



Press Release

**U.S. Army Garrison Hawaii
Public Affairs Office
(808) 787-2140
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Army invites comments on draft environmental impact statement for proposed land retention at Kahuku Training Area, Poamoho Training Area, and Makua in Military Reservation Hawai'i

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawai'i (June 7, 2024) — The U.S. Army prepared a draft environmental impact statement regarding its proposed retention of up to approximately 6,322 acres of state-owned lands. This land retention would support continued military training at Kahuku Training Area (KTA), Kawaihoa-Poamoho Training Area (Poamoho), and Makua Military Reservation (MMR) on the island of O'ahu.

Native Hawaiian organizations, federal, state, and local agencies/officials, and other interested organizations and individuals are encouraged to review the draft EIS and provide comments during the 60-day public comment period, which runs from June 7, 2024 through August 7, 2024. The draft EIS can be viewed online at:

<https://home.army.mil/hawaii/index.php/OahuEIS/project-home>.

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

Public meetings will be held in at Wai'anae District Park Multi-Purpose Room on July 9, 2024, Kahuku High and Intermediate School on July 10, 2024, and at Leilehua High School on July 11, 2024, to provide information on the draft EIS and to enhance the opportunity for public input.

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Information on how to participate in draft EIS public meetings and on how to submit comments is available on the EIS website:

<https://home.army.mil/hawaii/index.php/OahuEIS/project-home>.

The draft EIS was prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and the Hawai'i Environmental Policy Act. 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 can review and comment on the draft EIS. The notice of availability of the draft EIS will also appear in the State Environmental Review Program's publication, The Environmental Notice.

The state-owned lands include 1,150 acres at KTA, 4,390 acres at Poamoho, and 782 acres at MMR that are used by Army units and other military entities, including the U.S. Marine Corps and the Hawai'i Army National Guard. For each of the three training areas, the EIS examines a range of retention alternatives. It also evaluates the no-action alternative, under which military use of state-owned land at each training area would stop after the current leases lapse in 2029.

Located in northeast O'ahu, KTA has been the site of military training since the mid-1950s. Current activities on state-owned land at KTA include company-level helicopter training in a tactical environment, large-scale ground maneuver training, and air support training.

Located in the Ko'olau Mountains in north-central O'ahu, Poamoho has been the site of military training since 1964 and provides ideal airspace with ravines and deep vegetation vital to realistic helicopter training.

Located in northwest O'ahu, MMR has been a military training site for nearly 100 years. Tactical training and exercises at MMR began in 1941 after the attack on Pearl Harbor

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and continue to this day. Current activities on state-owned lands at MMR include maneuver training, the use of restricted airspace for unmanned aerial vehicle training, and wildland fire suppression and security activities.

Of the approximately 18,000 total acres at these three sites, the Army leases around 6,322 acres from the state. The Army's 65-year leases of the state-owned lands will expire in August 2029.

The draft EIS evaluates the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of a range of reasonable alternatives. These alternatives are: (1) full retention; (2) modified retention; (3) minimum retention and access; and 4) the no-action alternative, under which the leases would lapse, and the Army would lose access to these lands. The Army identified modified retention at each of the training areas as the preferred alternative.

The draft EIS indicates that under the action alternatives, significant adverse impacts would occur for land use (i.e., land tenure) and environmental justice at all three areas, and for cultural practices at MMR. The no-action alternative would have a significant beneficial impact on land use and environmental justice at all sites, and on cultural practices at MMR.

The Army distributed the draft EIS to Native Hawaiian organizations, federal, state, and local agencies/officials, other key stakeholders, and local libraries. The public may also review the Draft EIS and select materials at the following libraries:

1. Hawai'i State Library, Hawai'i Documents Center
478 S. King Street, Honolulu, HI 96813
2. Kahuku Public and School Library
56-490 Kamehameha Highway, Kahuku, HI 96731

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3. Wahiawā Public Library

820 California Ave., Wahiawā, HI 96786

4. Waiʻanae Public Library

85-625 Farrington Highway, Waiʻanae, HI 96792

In preparing the final EIS, the Army will review and consider all timely public comments regarding the draft EIS.

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.