

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q's & A's)

Environmental Impact Statement for Army Training Land Retention at Pōhakuloa Training Area in Hawai'i

September 3, 2020

Q-1. What is the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA) and what is it used for?

A-1: PTA is on the island of Hawai'i and encompasses approximately 132,000 acres of land for the specific purpose of preparing military personnel for the rigors of combat. U.S. Army Hawaii (USARHAW) conducts training at PTA to meet its federally mandated mission of readiness. Training offered at installations such as PTA support the Army's fulfillment of its role in the Nation's defense. Users of PTA, including the Army, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Army Reserve, Hawaii Army National Guard, Hawaii Air National Guard, State and County of Hawai'i first responders and firefighters, Hawai'i Civil Defense Agency, Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency, State Office of Homeland Security, Hawai'i Police Department, and others, rely on the installation to fulfill agency-specific mission and readiness requirements. PTA is the largest contiguous live-fire range and maneuver training area in Hawai'i and is considered the Pacific's Premier Training Center. It is the only U.S. training area in the Pacific region where training units can complete all mission essential tasks, and the only U.S. training facility in the Pacific region that can accommodate larger than company-sized units for live-fire and maneuver exercises.

Q-2. What is the background of Army training use at PTA and future needs?

A-2: The Pōhakuloa area was used for training as early as 1938, but not routinely used until 1943. PTA was formally established in 1956 through a maneuver agreement granted by the Territory of Hawai'i. Approximately 23,000 acres of land were leased for military purposes to the Army in 1964 by the state (State-owned land). The 65-year lease expires on August 16, 2029. The State-owned land contains maneuver land and key training facilities, some of which are not available elsewhere in Hawai'i, and provides access between major parcels of U.S. Government-owned land on PTA. This land has been key to PTA's ability to support numerous training facilities and capabilities essential to USARHAW and other military services and local agencies. The Army proposes to retain up to approximately 23,000 acres of State-owned land at PTA in support of continued military training (the "Proposed Action").

Q-3. Why is the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) being prepared?

A-3: The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires federal agencies to examine the potential effects of proposed actions on the human environment. Under Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 343 and Hawai'i Administrative Rules (HAR) Chapter 11-200.1, collectively referred to as the Hawai'i Environmental Policy Act

(HEPA), use of State lands is a trigger that requires environmental disclosure. An EIS-level analysis is being conducted as, in accordance with HAR Section 11-200.1-14(d)(2), the accepting authority, the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources, has determined, through its judgement and experience, that the applicant's Proposed Action may have a significant effect.

NEPA regulations for environmental disclosure (environmental assessments or environmental impact statements) are guided by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) in Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations [C.F.R.] Parts 1500-1508. Specific Army NEPA implementation regulations are in Title 32 C.F.R. Part 651.

The Army intends to prepare a single EIS, compliant with both NEPA and HEPA regulations, to facilitate concurrent public review and processing at both the federal and state levels of government.

Q-4. What is the difference between NEPA and HEPA?

A-4: NEPA and HEPA require government agencies proposing to use government land to identify and analyze the potential adverse environmental, social and economic effects of the Proposed Action and reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Action that would provide similar benefits with different environmental impacts. NEPA and HEPA procedures ensure environmental information is available to public officials and citizens before decisions are made and before actions are taken, and both allow for public disclosure and participation.

Like NEPA, the purpose of HEPA is to ensure environmental concerns are given appropriate consideration in decision making, along with economic and technical considerations, and allow for public disclosure and participation. Both require publication of a notice to alert the public to preparation of an EIS, with a public scoping period prior to preparation of an EIS.

Q-5. What agency is undertaking the EIS?

A-5: The project proponent undertaking the EIS is U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii (USAG-HI). The preparer of the EIS is the Department of the Army.

Q-6. What Proposed Action is being considered in the EIS?

A-6: The Proposed Action is to retain up to approximately 23,000 acres of State-owned land at PTA in support of continued military training. The Army would retain the State-owned land prior to the end of the current lease to limit impacts on training.

Q-7. What is the purpose and need for the Proposed Action?

A-7: The purpose of the Proposed Action is to enable USARHAW to continue to conduct military training on the State-owned land within PTA to meet its current and future training requirements. The Proposed Action is needed to allow access between major parcels of U.S. Government-owned land at PTA, retain substantial Army infrastructure investments, allow for future facility and infrastructure modernization, preserve limited maneuver area, provide austere environment training, and maximize use of the impact area in support of USARHAW-coordinated training.

Q-8. What resources will be analyzed in the EIS?

A-8: The EIS will analyze the following resources: air quality and greenhouse gases, airspace, biological resources, archaeological and cultural resources, electromagnetic spectrum, geology and soils, hazardous and toxic materials and wastes, human health and safety, land use, noise, socioeconomics and environmental justice, transportation and traffic, utilities, and water resources. The EIS will quantitatively and qualitatively analyze and evaluate the potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts of the proposed alternatives.

Q-9. What resources may be significantly impacted from implementation of the Proposed Action?

