



DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT ADDRESSING HEAT AND ELECTRICAL UPGRADES AT FORT WAINWRIGHT, ALASKA

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Army proposing to do?

U.S. Army Garrison (USAG) Alaska is proposing to upgrade its central heat and power plant to a more reliable and sustainable heating and electrical infrastructure system that would be compliant with Army installation energy security requirements and air quality regulations for the region.

What is the Army's purpose and need for the proposed action?

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide reliable heat and electrical infrastructure for the installation that resolves current safety, resiliency, fiscal, and regulatory concerns.

The need is to construct heat and electrical infrastructure on the installation to prevent the potential failure of heat and power generation and distribution, which could require evacuation of the installation and severely affect mission readiness. USAG Alaska also needs to meet energy efficiency, energy security, and resilience criteria mandated by the U.S. Army and Department of Defense, and be compliant with air quality regulations.

Why does the Army need to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS)?

The possible upgrades to the central heat and power plant (CHPP) on Fort Wainwright require the Army to prepare an EIS in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. The EIS evaluates potential effects of this project on the natural, physical, and social environment.

What is the current condition of the CHPP and distribution system?

The CHPP is one of the oldest operational coal-fired power plants in the United States and is operating beyond the average design life of similar facilities. The distribution system for transferring heat throughout the installation is also operating at or beyond its design life.

What alternatives are USAG Alaska considering for upgrading its heat and electrical generation and distribution?

Alternatives include (1) a No Action Alternative; existing heat and electrical infrastructure would be maintained to be in compliance with regulatory standards, (2) construction of a new coal-fired CHPP, (3) construction of a new dual-fuel combustion turbine generator CHPP that would be fueled primarily by natural gas and/or ultra-low sulfur diesel, and (4) installation of distributed natural gas boilers for heat and purchase of all electricity directly from a local utility provider.

What are the anticipated environmental impacts?

The Draft EIS evaluates the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental and socioeconomic impacts of the alternatives. Adverse impacts would be minimized to the extent possible through prevention, minimization, and mitigation measures.

Unavoidable environmental impacts would result from implementation of any of the proposed action alternatives.

- Significant, adverse impacts would be anticipated for socioeconomics (Alternatives 2 and 3, reduced coal demand), environmental justice (Alternatives 2 and 3, reduced coal demand), and cultural resources (Alternative 3, distributed boilers in addition to utility upgrades in Ladd Field National Historic Landmark). Under the No Action Alternative, significant, adverse impacts would be anticipated for utilities, environmental justice, and human health and safety due to continued risk of plant failure.
- Less than significant impacts would include increases in water turbidity; disturbance of sediments; noise from construction; localized habitat degradation; soil disturbance and erosion; stormwater runoff into surface water; and increased traffic, air emissions, and noise associated with construction vehicles and activities.
- Beneficial impacts would be anticipated for utilities (increased heating efficiency and improved system reliability).



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What is the schedule for completion of the EIS?

The EIS process is expected to take approximately two years to complete. The Draft EIS is currently available for a 60-day public comment period. The Final EIS is expected to be published in mid-2021.

Will USAG Alaska coordinate with other agencies on this project?

Throughout the development of the EIS, USAG Alaska is coordinating with appropriate federal, state, and local agencies; Alaska Natives; Native Americans; Native American organizations and tribes; public organizations; and the public about its proposal to upgrade the installation's heat and power generation capabilities. Agency involvement activities include formal scoping meetings with agency representatives throughout the project and comment inclusion on the Draft and Final EIS.

Where can I get a copy of the Draft EIS?

An electronic copy of the Draft EIS is available online at <https://home.army.mil/alaska/index.php/fort-wainwright/NEPA/HEU-EIS>. Copies of the Draft EIS will be available for review at the Noel Wien Library, Fairbanks, AK; Post Library, Fort Wainwright, AK; and Tri-Valley Community Library, Healy, AK if these facilities are open; and upon request.

When does the comment period end?

The Draft EIS comment period is from October 9, 2020, through December 8, 2020. Comments received during the 60-day comment period on the Draft EIS will be fully considered prior to determining which alternative would be the Army's preferred alternative. This preference will be identified when the Final EIS is published.

How do I provide comments?

There are several ways to provide comments during the comment period.



Email:

usarmy.wainwright.id-pacific.mbx.heu-eis@mail.mil



Online Open House:

<https://home.army.mil/alaska/index.php/fort-wainwright/NEPA/HEU-EIS>



Telephone Public Meeting:

On Monday, November 9, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Dial toll-free 855-756-7520 and use access code 65742.



Mail:

Ms. Laura Sample, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Program Manager
Attn: IMFW-PWE (Sample)
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What if I have questions?

If you need additional information or have questions on the NEPA process, please contact Laura Sample via email at usarmy.wainwright.id-pacific.mbx.heu-eis@mail.mil or visit the project website at <https://home.army.mil/alaska/index.php/fort-wainwright/NEPA/HEU-EIS>.