

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

NOTICE: KSC-04-21

National Environmental Policy Act: Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Environmental Assessment (EA) Kennedy Space Center (KSC) Launch Complex (LC)-48

AGENCY: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 United States Code 4321, et. seq.); the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 1500-1508); and NASA policies and procedures (14 CFR Part 1216, Subpart 1216.3), NASA has made a FONSI with respect to the proposed construction and operation of a Small Class Vehicle Launch Pad referred to as LC-48. The launch complex is located approximately 1.6 kilometers (km) (1 mile [mi]) southeast of LC-39A on KSC.

DATE: This Proposed Action may proceed as of the date of the signature of this FONSI.

ADDRESSES: Written comments or questions should be addressed to:

Mr. Donald Dankert
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NASA Kennedy Space Center
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The final EA is available online in Acrobat® format at:

https://netspublic.grc.nasa.gov/EA_EIS_Documents.cfm?key=KSC

A limited number of hard copies of the final EA are available by contacting Mr. Dankert at the address above, electronic mail address, or telephone indicated herein.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: On April 11, 2019, NASA released the Draft EA for a 30-day public comment period ending May 11, 2019. NASA notified the public of the Draft EA availability through a local newspaper advertisement. No substantial comments were received during the public comment period.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION: The purpose of the Proposed Action is the construction and operation of a multi-user launch complex for small class launch vehicles designated as LC-48. It will serve as a versatile launch pad and integrated stage testing facility,

providing a “clean” pad surface that would allow commercial and government users to supply their own launch ground systems support infrastructure for their launch campaigns. The launch complex is located approximately 1.6 km (1 mi) southeast of LC-39A on KSC. The pad design will accommodate various launch vehicles utilizing multiple types of liquid and solid propellants, including oxygen, methane, hydrogen, and rocket propellant (RP-1), as well as high-pressure gaseous nitrogen and helium.

The proposed LC-48 could support up to two concrete slab “clean” pads with room for minimal supporting infrastructure and facilities, or one concrete slab “clean” pad that would allow for a greater diversity of supporting facilities. Initial development of the area (Phase 1) includes one clean pad design. To account for potential future partners and development, the total build-out concept for LC-48 could support two fully integrated launch facilities with all necessary supporting infrastructure.

The EA evaluated potential impacts of implementing the Proposed Action and a range of reasonable alternatives. The two alternatives carried forward for evaluation in the EA include: 1) the Preferred Alternative; and 2) the No Action Alternative where the Proposed Action would not be implemented.

ALTERNATIVE TO BE IMPLEMENTED: Alternatives analyzed in the EA include the Proposed Action and the No Action alternative. Under the No Action alternative, KSC would forego development and operations of the proposed launch complex. The Preferred Alternative is the Proposed Action which best meets the purpose and need for the project.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES: Environmental impacts from the Proposed Action and No Action Alternatives were classified as none, minimal, or moderate. Under the No Action Alternative, the launch complex would not be constructed, and no potential environmental impacts would be realized. However, the No Action Alternative was not selected because it does not meet the purpose and need of the Proposed Action.

Specifically, the construction and operation of the Proposed Action would result in no adverse impacts to cultural resources and Section 4(f) properties and minimal adverse impacts to air quality, climate, hazardous materials, water quality, transportation, and health and safety. Land use and visual resources, noise, and biological resources would experience moderate adverse impacts and socioeconomics would realize minimal beneficial impacts.

No significant impacts to the environment have been identified for the implementation of the Proposed Action and no significant cumulative impacts are anticipated. Regulatory consultations and state and federal permitting actions have been completed. Any deviations from the Proposed Action will be evaluated and subject to additional NEPA analysis.

CONCLUSION: Based on the analysis in this EA NASA has concluded that the implementation of the Proposed Action will not result in a significant effect on the human or natural environment. Applicable Federal, state, and local laws and regulations will be followed. NASA has determined that an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to NEPA is not required, and this FONSI is hereby submitted.

On the basis of the final EA, I have determined that the environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Action would not individually or cumulatively have a significant impact on the quality of the biological or physical environment.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:

Janet E. Petro
Director