

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

NOTICE 96-LERC-01

National Environmental Policy Act; Finding of No Significant Impact; Operation of the Hypersonic Tunnel Facility at the Plum Brook Station (Lewis Research Center)

AGENCY: National Aeronautics and Space Administration

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 Procedures for Implementing NEPA (14 CFR Subpart 1216.3), NASA has made a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) with respect to the planned resumption of operation of the Hypersonic Test Facility (HTF) at the Plum Brook Station (PBS) located in Sandusky, Erie County, Ohio. The resumption of operations of HTF involves returning to service this unique test facility, built in 1966 and operated until 1974, when it was placed in shutdown/storage mode. In 1990 an effort was begun to rehabilitate the facility, and that effort has been completed. The HTF is now ready to begin normal testing operations.

DATE: Comments in response to this notice must be received in writing no later than (30 days after the first date of publication in the local newspaper).

ADDRESSES: Comments should be addressed to Mr. Peter W. McCallum, Chief, Office of Environmental Programs, NASA Lewis Research Center, Mail Stop 6-4, 21000 Brookpark Road, Cleveland, Oh 44135; telephone 216-433-8852; e-mail peter.mccallum@lerc.nasa.gov. The Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared for the Operation of the Hypersonic Test Facility, PBS which supports this FONSI can be reviewed at:

NASA Lewis Research Center
Office of Environmental Programs Building 6
21000 Brookpark Rd, Cleveland, OH, 44135
(Contact Peter W. McCallum, 216-433-8852)

NASA Plum Brook Station
Plum Brook Management Office, Building 7141
6100 Columbus Ave, Sandusky, OH, 44870
(Contact Keith M. Peecook, 419-621-3234)

Sandusky Library
114 W. Adams Street
Sandusky, OH 44870
(Contact Gail Riedy, Head of Reference services)

NASA Headquarters Library
Room 1J20
33 E Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20546
(Contact Kenneth M. Kumor, 202-358-1112)

A limited number of copies of the EA are available by contacting Mr. Peter W. McCallum, Chief, Office of Environmental Programs, at the address and/or telephone number indicated herein.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mr. Peter W. McCallum, Chief, Office of Environmental Programs,
NASA Lewis Research Center, Mail Stop 6-4, 21000 Brookpark Road,
Cleveland, OH 44135; telephone 216-433-8852; e-mail peter.mccallum@lerc.nasa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

NASA has independently reviewed the EA prepared for the Operation of the Hypersonic Test Facility, PBS, 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 NASA Lewis Research Center is proposing action which involves resuming operation of the Hypersonic Test Facility (HTF).

Two major alternatives to the proposed action were considered. First, the implications of no action/operations at the HTF were examined. No significant environmental impact would result if this proposed action were implemented. If over time the HTF and associated facilities are not maintained, the structures would eventually deteriorate. This could lead to soil contamination from flaking paint, possible release of asbestos insulation, as well as reduced aesthetics due to lack of maintenance. In addition, if this option of no action/operations at the HTF were chosen it would not be possible to perform the required Mach 5 - 7 range testing in the unique non-vitiated environment provided by HTF. There is no other existing alternate facility with these capabilities.

The second alternative considered the impact of duplicating the HTF operations at an alternate (unspecified) site. This alternative would be considerably more expensive and would have by far the greatest environmental impact of all the options since no comparable facility to the HTF currently exists. Choosing this option would result in having to construct an entirely new facility which poses significant environmental uncertainties when compared to using an existing facility.

The proposed operation activities will generate steam, engine exhaust products, noise, and waste chemicals, but all in such amounts that no individual or cumulative significant impact will result. NASA has determined that the proposed project will not affect long-term air or water quality, wetlands, cultural resources, threatened or endangered species or critical habitat, or other flora or fauna. HTF is not located in the 500-year floodplain. No other matters of potential environmental concern have been identified.

On the basis of the EA developed in connection with the operation of the Hypersonic Test Facility 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 environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required. NASA will take no final action or authorize operation activities prior to the expiration of the 30-day comment period.

Prepared by: Neil M. Beecroft Date 4/22/96

Reviewed by: Peter W. McCallum Date 4/29/96

Approved by: Donald J. Campbell Date 5/15/96