

## NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

National Environmental Policy Act; Finding of No Significant Impact for the Proposed Hydro-Impact Basin at NASA Langley Research Center

AGENCY: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Langley Research Center (LaRC)

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500 - 1508), and NASA's policy NPR 8580.1, "Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act and Executive Order 12114," NASA has made a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) with respect to the proposed Hydro-Impact Basin project. The Hydro-Impact Basin would allow cost-effective full-scale water-impact testing for simulated Orion Crew Exploration Vehicle (CEV) ocean splashdown research in support of NASA's Constellation Program. The proposed project consists of constructing a rectangular basin of steel mesh and spray-on concrete; using the water-filled basin for CEV testing for approximately five years; and draining and refilling of the basin following completion of the testing program. The Hydro-Impact Basin would measure 35 meters (115 feet) by 27 meters (90 feet) with a maximum depth of 7.6 meters (25 feet), and would be filled with 4.5 million liters (1.2 million gallons) of potable water from the Newport News municipal water system.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Philip McGinnis, NASA LaRC Environmental Management Office, MS 213, Hampton, VA 23681-2199, (757) 864-2073.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: NASA has reviewed the EA prepared for the proposed Hydro-Impact Basin project and has determined that it represents an accurate and adequate analysis of the scope and level of associated environmental impacts. The EA is incorporated by reference in this FONSI.

The Proposed Action and the No-Action Alternative were considered in the EA. Under the No-Action Alternative, NASA would not construct the Hydro-Impact Basin. There would be no full-scale testing of simulated ocean splashdown landing scenarios of the Orion CEV, potentially compromising the implementation of the Agency's Constellation Program.

The EA addressed environmental impacts in the areas of Land Use; Noise; Cultural Resources; Hazardous Materials and Hazardous/Solid Waste; Pollution Prevention; Health and Safety; Air Quality; Soils and Geology; Water Resources; and Ecological Resources. The impact of the Proposed Action on the identified resource areas would be very minor and temporary.

On the basis of the information provided in the EA, NASA has determined that the environmental impacts associated with this project will not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the quality of the human or natural environment. Therefore, issuance of a

FONSI is warranted, and preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, is not required.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. B. Roe', written over a horizontal line.

Lesla B. Roe

Director, NASA Langley Research Center

1/25/03  
Date