

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Air Force

**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
(DRAFT EA) FOR REDISTRIBUTION OF KC-135 STRATOTANKER AIRCRAFT TO
EIELSON AIR FORCE BASE, ALASKA.**

AGENCY: United States Air Force (USAF)

ACTION: Notice of Availability

SUMMARY: The United States Air Force (USAF) is issuing this notice of availability (NOA) to advise the public of the availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA) for the redistribution of four KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft to Eielson Air Force Base (AFB), Alaska. The Draft EA evaluates impacts associated with infrastructure construction, demolition, renovations, additional personnel, and increases in aircraft operations at Eielson AFB.

DATES: Agencies and the public are encouraged to provide written comments on the Draft EA. The 30-day public comment period for the Draft EA begins on December 8, 2022 and ends on January 7, 2023.

ADDRESSES: Further information, including an electronic copy of the Draft EA, may be found online at the following website (<https://www.eielson.af.mil/General-Information/Environmental/>). Hard copies of the Draft EA are also available for review at the Noel Wien Public Library, 1215 Cowles St., Fairbanks, Alaska 99701, and at the North Pole Branch Library, 656 NPHS Boulevard, North Pole, Alaska 99705. Questions or comments concerning the Draft EA should be directed to Attn: Eielson AFB Public Affairs, 354 Broadway St., Suite 15A, Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska 99702-1800 or email: 354fw.pa.publicaffairs@us.af.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

BACKGROUND: The Air Force proposes to relocate four KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft as Primary Aircraft Assigned (PAA) to Eielson AFB. The addition would increase the total number of KC-135 aircraft to 12 total PAA. In order to maintain efficient aircraft and airfield operations, approximately 254 personnel, plus their associated dependents, would be stationed at Eielson AFB. Additionally, USAF would construct, renovate, or modify at least 12 facilities to accommodate the incoming aircraft and manpower.

ALTERNATIVES UNDER CONSIDERATION: Carrying out the Proposed Action at Eielson AFB is the Preferred Alternative. Other Alternatives considered for the Proposed Action were: Andersen AFB, Guam; Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii; and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. Installations were evaluated based on their current operations and proximity to the Arctic Region. Andersen AFB and Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam were eliminated from consideration due to lack of proximity to the Arctic Region; additionally, Andersen AFB does not currently host a KC-135 unit. Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson was eliminated from consideration because the base does not currently host a KC-135 unit.

Under the No Action Alternative, the four KC-135s and additional personnel would not be stationed at Eielson AFB and none of the associated proposed construction, renovation, or demolition projects would occur.

FLOODPLAIN/WETLANDS: The projects associated with the Proposed Action at Eielson AFB have the potential to be located in a floodplain and/or wetland. Consistent with the requirements and objectives of Executive Order (EO) 11990, "Protection of Wetlands," and EO 1988, "Floodplain Management," as amended by EO 13690, "Establishing a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard and a Process for Further Soliciting and Considering Stakeholder Input," state and federal regulatory agencies with special expertise in wetlands and floodplains have been contacted to request comment. Consistent with EO 11988, EO 13690, and EO 11990, an Early Public Notice was published in the

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner on March 13, 2022 to initiate early public review of the proposed actions and alternatives, which have the potential to be located in a floodplain and/or wetland.

Henry Williams
Acting Air Force Federal Register Liaison Officer