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1. Title: Final Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives for the Environmental Assessment Addressing UH-1N Replacement Beddown at Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico

3. Author(s)/Office Symbol/Phone #/Contractor's email address: Martha E. Garcia, 377 MSG/CEIEC, 846-6446: martha.garcia.3@us.af.mil

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No.

Date: 22-Aug-19

COORDINATION RECORD FOR SECURITY & POLICY REVIEW FORM 377 MSG/MODIFIED FOR 377 MSG/CE

APPROVAL

***PROGRAM MANAGER OR SUBMITTER**	**SIGNATURE and DATE**
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***BRANCH CHIEF OR SUPERVISOR**	**SIGNATURE and DATE**
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***OPSEC COORDINATOR/WEBSITE**	**SIGNATURE and DATE**
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Final Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives for the Environmental Assessment Addressing

UH-1N Replacement Beddown

at Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico

August 2019

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABW	Air Base Wing
ADSL	Average Daily Student Load
AETC	Air Education and Training Command
AFB	Air Force Base
AFGSC	Air Force Global Strike Command
AMXS	Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
ATTW	Aircrew Training and Test Wing
BAI	backup aircraft inventory
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CCTW	Combat Crew Training Wing
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CTW	Crew Training Wing
DOD	Department of Defense
DOE	Department of Energy
DOPAA	Description of the Proposed Action and Alternative
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EO	Executive Order
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
ft	foot/feet
FY	fiscal year
FTU	Flight Training Unit
mph	miles per hour
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NOA	Notice of Availability
PAI	primary aircraft inventory
RQS	Rescue Squadron
SF	square foot/feet
SMA	Special Missions Aviator
SOW	Special Operations Wing
UMD	Unit Manning Document
US	United States
USAF	United States Air Force
USFS	United States Forest Service

COVER SHEET

CHECK FINAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ADDRESSING THE UH-1N REPLACEMENT BEDDOWN AT KIRTLAND AIR FORCE BASE, NEW MEXICO

Responsible Agencies: United States Air Force (USAF), Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC), 377th Air Base Wing.

Affected Location: Kirtland Air Force Base (AFB), New Mexico.

Report Designation: Check Final Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives for an Environmental Assessment (EA).

Abstract: USAF proposes to replace Bell UH-1N helicopters at Kirtland AFB with Boeing MH-139 medium lift helicopters. The Vice Chairman Joint Chiefs of the Staff approved replacement of the UH-1N in 2016. This decision was made after it was determined that maintaining the aging UH-1N fleet was becoming costlier and Air Education and Training Command (AETC) would no longer be able to meet its requirement to train aircrew for weapon site security, missile convoy operations, or emergency evacuation operations if the aging fleet of UH-1N aircraft are not replaced with a newer state-of the-art helicopter. USAF executed an open bid competition for an off-the-shelf helicopter with minimum requirements conservative enough to allow multiple manufacturers to participate. In September 2018, USAF selected the Boeing MH-139 as the replacement aircraft.

The current fleet of 6 UH-1Ns assigned to the 58th Special Operations Wing (SOW) at Kirtland AFB would be replaced with 8 primary aircraft inventory (PAI) and 2 backup aircraft inventory (BAI) for a total of 10 MH-139 aircraft. However, there would be a period of overlap of UH-1N and replacement MH-139 aircraft operating at the installation until all replacement aircraft arrive and operations decrease to a steady-state. Specifically, there would be an increase in the number of sorties flown each year by the 58 SOW as part of their training operations. The estimated increase in the annual number of flights will be an increase from the current 945 sorties to 1,607 sorties by fiscal year (FY) 2024 through FY 2026, a 70 percent increase. Sorties after FY 2026 would be reduced to 1,238 sorties annually by FY 2027, which would be an overall increase of 31 percent from the current 945 sorties. Increases in manning for the MH-139 have been mandated by AFGSC. The additional training throughput for the MH-139 drives the increases in flight hours and aircraft assigned.

Current training activities at Kirtland AFB would increase from the current total number of students and permanent party personnel of 62 to 73 in the first quarter of FY 2024, and then to 95 in the third quarter of FY 2024 through the fourth quarter of FY 2026. This increase would be due to the overlap in operations between the UH-1N and MH-139. With completion of the transition to the MH-139 helicopter by the first quarter of FY 2027, the steady state for students and permanent party personnel at 58 SOW would be 87.

