



**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS, 673rd AIR BASE WING
JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, ALASKA**

6 April 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR ANNOUNCEMENT OF SCOPING

FROM: 673 CES/CEI
730 Quartermaster Road
JBER AK 99505

SUBJECT: Proposal for Mortar and Artillery Training (PMART) at Richardson Training Area, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska – Environmental Impact Statement

1. As a direct result of the National Emergency declared by the President on Friday, March 13, 2020, in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the U. S., and the Center for Disease Control's recommendations for social distancing and avoiding large public gatherings, the United States Air Force (USAF) has cancelled the two public scoping meetings scheduled to occur on April 13, 2020 and April 14, 2020. In lieu of the public scoping meetings, the USAF will use the alternative means set forth below to inform the public and stakeholders and to obtain input for scoping the proposed action.
2. The USAF is proposing to modify the conditions under which indirect live-fire weapons training can be conducted at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), Alaska. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared for the proposed action, which focuses on live-fire weapons training at the Richardson Training Area, Eagle River Flats (ERF) Impact Area. All-season training is necessary to ensure that Soldiers achieve and maintain critical combat skills. Current live-fire restrictions limit training on JBER's only currently usable explosive munitions impact area to winter firing only (November 1 to March 31), dependent on ice cover requirements.
3. The U.S. Army Alaska (USARAK) has used ERF Impact Area for live-fire training since the 1940s. Restrictions put in place in 1991 allow use of the impact area for winter firing only (1 November through 31 March), provided required ice thickness conditions are also met. With these seasonal restrictions in place, units stationed at JBER have not been able to conduct the full range of required indirect live-fire training exercises at JBER, and must deploy to other installations during portions of the year to conduct their required small unit training.
4. A new EIS is now being prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Part 1500-1508) and USAF NEPA regulations at 36 CFR Part 989.
5. The EIS will evaluate the potential impacts associated with the proposed action, which includes indirect live-fire training during all-seasons at ERF Impact Area on JBER, in order to meet Army training standards. The proposed action also includes expansion of ERF impact area by approximately 585 acres. In addition, the EIS will evaluate an action alternative that would marginally meet Army training standards, and would not include expansion of ERF impact area. The no action alternative will also be evaluated in the EIS, under which the Army would continue to train

with the existing seasonal restrictions and which would require JBER home station units to deploy to other Army-controlled training lands to conduct required training. The USAF is the NEPA lead agency and the US Army is a cooperating agency for this EIS process.

6. To define the full range of issues to be evaluated in the EIS, the USAF will determine the scope of the analysis by soliciting comments from interested local, state, and federal elected officials and agencies, Alaska Native organizations, as well as interested members of the public and others. This is being done by providing a website where the public can submit comments and/or by having comments mailed to the mailing address provided below.

7. In lieu of scoping meetings, information on the proposal will be available on the project website at: <https://JBER-PMART-EIS.com>. For those who do not have ready access to a computer or the internet, the scoping-related materials posted to the website will be made available upon request. Inquiries, requests for scoping-related materials, and comments regarding the EIS may be submitted by mail to JBER Public Affairs, JBER.PA@US.AF.MIL, (907) 552-8151; (US Post Office) JBER Public Affairs c/o Matthew Beattie, 10480 Sijan Ave., Suite 123, JBER, AK 99506.

8. Written scoping comments will be accepted at any time during the environmental impact analysis process up until the public release of the Draft EIS. However, to ensure the USAF has sufficient time to consider public input in the preparation of the Draft EIS, scoping comments should be submitted to the website or the address listed above by no later than May 11, 2020.

9. If you wish to receive additional information please contact JBER Public Affairs at 907-552-8151 or JBER.PA@US.AF.MIL.



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