NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

NOTICE 96-SSC-01

National Environmental Policy Act; Finding of No Significant Impact; Low Cost Boost Technologies Program at the John C. Stennis Space Center.

AGENCY: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

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 proposed Low Cost Boost Technologies Program located at Stennis Space Center. NASA is planning implementation of this program to meet requirements for future Earth-to-Orbit missions at reduced cost.

DATE: Comments in response to this notice must be received in writing within 30 days of (first date of publication).

ADDRESSES: Comments should be addressed to Ronald G. Magee, NASA Environmental Officer, Code GA00, Stennis Space Center, MS 39529-6000; Telephone (601) 688-7384. The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Low Cost Boost Technologies Program that supports this FONSI may be reviewed at:

Maury Oceanographic Library, Building 1003, Stennis Space Center, MS

Hancock County Library, Highway 90, Bay St. Louis, MS

Margaret Reed Crosby Library, Picayune, MS

St. Tammany Parish Library, Slidell, LA

NASA Headquarters Information Center, Room 1H23, Two Independence Square, S.W., Washington, DC

A limited number of copies of the EA are available by contacting Ronald G. Magee, NASA Environmental Officer, at the address and/or telephone number indicated.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Ronald G. Magee, NASA Environmental Officer, Code GA00, Stennis Space Center, MS 39529-6000; Telephone (601) 688-7384

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NASA has determined that the Environmental Assessment for the Low Cost Boost Technologies Program at SSC 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 mission at the Stennis Space Center is to provide propulsion testing to support NASA's rocket propulsion and subsystem development, acceptance testing, and certification. The implementation of the Low Cost Boost Technologies Program will provide NASA with the technology to develop new reduced cost booster capabilities for future space exploration and research. The program includes modifications to the B2 Test Position at Stennis Space Center and testing of a vertical 60,000 lbf thrust engine and a horizontal 64,000 lbf thrust engine using liquid oxygen and rocket propellant fuel.

Alternatives to the proposed modification and testing include the No Action Alternative (i.e., no modification or testing) and the implementation of the program at Marshall Space Flight Center.

The environmental impacts identified as a result of the Environmental Assessment are short term fugitive air emissions, engine testing air emissions, rocket propellant fuel transport and storage, noise, and cooling water discharge. The short term fugitive air emissions that may result from the abrasive blasting and recoating of the structural components of the B2 Test Position will be minimal. Projected air emissions of carbon monoxide, particulate, nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide from testing the 60,000 lbf thrust engine are well below the National Ambient Air Quality Standards and will have insignificant impact on the environment. Rocket propellant transport and storage will conform to federal secondary containment requirements and overfill protection will be installed. The SSC Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan and the SSC Contingency Plan will be revised to include handling of rocket propellant fuel. Noise from engine testing will not impact local communities due to their distance from the test position provided by the SSC buffer zone. Cooling water discharges will be monitored as required by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality under a National Pollutant Elimination Discharge System permit. The B2 Test Position is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This project does not alter the architecture or historic attributes of the facility and will not affect the property from a cultural resource standpoint. The proposed project site is an existing facility and is not located in wetlands or floodplains. No threatened or

endangered species, critical habitats, historical or cultural resources will be affected by the project. No other matters of potential environmental concern have been identified. On the basis of the EA and underlying reference documents, 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 construction activities prior to the expiration of the 30-day comment period.

Roy S. Estess
Center Director
John C. Stennis Space Center

10/20/96
Date