Delivery of the first MH-139s are scheduled for FY 2024 with the scheduled delivery of five MH-139s. To support the beddown and mission of the MH-139 aircraft, it would be necessary to demolish and construct facilities on the installation to provide space for additional personnel and training facilities. Based on size specifications for the UH-1N and the MH-139, the two helicopters are similar in size.

Under the No Action Alternative, replacement of aging UH-1N aircraft with modern MH-139 medium lift aircraft at Kirtland AFB would not occur. Demolition and construction for additional personnel and training facilities would not be required. 58 SOW would continue to conduct their mission using the UH-1N aircraft and support facilities. Maintenance costs for the aging UH-1N would continue to increase impacting AETC's ability to continue to meet its requirement to train aircrew for weapon site security, missile convoy operations, or emergency evacuation operations while those units would continue to fly the outdated UH-1N. As other units transition to the MH-139 aircraft, the 58 SOW would no longer be able to conduct its mission, since it would not have the correct aircraft to train aircrew.

Written comments and inquiries regarding this document should be directed by mail to the Kirtland AFB National Environmental Policy Act Program Manager, 377 MSG/CEIEC, 2050 Wyoming Boulevard SE, Suite 116, Kirtland AFB, New Mexico 87117-5270, or by email to *KirtlandNEPA@us.af.mil*.

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1.0 PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE ACTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Due to safety concerns and the costliness of maintaining an aging fleet, the United States Air Force (USAF) proposes to replace the 58 Special Operations Wing's (SOW's) fleet of Bell UH-1N helicopters at Kirtland Air Force Base (AFB) with Boeing MH-139 medium lift helicopters. The Proposed Action is evaluated as part of a focused Environmental Assessment (EA) that also addresses several elements associated with the UH-1N replacement. To support the beddown and mission of the MH-139 aircraft, it would be necessary to demolish and construct facilities to provide space for additional personnel and training facilities.

This Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives will become Sections 1 and 2 of the EA, which will evaluate the potential environmental impacts resulting from the Proposed Action and No Action Alternative. The EA will be prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 United States Code §4321 et seq.) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] §1500–1508). The USAF is also required to comply with USAF NEPA-implementing regulation 32 CFR Part 989, as amended.

1.2 PROJECT LOCATION AND BACKGROUND

1.2.1 Kirtland AFB Background

Kirtland AFB is in Bernalillo County, southeast of the city of Albuquerque, New Mexico (see **Figure 1-1**). The installation encompasses 51,585 acres with elevations that range from 5,200 feet (ft) to almost 8,000 ft above mean sea level. The Manzanita Mountains on its eastern boundary rise to over 10,000 ft (KAFB 2018). The land within the installation is owned by a variety of entities (see **Table 1-1**). The northwest portion of Kirtland AFB is developed. The remaining portion of the installation is relatively undeveloped and is used for training and testing missions.

