

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FNSI)

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA) FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF PROPOSED PROJECTS ON AREA B OF FORT DETRICK IN FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

AGENCY: U.S. Army Garrison, Fort Detrick, Frederick, MD

PROPOSED ACTION: The Proposed Action (Alternative I, the preferred alternative) and subject of this EA is the Construction and Operation of Proposed Projects, which include a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Antenna, Recreational Vehicle (RV) Parking Lot, Training Campus, and Infrastructure Improvements, on Area B of Fort Detrick in Frederick County, Maryland. Implementing Alternative I will enhance US Army Garrison's (USAG) mission performance by providing a necessary infrastructure to sustain Department of Defense (DoD) and DHS current and future mission needs.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED: During the preparation of this EA, one reasonable alternative to the Proposed Action was identified. This alternative is to Not Construct and Operate the Proposed Projects on Area B of Fort Detrick in Frederick County, Maryland (Alternative II, No Action) on Area B – Fort Detrick, Maryland (Alternative II). This EA characterizes and analyzes the probable and possible environmental impacts associated with implementation of Alternative I (the Proposed Action) and Alternative II (the No Action Alternative) on Area B of Fort Detrick, Maryland.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES AND MITIGATION MEASURES: As discussed in the EA, the environmental impacts of Alternative I (the Proposed Action, Construction and Operation of Proposed Projects on Area B of Fort Detrick in Frederick County, Maryland) were evaluated in detail, and the potential adverse environmental, health, and socioeconomic impacts were found to be negligible to minor, and mitigable. During the preparation of this EA several potential environmental issues associated with implementation of the Proposed Action or the No Action alternative were identified, including impacts on soil during the construction and operational phases of the project, impacts to geology, water resources, and transportation.

FACTORS CONSIDERED IN THE FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT: The EA systematically reviews the nature of the Proposed Action and associated risks and issues. Particular attention is given to protection of the workforce and surrounding community. Alternatives with regard to needs of the United States and the U.S. Army and potential adverse effects on the environment are evaluated.

During the construction phase, the following impacts are anticipated: negligible impacts to the local climate, potential negligible to minor impacts to geology, potential minor impacts to soils, minor impacts to water resources, minor impacts to wetlands, negligible impacts to floodplains, minor impacts to plants and animals, minor impacts to air quality, no impacts to historical and cultural resources, positive impacts to the local socioeconomic environment, minor impacts from noise and lighting, negligible to minor impacts from odors, minor impacts to traffic, negligible impacts to energy resources, negligible impacts to waste streams, minor impacts to hazardous materials management, negligible impacts to human health and safety, and minor cumulative impacts.

During the operational phase, the following impacts are anticipated: minor impacts to land use, negligible impacts to the local climate, potential minor to negligible impacts to geology, negligible impacts to soils, potential minor impacts to water resources, minor impacts to wetlands, negligible impacts to floodplains, positive impacts to plants and animals, negligible impacts to air quality, no impacts to historical and cultural resources, no impacts to the local socioeconomic environment, negligible impacts from noise, negligible impacts from lighting, minor impacts from odors, no impacts to traffic, negligible impacts to energy resources, negligible impacts to waste streams, negligible impacts to hazardous materials management, negligible impacts to human health and safety, and minor cumulative impacts.

All of the potential adverse impacts were deemed to be negligible to minor and mitigatable, provided that BMPs are strictly adhered to during construction/demolition and operation of the proposed facilities.

COMMENTS RECEIVED: Comments received during the public review period were evaluated and all relevant issues were addressed. The comments on the EA were received from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) and Susan Funk of the Kristen Renee Foundation. The MDE letter commented on: conformance with State regulations regarding fugitive dust; obtaining permits to construct and performing a toxic air pollutants review; coordination with MDE should projected emissions from the Proposed Action exceed the thresholds identified in the Federal rule on general conformity; proper disposal of waste generated from the project; and pre-project coordination with State officials to ensure that the treatment, storage, or disposal of hazardous and low-level radioactive wastes will be conducted in compliance with all applicable regulations. The comments from the MDE were fully addressed in the original text of the EA and no changes to the EA were required. The SHPO – Maryland Historical Trust stamped the Area B EA transmittal letter confirming that no historic properties will be affected by the Proposed Action therefore no changes to the EA were required. The MDP letter included comments from the Maryland Department of Transportation, the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development, the Maryland Military Department, the City of Frederick, and the MDP which all stated that the Proposed Action was consistent with their plans, programs, and objectives therefore no changes to the EA were required. A comment was also received from Susan Funk of the Kristen Renee Foundation stating “we would like to make note that any expansion of the existing Ft Detrick Facilities including but not limited to containment laboratories, should be carefully reviewed and scrutinized by a community task force , the EPA and Dept of Environment.” This comment did not require changes to the EA. The Proposed Action was discussed in detail in the EA and the public, including the USEPA and MDE, were given the opportunity to review the EA in its entirety.

CONCLUSIONS: The principal conclusions of this EA are: (1) implementing Alternative I (the preferred alternative) would not result in significant adverse environmental impacts, provided that best management practices (BMPs) to mitigate these potential environmental impacts are adhered to during construction and operation of the Proposed Projects; (2) implementing the Proposed Action will provide Fort Detrick with infrastructural improvements which will allow USAG and DHS to achieve their respective mission requirements; (3) construction and operation of Proposed Projects on Area B of Fort Detrick (the Proposed Action) will provide facilities necessary to satisfy training requirements for the Fort Detrick Police and Fire Departments; (4) implementing Alternative I is consistent with the land use planning objectives for Fort Detrick; (5) implementing Alternative II (No Action) would not provide Fort Detrick with much-needed infrastructure and facilities and would hamper the ability of USAG and DHS to

meet their respective mission requirements; (6) implementing Alternative II (No Action) is not consistent with land use planning objectives for Fort Detrick; and (7) implementing the No Action alternative would eliminate the negligible to minor environmental impacts associated with the implementation of Alternative I, but would also eliminate the beneficial impacts of the Proposed Action.



JUDITH D. ROBINSON
Colonel, MS
Commanding
Fort Detrick, Maryland