

Finding of No Significant Impact Implementation of the Privatization of Army Lodging Program at Fort Hunter Liggett, California

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations (Title 40 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* [CFR] Parts 1500–1508) for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (Title 42 of the *United States Code* 4321 *et seq.*) and 32 CFR Part 651 (Environmental Analysis of Army Actions), Fort Hunter Liggett conducted an environmental assessment (EA) of the potential environmental and socioeconomic effects associated with executing a lease at Fort Hunter Liggett under the Army's Privatization of Army Lodging (PAL) program.

Proposed Action

The Army proposes to transfer ownership and operation of its transient lodging facilities to a private-sector development company. Under the proposed action, the Army would execute a lease and supporting agreements negotiated with and approved by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy, and Environment. The Army would convey specified lodging facilities and lease the underlying land to its selected development partner, Lend Lease. Lend Lease has formed a special-purpose entity, Rest Easy, LLC (Rest Easy) to execute the lease with Army as lessor and Rest Easy as lessee. Lend Lease would redevelop the lodging facilities, and InterContinental Hotels Group, its contracted hotelier, would manage the lodging operations. The Army would grant a 46-year lease of land for constructing a new lodging facility. Rest Easy would be expected to meet Fort Hunter Liggett's lodging requirements by owning, operating, and maintaining the existing facilities, renovating inadequate facilities, and constructing new ones.

Implementing the PAL program at Fort Hunter Liggett would result in the conveyance of the existing lodging facility, Building 128 (Gibb Hall), to Rest Easy for renovation, short-term use, and demolition. The Army also would convey land for the construction of a 54-room Candlewood Suites hotel. Rest Easy would construct the new hotel on one of two sites being considered. These actions would occur over a 7-year initial development period and provide a final inventory of 54 lodging units. The proposed action would improve the quality of life for Soldiers, their families, and other personnel eligible to use Army transient lodging.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed action is to transfer ownership and operation of transient lodging to the private sector. The proposed action is needed to provide affordable, quality transient lodging facilities to Soldiers and their families through a combination of a new facility and improvement of an existing facility to ensure that they meet current commercial standards for mid-scale hotels.

Alternatives Considered

The alternatives to the proposed action that were considered are renovation of existing lodging facilities and reliance on the off-post hotel market. The first alternative would involve modifying Gibb Hall into a Holiday Inn Express, the minimum lodging standard under the PAL program. Due to the age, condition, and structure of Gibb Hall, the Army determined that rehabilitation was not economically viable. For this reason, this alternative is not feasible and is not evaluated in detail in the EA.

Under the second alternative, in lieu of privatizing the function, the Army could exit the lodging business, resulting in patrons' reliance on off-post hotels and motels for similar services. The use of off-post lodging, however, would lengthen Soldiers' workdays because of commuting and increased transportation costs. In some instances, Soldiers would encounter shortages of lodging in adjacent communities. Terminating the Army's lodging program at Fort Hunter Liggett would result in abandoning the existing

lodging facility. The combination of the building standing idle until alternative uses could be determined and the time needed to achieve such uses would contravene the Army's policy to manage its resources to their optimal potential. For those reasons, this alternative is not feasible and is not evaluated in detail in the EA.

As prescribed by the CEQ regulations, the EA also evaluates the No Action Alternative, which would consist of the Army's not implementing the PAL program at Fort Hunter Liggett.

Factors Considered in Determining that No Environmental Impact Statement is Required

The EA, which is attached hereto and incorporated by reference into this Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI), examines the potential effects of the proposed action and the No Action Alternative on resource areas and areas of environmental and socioeconomic concern: land use, aesthetic and visual resources, air quality, noise, geology and soils, water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, socioeconomics (including environmental justice and protection of children), transportation, utilities, and hazardous and toxic materials. As part of the proposed action, Rest Easy would implement the mitigation measures identified in the EA and would comply with all applicable laws, ordinances, and regulations.

Implementing the proposed action would be expected to result in a combination of short- and long-term minor adverse and beneficial effects. Short-term minor adverse effects on land use, aesthetics and visual resources, air quality, noise, geology and soils, water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, socioeconomics, transportation, utilities, and hazardous and toxic substances would be expected, primarily associated with renovation, construction, and demolition activities. These activities would change land use of the project sites, modify the visual environment, increase fugitive dust and pollutant emissions, cause a temporary increase in noise, disturb soils, contribute to possible stormwater-related erosion, disturb vegetation and wildlife, disturb potentially unidentified archaeological resources, increase potential exposure of children to hazards, generate construction vehicle trips, produce construction and demolition debris, and disturb hazardous building materials.

Long-term minor adverse effects would be expected on land use, aesthetics and visual resources, air quality, noise, water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, transportation, and utilities. The new hotel would result in changed land use, a new element in the visual environment, an increase in stormwater runoff from additional impervious surfaces, displaced or disturbed vegetation, and a minor addition to the viewshed of the historic Mission San Antonio de Padua. The increase in lodging units and operation of the hotel would increase pollutant emissions, ambient noise levels, vehicle trips, and demand for utilities.

Beneficial effects on the local economy would be expected from expenditures and employment associated with lodging renovation, construction, and operation. Beneficial effects for hazardous and toxic substances would be expected from removing or replacing hazardous building materials, thus removing potential public exposure pathways.

Implementing the proposed action would have no long-term effect on geology and soils.

Implementing the No Action Alternative would not alter existing conditions and there would be no environmental or socioeconomic effects.

Public Review

The final EA and draft FNSI were made available for review and comment for 30 days, beginning upon publication of the notice of availability. Copies of the EA and draft FNSI were available for review and comment at the following local libraries: Monterey County Free Libraries (King City and Buena Vista Branches), San Antonio School Library, and Fort Hunter Liggett Library. Comments on the EA and draft FNSI were directed to: Dir. of Public Works Env. Division (ATTN: Clark), 233 California Avenue, Fort Hunter Liggett, CA 93928-7090 or by electronic mail to liz.r.clark@us.army.mil. An electronic copy of the EA and FNSI was available at <http://www.liggett.army.mil/sites/dpw/enviromental.asp>.

Conclusions

On the basis of the EA, it has been determined that implementing the proposed action would have no significant adverse effects on the quality of human life or the natural environment. Preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required before implementing the proposed action.



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20 Feb 13

Date