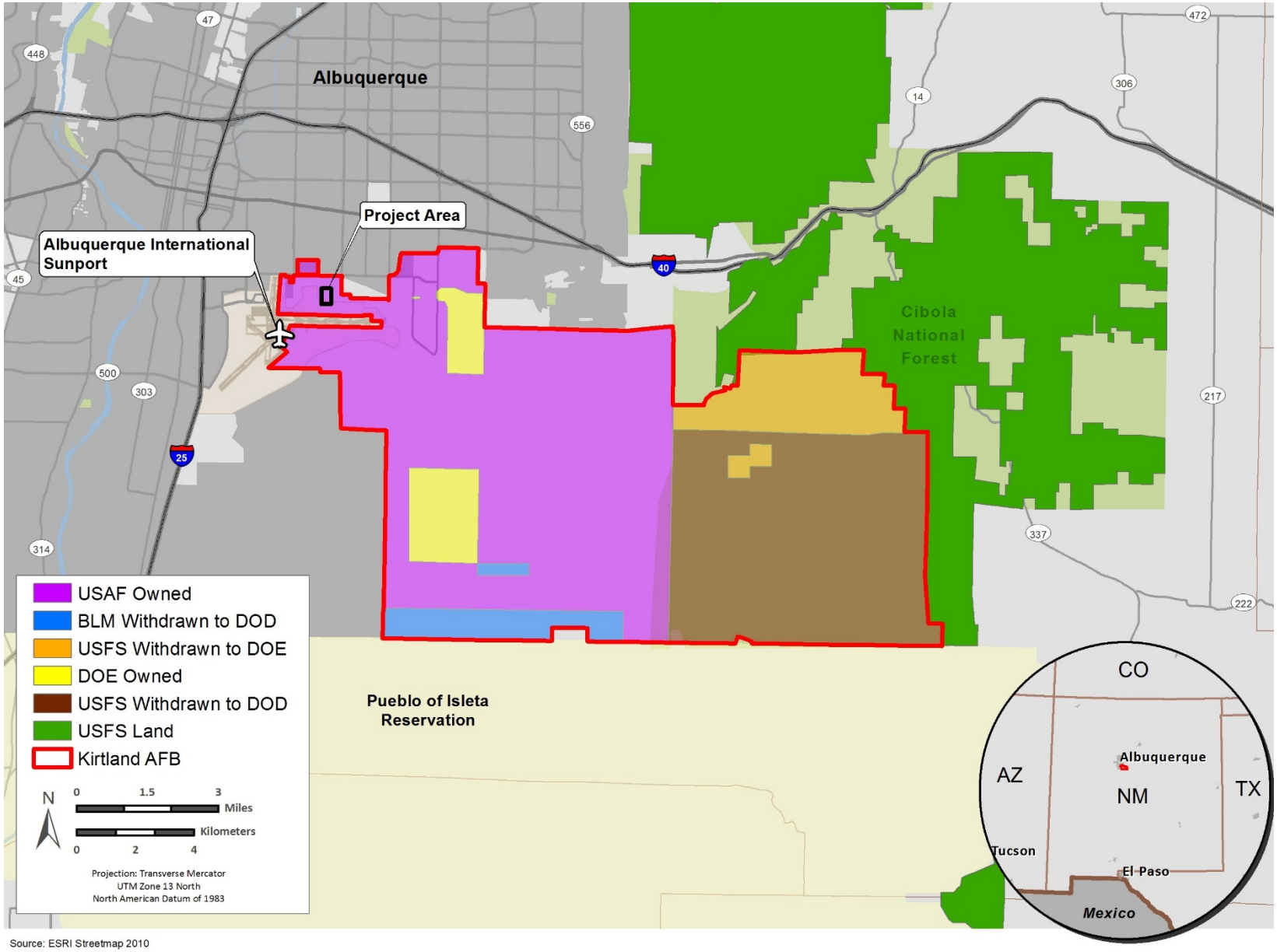
Table 1-1. Kirtland AFB Land Ownership

Kirtland AFB Lands	Acres
USAF Fee Owned	25,612
United States Forest Service (USFS) withdrawn to the Department of Defense (DOD)	15,891
Bureau of Land Management (BLM) withdrawn to DOD	2,549
USAF Total (USAF Controlled Lands)	**44,052**
Department of Energy (DOE) Fee Owned	2,938
USFS withdrawn to DOE	4,595
DOE Total	**7,533**
GRAND TOTAL	**51,585**

Source: KAFB 2012

Surrounding land uses adjacent to Kirtland AFB include the USFS Cibola National Forest to the northeast and east; the Isleta Pueblo Reservation to the south; Bernalillo County developments to the southwest; residential and business areas of the city of Albuquerque to the west and north; and the Albuquerque International Sunport, hereafter referred to as the Sunport, directly to the northwest.

Kirtland AFB is the sixth largest installation in the USAF. It is operated by 377th Air Base Wing (ABW), a unit of Air Force Global Strike Command's (AFGSC's) 20th Air Force and the host unit at Kirtland AFB. Missions at Kirtland AFB fall into four major categories: research, development, and testing; readiness and training; munitions maintenance; and support to installation operations



Source: ESRI Streetmap 2010

Figure 1-1. Kirtland AFB Vicinity Map with Land Ownership and Withdrawn Area

for more than 100 mission partners. The primary mission of 377 ABW is to execute readiness and support operations for American air power.

Kirtland AFB is a center for research, development, and testing of nonconventional weapons, space and missile technology, laser warfare, and much more. Organizations involved in these activities include the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center, Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center, Space and Missile Systems Center, Air Force Inspection Agency, Air Force Safety Center, Air Force Research Laboratory, DOE, and Sandia National Laboratories. In addition, 377 ABW ensures readiness and training of airmen for worldwide duty and operates the airfield for present and future USAF operations, prepares personnel to deploy worldwide on a moment's notice, and keeps the installation secure. Mission partners involved in these activities include the 58th Special Operations Wing (SOW), 150 SOW (New Mexico Air National Guard), and the USAF Pararescue School.

