



Media Release

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Army invites comments on second draft environmental impact statement for proposed land retention at Pōhakuloa Training Area

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawai'i (19 April, 2024)— The U.S. Army has prepared a second draft environmental impact statement (EIS) on its proposed retention of up to approximately 22,750 acres of state-owned land to support continued military training at Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA) on the island of Hawai'i.

Located between Mauna Loa, Mauna Kea, and Hualālai on the island of Hawai'i, PTA is the largest contiguous live-fire range and maneuver training area in Hawai'i. Of the approximately 132,000 acres at PTA, the Army leases approximately 22,750 acres from the state. The Army's 65-year lease of the state-owned land is set to expire in August 2029.

Native Hawaiian organizations, federal, state, and local agencies and officials, and other interested organizations and individuals are encouraged to provide comments on the EIS during the 45-day public comment period. The EIS is available for public review and comment from April 19, 2024 through June 7, 2024, and can be viewed at:

<https://home.army.mil/hawaii/index.php/PTAEIS>.

To be considered in the final EIS, all comments must be postmarked or received by 11:59 p.m. Hawai'i Standard Time on June 7, 2024. Written comments can be submitted through the above website, emailed to atlr-pta-eis@g70.design, or mailed to ATLR PTA EIS Comments, P.O. Box 3444, Honolulu, HI 96801-3444.

Public meetings will be held at the Waimea District Park on May 6, 2024, and at the 'Imiloa Astronomy Center on May 7, 2024 to provide information and an opportunity for oral or written comments. Information on how to participate in the EIS public meetings and submit comments will be available at: <https://home.army.mil/hawaii/index.php/PTAEIS>.

The second draft EIS was prepared in response to comments received from agencies and the public regarding the draft EIS that was published in April 2022.

The EIS was prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and the Hawai'i Environmental Policy Act (HEPA). A notice of availability has been published in the Federal Register to announce the start of the public comment period and the dates of public meetings, and to provide information on how the public may review the EIS and submit comments. The EIS will also be published in the State Environmental Review Program's publication, The Environmental Notice, to begin the public comment period under HEPA.

The EIS evaluates the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of a range of reasonable alternatives that meet the purpose of, and need for, the proposed action. Alternatives considered are: 1) Maximum Retention (of approximately 22,750 acres); 2) Modified Retention (of approximately 19,700 acres); 3) Minimum Retention and Access (of approximately 10,100 acres and 11 miles of roads and training trails); and 4) the No Action Alternative. The Army has identified Alternative 2, Modified Retention, as the preferred alternative.

The EIS indicates that under Alternatives 1, 2, and 3, significant adverse impacts on land use (land tenure), cultural practices, and environmental justice could occur. Under the No Action Alternative, significant adverse impacts on biological resources, socioeconomics, and utilities could occur. The No Action Alternative could have significant beneficial impacts on land use, cultural practices, and environmental justice.

The Army distributed the EIS to Native Hawaiian organizations, federal, state, and local agencies and officials, other stakeholders, and local libraries. After the public comment period, comments on the EIS will be reviewed and considered, and a final EIS will be prepared.

For more information, please contact the U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii Public Affairs Office by email at usarmy.hawaii.nepa@army.mil or by phone at (808) 787-2140.