# FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

***for the Programmatic Environmental Assessment Addressing Air Force Research Laboratory Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation Activities at Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico***

Pursuant to provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Title 42 United States Code (USC) Sections 4321–4347 and Department of Defense (DoD) NEPA Implementing Procedures, the United States Air Force (USAF) assessed the potential impacts on the natural and human environment associated with the USAF, United States Space Force (USSF), Kirtland Air Force Base (AFB), and Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) continuing to conduct current research, development, test, and evaluation (RDT&E) activities and implement future RDT&E activities on Kirtland AFB, New Mexico.

## Purpose of and Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to ensure that all current and proposed AFRL RDT&E activities can continue to occur on Kirtland AFB into the future. The need for the Proposed Action is to allow users the ability to test concepts to improve technology. Such tests are needed to determine the survivability and vulnerability of structures and targets for national security. In turn, these tests allow for the delivery of innovative and affordable weapons, materials, and methods to the warfighter in time to meet their mission demands. Because of ever-changing threat scenarios, the RDT&E activities conducted by these agencies are a critical element in the development of new capabilities for the nation's security and provide an important component of the United States' global leadership in safety, science, and technology.

## Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives

**Proposed Action.** AFRL has been conducting RDT&E activities on Kirtland AFB since the 1960s. There are many existing Environmental Assessments and EIAP documents, including Air Force Form 813s, spanning the decades from 1970 to the present day. The Proposed Action consolidates all current and proposed future AFRL RDT&E activities into one Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA), ensuring these activities can continue to occur on Kirtland AFB into the future. Two units of AFRL conduct these activities, the AFRL Directed Energy Directorate (AFRL/RD) and AFRL Space Vehicle Directorate (AFRL/RV).

AFRL/RD develops directed energy weapons (including high energy lasers, high-power microwave, and high-power electromagnetic system prototypes) to counter, disable, and attack adversary sources. Equipment, components, and designs for warfighter weapons are created and tested in laboratories across Kirtland AFB before being tested outdoors at the High Energy Research and Technology Facility (HERTF)/HERTF Canyon, Frustration Canyon, Starfire Optical Range/1-Mile and 2-Mile sites, and Outdoor Laser Propagation and Firing Area to evaluate performance of the new technology.

AFRL/RV ensures that the United States and its allies maintain space superiority by developing and transitioning technologies that provide space-based capabilities to the nation. Equipment, components, and designs for space-based technologies are created in laboratories across Kirtland AFB and then tested outdoors at the Skywave Technologies Laboratory, Improved Solar Observing Optical Network, and South Park Antenna Field.

**Alternatives.** The PEA considered all reasonable alternatives. Two alternatives were considered and eliminated from further consideration based on the selection standards outlined in **Section 2.4** of the PEA.

**No Action Alternative.** Under the No Action Alternative, operations would continue as usual for Kirtland AFB, consistent with mission and management plans. Planned efforts would not increase over current operating levels and would not deviate from already approved activities. No new test activities would occur; this includes any expanded RDT&E operations that would pose new impacts on environmental resources. This alternative was carried forward for detailed analysis in the PEA. However, the No Action Alternative would not meet the purpose of or need for the Proposed Action as described in **Section 1.2** of the PEA.

## Summary of Environmental Effects

The USAF has concluded that the Proposed Action would not affect the following resources: airspace management, land use, and socioeconomics. Based on the findings in the PEA, less than significant adverse impacts would result on the following resources: noise, air quality, geological resources, water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, infrastructure, hazardous materials and wastes, and safety. The analysis in the PEA for each of the environmental resource areas listed above identified negligible to moderate adverse impacts under the Proposed Action. Potential environmental impacts are not expected to be significant for any of the resources. Additionally, no significant adverse cumulative impacts would result from the Proposed Action when combined with present and reasonably foreseeable future actions. A summary of the environmental consequences is provided in **Table 2-1** of the PEA.

## Conclusion

Based on the description of the Proposed Action as outlined in the PEA, all activities were found to comply with the criteria or standards of environmental quality and were coordinated with the appropriate federal, state, and local agencies. The attached PEA and this FONSI were made available to the public for a 30-day review period on 11 May 2025. Agencies were coordinated with throughout the PEA development process, and their comments were incorporated into the analysis of potential environmental impacts performed in the PEA as appropriate.

## Finding of No Significant Impact

Based on my review of the facts and analysis contained in the attached PEA, conducted under the provisions of NEPA, I conclude that the Proposed Action would not have a significant environmental impact, either by itself or cumulatively, with other known projects. Accordingly, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. This analysis fulfills the requirements of NEPA. The signing of this FONSI completes the environmental impact analysis process.

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20 Nov 25

JUSTIN D. SECREST, Colonel, USAF
Commander, 377th Air Base Wing

Date

Attachment: *Programmatic Environmental Assessment Addressing Air Force Research Laboratory Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation Activities at Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico*