

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Army Training Land Retention at Kahuku Training Area, Kawaihoa-Poamoho Training Area, and Makua Military Reservation, Island of O‘ahu, Hawai‘i

Q-1. What are Kahuku Training Area (KTA), Kawaihoa-Poamoho Training Area (Poamoho), and Makua Military Reservation (MMR) and what are they used for?

A-1: KTA, Poamoho, and MMR are located on the island of O‘ahu in the State of Hawai‘i. KTA encompasses approximately 9,480 acres of land, of which approximately 1,150 acres are state-owned. State-owned land at KTA is primarily used for high-density helicopter training and to support large-scale ground maneuver training that occurs on adjacent federal land. Poamoho includes approximately 4,390 acres, the entirety of which is state-owned land. Poamoho provides airspace over ravines and deep vegetation, and offers realistic helicopter training for combat readiness. MMR encompasses approximately 4,190 acres of land, of which approximately 782 acres are state-owned. State-owned land at MMR is used for ground maneuver and unmanned aerial vehicle training, as well as for wildland fire suppression and security activities.

Q-2. What is the history of military training at KTA, Poamoho, and MMR and how would these training areas support future military needs?

A-2: KTA and Poamoho have been military training sites since at least the 1960s, while MMR has been used by the military since the 1920s. All training areas continue to be utilized by Active Army units and other military entities such as the U.S. Marine Corps and the Hawai‘i Army National Guard. Since 1964, the Army has leased approximately 6,322 acres of state-owned lands on O‘ahu. The 65-year leases expire in 2029. The Army seeks to retain the lands to ensure mission readiness and deployment preparedness to a theater of operations when needed. Military units using these training sites on O‘ahu must be ready to deploy on order and perform combat operations in support of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) strategy.

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 their 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 requires environmental disclosure. An EIS-level analysis is being conducted in accordance with HAR Section 11-200.1-14(d)(2). The accepting authority (i.e., the Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources) has determined that the Army’s proposed action may have a significant environmental effect.

Environmental Assessments and EISs are guided by Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Parts 1500-1508 (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508). Army NEPA implementation regulations are in 32 CFR Part 651.

The Army prepared a single EIS, compliant with both NEPA and HEPA regulations, to facilitate concurrent public review and processing at both the federal and state level.

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

A-4: NEPA is a federal statute, whereas HEPA is a statute of the State of Hawai'i.

Q-5. What agency is undertaking the EIS?

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

Q-6. What proposed action is being considered in the Draft EIS?

A-6: The proposed action is to retain up to approximately 6,322 acres of state-owned lands at KTA, Poamoho, and MMR in support of continued military training. The Army would retain the state-owned lands prior to the 2029 expiration of the leases to limit impacts on training. The Draft EIS evaluates the potential impacts of a range of alternatives:

For KTA—(1) Full Retention (of approximately 1,150 acres); (2) Modified Retention (of approximately 450 acres);

For Poamoho—(1) Full Retention (of approximately 4,390 acres); (2) Modified Retention (of approximately 3,170 acres);

For MMR—(1) Full Retention (of approximately 782 acres); (2) Modified Retention (of approximately 572 acres); (3) Minimum Retention and Access (of approximately 162 acres and 2.4 miles of select range roads and firebreak roads).

Under the No-Action Alternative for each of these sites, the leases would lapse in 2029 and the Army would lose access to these lands.

Q-7. What is the purpose of and need for the proposed action?

A-7: The purpose of the proposed action is to retain these three areas for military training beyond the end of the current leases. The need for the proposed action is to maintain facilities for training by the Army and other Department of Defense organizations, as such training facilities are not available elsewhere in Hawai'i.

Q-8. What resource areas does the Draft EIS analyze?

A-8: The Draft EIS analyzes the following resource areas: land use, biological resources, cultural resources/practices, hazardous substances, hazardous wastes, air quality, greenhouse gases, noise, geology, topography, soils, water resources, socioeconomics, environmental justice, transportation, traffic, human health, and safety.

The Draft EIS quantitatively and qualitatively analyzes and evaluates the potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts of the Proposed action.

Q-9. What resources may be significantly impacted by implementation of the proposed action?

A-9: The Draft EIS indicates that significant adverse impacts on land use (land tenure) and environmental justice would occur with a lease or fee simple title at: KTA and Poamoho under Alternatives 1 and 2; and MMR under Alternatives 1, 2, and 3. Significant adverse impacts on cultural practices would occur with a lease or fee simple title at MMR under Alternatives 1, 2, and 3. Some of the significant impacts for land use (land tenure) could be reduced to less than significant. The modified or minimum retention alternatives would have significant beneficial impacts on land use (land tenure) for land not retained at KTA, Poamoho, and MMR. Impacts of the action alternatives on other resources are less than significant. The No-Action Alternative would have a significant beneficial impact on land use (land tenure) and environmental justice at all sites, and on cultural practices at MMR. The No-Action Alternative would have less than significant impacts on all other resources at the three sites.