A-9: An EIS-level analysis is being undertaken as the land retention action could have significant impacts (adverse or beneficial) on biological resources, cultural resources, hazardous and toxic materials and wastes, socioeconomics, utilities, and human health and safety.

Q-10. Q-10. What methods of land retention is the Army considering?

A-10: Army Regulation 405-10 identifies authorized methods for Army retention of non-federal land which include title, lease, easement, and license. Several retention methods can be accomplished through different mechanisms according to Army Regulations. The Army would negotiate with the State regarding the most appropriate land retention method(s) for the selected alternative after issuance of the Record of Decision.

Q-11. When is the scoping period for the EIS?

A-11: The scoping period for a NEPA EIS will occur for 40 days after the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register*. In accordance with HAR Section 11-200.1-23(c), the HEPA scoping period is within 30 days after the publication of the EIS Preparation Notice (EISPN) in *The Environmental Notice*, the state Office of Environmental Quality Control's publication.

As the EIS will be a joint NEPA-HEPA document, the public scoping processes will run concurrently and will jointly meet NEPA and HEPA requirements. The NOI will be published in the *Federal Register* on September 4, 2020 and the EISPN will be

published in *The Environmental Notice* on September 8, 2020. The joint NEPA-HEPA scoping period will end on October 14, 2020.

The Army has voluntarily chosen to extend the NEPA scoping period. The collective NEPA scoping period will be 40 days.

Q-12. How can the public be involved in the EIS scoping process?

A-12: The public scoping process will help identify possible alternatives, potential environmental impacts, and key issues of concern to be analyzed in the EIS, as well as eliminate issues from detailed consideration that are not significant, or which have been covered by prior environmental reviews.

The Army invites public comments on the scope of the EIS during a 40-day public scoping period beginning September 4, 2020. Comments can be submitted on the EIS website: <https://home.army.mil/hawaii/index.php/PTAEIS>, as well as emailed to usarmy.hawaii.nepa@mail.mil, or mailed to: ATLR PTA EIS Comments, P.O. 25 Box 3444, Honolulu, HI 96801-3444. All comments must be postmarked or submitted by October 14, 2020, to be considered in preparation of the EIS.

Due to public health concerns from COVID-19, large group, in-person public scoping meetings will not be held. The public is invited to participate in an online EIS scoping virtual open house September 23, 2020, which will take place on the project website: <https://home.army.mil/hawaii/index.php/PTAEIS>. During the virtual open house participants can:

- 1) View online presentations.
- 2) Call (808) 300-0220 to submit oral comments from 4 p.m. – 9 p.m. (Wednesday, September 23 only).

Written comments (mail, email, EIS website) will be accepted throughout the scoping period. Oral comments will be summarized in the Draft EIS, and the recording will be made available to the Office of Environmental Quality Control for the public record. Written comments and associated responses will be included in the Draft EIS.

Q-13. How do you submit comments and, if you have further questions, whom should you contact?

A-13: Written comments and/or concerns regarding the scope of the EIS can be submitted via the EIS website at: <https://home.army.mil/hawaii/index.php/PTAEIS>. Alternatively, comments can be emailed to: usarmy.hawaii.nepa@mail.mil, or mailed to: ATLR PTA EIS Comments, P.O. Box 3444, Honolulu, HI 96801-3444.

Comments will be accepted from September 4 through October 14, 2020. All comments will be valued equally, regardless of how they are submitted. Comment submittal through the EIS website is preferred. Please do not submit duplicate comments. Personal contact

information will not be published in the Draft or Final EIS. Personal contact information will be maintained for the project record and will not be released unless required by law. All relevant identifying information of public agencies, organizations, and elected officials will be published in the EIS. Comments should be written clearly, as commenters will not be contacted to provide clarification. For those who do not have ready access to a computer or internet, the scoping materials posted to the EIS website will be made available upon request by mail.

For more information or accessibility requests, please contact Michael Donnelly, PTA Public Affairs Officer by email: michael.o.donnelly.civ@mail.mil, or phone: (808) 969-2411.

Q-14. Will the public have additional opportunities to participate in the EIS process?

A-14: Yes, there will be additional opportunities to participate in the EIS process. The public will be able to participate in a minimum 45-day review period following publication of a future Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Draft EIS. Public outreach will be conducted during the 45-day comment period. Written comments will be accepted on the Draft EIS for 45 days after publication of the NOA in the *Federal Register*.

The Final EIS will also be made available through an NOA, to be published in the *Federal Register*, initiating the 30-day waiting period. The Army will complete the EIS process by issuing a Record of Decision no sooner than 30 days following the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's NOA in the *Federal Register*, to provide notice that a Final EIS has been filed.

Written comments also will be accepted for the HRS Chapter 343 process for 45 days after publication of the NOA of the Draft EIS in *The Environmental Notice*. A similar NOA will be published in *The Environmental Notice* for the Final EIS. The Hawai'i Department of State Board of Land and Natural Resources will conduct an acceptability determination of the Final EIS.

Q-15. When will the Draft EIS be completed?

A-15: A definitive timeline has not been established for the completion of the Draft EIS; however, it is estimated that the Draft EIS will be available by February 2022.