

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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

**May 15, 2025**

**Q-1. What are Kahuku Training Area (KTA), Kailua-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 these training sites. The 65-year leases expire in 2029. The Army seeks to retain the lands to ensure mission readiness and deployment preparedness. Military units using these training sites on O‘ahu must be ready to deploy and perform combat operations to support 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) determined that the Army’s proposed action may have a significant environmental effect.

NEPA environmental disclosure requirements were previously set forth by the Council on Environmental Quality in the Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.), Title 40, Parts 1500–

1508 (40 C.F.R. Parts 1500–1508). The current Army NEPA implementing regulation is in 32 C.F.R. Part 651. These regulations either have been or will be rescinded, but were followed in preparing the Draft EIS, and are cited in the Final EIS to provide transparency and consistency.

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 levels.

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

**A-4.** NEPA is a federal law, whereas HEPA is a law 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. The preparer of the EIS is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Honolulu District.

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

**A-6.** The proposed action is to retain up to approximately 6,322 acres of state-owned lands at KTA, Poamoho, and MMR to support continued military training. The Final 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 (of approximately 162 acres and 2.4 miles of select range roads and firebreak roads).

The Final EIS also analyzes the potential impacts of the No-Action Alternative, under which Army use of the state-owned land would cease altogether when the lease expires in 2029.

**Q-7. Is there a preferred alternative?**

**A-7.** The Army has identified the preferred alternative as Alternative 2, Modified Retention, for KTA, and the No-Action Alternative for Poamoho and MMR.

**Q-8. What is the purpose of and need for the proposed action?**

**A-8.** The purpose of the proposed action is to retain 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 on O'ahu.

**Q-9. What resource areas does the Final EIS analyze?**

**A-9.** The Final EIS analyzes the following resource areas: land use; biological resources; cultural resources; cultural practices; hazardous substances and hazardous wastes; air quality and greenhouse gases; noise; geology, topography, and soils; water resources; socioeconomics; environmental justice; transportation and traffic; and human health and safety. The Final EIS quantitatively and qualitatively analyzes and evaluates the potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts of the proposed action.

The analyses regarding air quality, greenhouse gases, and environmental justice were prepared according to now-rescinded executive orders, and according to Council on Environmental Quality and Army NEPA implementing regulations that have been or are in the process of being rescinded. Because the analyses of air quality, greenhouse gases, and environmental justice were provided to the public for comment, they are included as part of the Final EIS for purposes of transparency and consistency.

**Q-10. What resources may be significantly impacted by implementation of the proposed action?**

**A-10.** The Final EIS indicates that significant adverse impacts could occur on land use (land tenure) and environmental justice at KTA and Poamoho under Alternatives 1 and 2, and at MMR under Alternatives 1, 2, and 3. Significant adverse impacts could occur on cultural practices with a lease or fee simple sale 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 Army has identified mitigation measures in the Final EIS to mitigate adverse impacts on cultural practices and environmental justice at MMR. The modified or minimum-retention alternatives could 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 could have a significant beneficial impact on land use (land tenure) and environmental justice at all areas, and on cultural practices at MMR. The No-Action Alternative could have less than significant impacts on all other resources at the three areas.

**Q. 11. What mitigation measures are identified in the EIS?**

**A. 11.** To reduce adverse impacts to cultural practices and environmental justice at MMR under Alternatives 1, 2, and 3, the Army would update and/or develop engagement efforts for Native Hawaiian Organizations, individuals, consulting parties, 'ohana, lineal descendants, and cultural practitioners, and would work with the Native Hawaiian community to update and/or develop a mutually beneficial cultural access plan.

The mitigation measures apply to MMR only and will be implemented should the Army decide to retain state-owned land at MMR. No mitigation measures will be implemented for the No-Action Alternative. The Army would plan to begin implementation of the mitigation measures no later than October 2028. Should funding be available prior to the

2029 fiscal year, mitigation measures and mitigation monitoring would be implemented as funding becomes available prior to October 2028.

**Q-12. What types of land retention is the Army considering?**

**A-12.** After the Army issues the Record of Decision (ROD), 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-13. Are live-fire activities at MMR covered in this Final EIS?**

**A-13.** No. After consideration of the relevant studies completed over the years, the 2009 MMR Training Activities EIS, current and foreseeable training requirements, and recent changes to Army force structure, the Army determined that it will not pursue live-fire training at MMR at this time or in the future. Live-fire activities at MMR are therefore not reasonably foreseeable and are not analyzed in this EIS.

**Q-14. When was the public comment period for the Draft EIS?**

**A-14.** The 60-day public comment period for the Draft EIS began on June 7, 2024, and ended on August 7, 2024. All comments postmarked or received by 11:59 p.m. Hawai'i Standard Time on August 7, 2024, were reviewed and considered in preparing the Final EIS.

Native Hawaiian Organizations, federal, state, and local agencies and officials, and other interested organizations and individuals were invited to participate in the public comment process for the Draft EIS.

**Q-15. When were the public meetings held for the Draft EIS?**

**A-15.** Public meetings were held in the Wai'anae District Park Multi-Purpose Room on July 9, 2024, at Kahuku High and Intermediate School on July 10, 2024, and at Leilehua High School on July 11, 2024, to provide information and to enhance the opportunity for public input. Further information regarding the public meetings is available on the EIS website: <https://home.army.mil/hawaii/OahuEIS/project-home>.

**Q-16. When will the Army issue the ROD?**

**A-16.** The Army will observe a 30-day waiting period before deciding how much land, if any, it will seek to retain. The waiting period for the Final EIS will end 30 days after publication of this Notice of Availability in the Federal Register by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, at which time the Army can execute the ROD.