To mitigate adverse impacts on land use (land tenure), the Army would consider adding non-barbed-wire fencing and signage to minimize accidental or intentional trespass from adjacent non-U.S. Government-controlled land. This applies to Alternative 2 for KTA and to Alternatives 2 and 3 for MMR. As mitigation for impacts to cultural practices and environmental justice at MMR, the Army would, for alternatives 1, 2, and 3: review and update its public engagement efforts; work with cultural practitioners and Native Hawaiian Organizations to update and/or develop a mutually beneficial cultural access plan; and promote long-term stewardship of the 'āina (i.e., the land of Hawai'i) with regard to military use of state-owned land.

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

A-10: After the Army issues the Record of Decision, the Army would negotiate with the state regarding the most appropriate land retention method(s) for the selected alternatives. Title 10 of the U.S. Code identifies authorized Army land interests, which include fee simple title, lease, and easement.

Q-11. Are live-fire activities at MMR covered in this Draft EIS?

A-11: No. The Army currently has no plan to resume or propose resumption of live-fire training at MMR. Such training at MMR is not reasonably foreseeable at this time. Therefore, the effects of live-fire training at MMR are not included in the EIS.

Q-12. When is the public comment period for the Draft EIS?

A-12: The Army is extending the standard 45-day public comment period to 60 days to allow more time for the public to review the Draft EIS and to submit comments. The 60-day public comment period for the Draft EIS begins on June 7, 2024, and ends on

August 7, 2024. Federal, state, and local agencies, Native Hawaiian organizations, and the general public are invited to participate in public meetings and to comment on the Draft EIS.

All comments must be postmarked or received by 11:59 p.m. Hawai'i Standard Time on August 7, 2024. After the public comment period ends, all timely comments regarding the Draft EIS will be reviewed and considered in preparing the Final EIS.

Q-13. Will there be any public meetings to discuss the Draft EIS?

A-13: Public meetings will be held at: Wai'anae District Park Multi-Purpose Room on July 9, 2024; Kahuku High and Intermediate School on July 10, 2024; and Leilehua High School on July 11, 2024, to provide information on the Draft EIS and to enhance the opportunity for public input. Information on how to participate in the public meetings and on how to submit comments is available on the EIS website: <https://home.army.mil/hawaii/index.php/OahuEIS/project-home>.

Comments on the Draft EIS can be submitted in the following ways: (1) written comments submitted through the EIS website (see above); (2) written comments mailed to the address in this document (see below); (3) written comments emailed to the email address in this document (see below); and (4) comments provided during public meetings (see above). All comments submitted during the 60-day public comment period will be considered in the development of the Final EIS. All written comments must be postmarked or received online by 11:59 p.m. Hawai'i Standard Time on August 7, 2024.

Q-14. How can the public submit comments?

A-14: Comments can be: submitted through the EIS website (<https://home.army.mil/hawaii/index.php/OahuEIS/project-home>); emailed to altr-oahu-eis@g70.design; mailed to O'ahu ATLR EIS Comments, P.O. Box 3444, Honolulu, HI 96801-3444; or provided during public meetings. All comments submitted during the 60-day public comment period will be considered in the development of the Final EIS. All written comments must be postmarked or received online by 11:59 p.m. Hawai'i Standard Time on August 7, 2024.

Q-15. Will the public have additional opportunities to participate in the EIS process?

A-15: Public outreach will occur during the 60-day Draft EIS public comment period. All comments submitted during the 60-day public comment period will be considered in the development of the Final EIS. When the Final EIS is ready, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will publish a Notice of Availability (NOA) in the *Federal Register*, which will initiate a 30-day waiting period. The Army will complete the NEPA process by issuing a Record of Decision no sooner than the end of the 30-day waiting period.

As to the HEPA process, written comments will be accepted for 60 days after publication of the Draft EIS NOA in *The Environmental Notice* (i.e., the State Environmental Review Program's publication). A similar NOA will be published in *The Environmental Notice* regarding the Final EIS. The Hawai'i Board of Land and Natural Resources will conduct an acceptability determination regarding the Final EIS.

Q-16. When will the Final EIS be completed?

A-16: The Army estimates the Final EIS will be available by June 2025.