action has been selected by DAF, as the decision-maker, and what management actions or other measures will be carried out to minimize, where possible, potential adverse impacts to the environment.

Repositories where the Draft EIS will be available:

WESTFIELD, MA: Westfield Athenaeum (Library), 6 Elm St., Westfield, MA 01085; Westfield City Hall (Mayor's Office), 59 Court St., Westfield, MA 01085; Airport Manager's Office, Terminal Building, Westfield-Barnes Regional Airport, 110 Airport Road Westfield, MA 01085; **FRESNO, CA:** Fresno County Public Library, 2420 Mariposa St., Fresno, CA 93721; Sunnyside Regional Library, 5566 E Kings Canyon Rd., Fresno, CA 93727; Betty Rodriguez Regional Library, 3040 N. Cedar Ave., Fresno, CA 93703; **CLOVIS, CA:** Clovis Regional Library, 1155 Fifth St., Clovis, CA 93612; **BELLE CHASSE, LA:** Belle Chasse Branch Library, 8442 LA-23, Belle Chasse, LA 70037.