

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

NOTICE 96-LERC-02

National Environmental Policy Act; Finding of No Significant Impact; Full Operation of the Spacecraft Propulsion Research 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 full operations of the Spacecraft Propulsion Research Facility (B-2) at the Plum Brook Station (PBS) located in Sandusky, Erie County, Ohio. The resumption of full operations at B-2 involves returning to service this unique test facility, built in 1968 and operated until 1974, when it was placed in standby mode. In 1987 an effort was begun to rehabilitate the facility, one system at a time, as required for the next test.

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 Full Operation of the Spacecraft Propulsion Research Facility, PBS, which supports this FONSI can be reviewed at:

The NASA Lewis Research Center is proposing action which involves resuming full operation of the Spacecraft Propulsion Research Facility (B-2). This is a unique space environment test facility capable of testing rocket engines and complete upper stages at full thrust while maintaining a thermal-vacuum environment to simulate on-orbit conditions. Testing performed here will be extremely valuable in the development of advanced and improved expendable launch vehicles.

Two major alternatives to the proposed action were considered. First, the implications of no action/operations at B-2, or similar operations elsewhere, were examined. Note that this means the required research could not be carried out. B-2 has been designated as a National Historic Landmark due to its importance in the development of Space Flight. Full operation of the B-2 facility would not affect its National Historic Landmark Status.

The second alternative considered the impact of duplicating the capabilities of B-2 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 facility comparable to B-2 currently exists. Choosing this option would result in having to construct an entirely new facility which poses environmental uncertainties when compared to using an existing facility.

The proposed operation activities will generate steam, noise, and waste chemicals, but all in such small amounts that no 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. B-2 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 full operation of the Spacecraft Propulsion Research 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 full operation activities prior to the expiration of the 30-day comment period.

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
400 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 Full Operation of the Spacecraft Propulsion Research 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.

Prepared by: 921 911 Beach

Date: 5/15/96

Reviewed by: Peter W. Callum

Date: 5/31/96

Approved by: Donald Campbell

Date: 6/6/96