1.2.2 58 SOW and UH-1N Helicopter Overview

Located at Kirtland AFB since April 1994, 58 SOW's mission is to train warriors, professionalize Airmen, and employ airpower. This mission has existed at Kirtland AFB since 20 February 1976, when the 1550th Aircrew Training and Test Wing (ATTW) moved from Hill AFB. The 1550 ATTW trained helicopter and fixed-wing aircrews. The USAF re-designated the unit as the 1550th Combat Crew Training Wing (CCTW) in May 1984, inactivating it in October 1991, and transferring the training mission to the 542nd Crew Training Wing (CTW). The USAF then inactivated the 542 CTW in April 1994, transferring the training mission to the 58 SOW. (Malloy 2019).

Drawing upon its history and experience with combat search and rescue operations, 58 SOW now serves as a test center and school house for rescue aircrews and technology for the USAF. 58 SOW provides undergraduate, graduate, and refresher aircrew training for special operations and personnel rescue by helicopter as well as fixed-wing and tilt-rotor aircraft. 58 SOW utilizes the UH-1N to train aircrew for weapon site security mission convoy operations, and emergency evacuation operations. 58 SOW trains over 17,000 students per year and operates six different aircraft systems, including two versions of the Bell Huey helicopter (TH-1H and UH-1N), one version of the Sikorksy Pave Hawk helicopter (HH-60G – soon to be updated with the HH-60W), two versions of the Lockheed Martin C-130 Hercules fixed-wing transport (HC-130J and MC-130J), and one version of the Bell Boeing Osprey tilt-rotor transport (CV-22) (Malloy 2019). Use of the UH-1N helicopter is detailed below.

Manufactured by Bell Helicopter/Textron Inc., the UH-1N is the military version of the Bell 212, one of the numerous variants of the original "Huey" first designed and flown in 1956. The UH-1N entered the USAF inventory in 1970 as a light-lift utility helicopter used to support various missions. The 57.3-ft-long helicopter can be deployed for airlift of emergency security forces, security and surveillance of off-base weapons convoys, distinguished visitor airlift, disaster response operations, civilian search and rescue, medical evacuation, airborne cable inspections, support to aircrew survival school, aerial testing, and routine missile site support and transport. The UH-1N has a crew of three (pilot, co-pilot and flight engineer) and is capable of flight in instrument and nighttime conditions. When configured for passengers, the UH-1N can seat up to 13 people, but actual passenger loads are dependent on fuel loads and atmospheric conditions (may be less). The medical evacuation configuration can accommodate up to six litters. Without seats or litters, the cabin can carry bulky, oversized cargo. Access to the cabin is through two full-sized sliding doors. At Kirtland AFB, 58 SOW has a current aircraft fleet of six UH-1N primary aircraft inventory (PAI) and no backup aircraft inventory (BAI).

Because the UH-1N helicopters first entered service over 40 years ago, and most of the helicopters currently being used are nearing the end of their life cycle, the USAF began searching

for a suitable replacement. In September 2018, Boeing was awarded a contract to produce the MH-139 helicopter for the USAF. MH-139 helicopters are derived from the Leonardo AW139 and are expected to provide significant upgrades in speed, range, endurance, payload capacity, and survivability. Ten helicopters are scheduled to be delivered to Kirtland AFB between fiscal year (FY) 2024 and FY 2027. The first MH-139s are scheduled to be delivered to 58 SOW in the first quarter of FY 2024, with delivery of all 10 MH-139s being complete by the fourth quarter of FY 2026. Boeing's contract also includes operations, maintenance, training systems, and support equipment for the MH-139 aircraft (Malloy 2019, Beck 2019).

1.3 PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to replace the aging UH-1N helicopter fleet with an updated helicopter, the MH-139. The aging UH-1Ns are critical assets for 58 SOW, used to train aircrew for weapon site security, missile convoy operations, and emergency evacuation operations. The aging UH-1Ns first entered service over 40 years ago, as discussed in **Section 1.2.2, and** are nearing the end of their life cycle. Delivery of the new MH-139s would allow 58 SOW at Kirtland AFB to continue providing graduate and refresher aircrew training and continue their current USAF mission.

The Proposed Action is needed to address increased helicopter maintenance costs, resolve reliability deficiencies and enhance mission capability, improve training of military personnel, as well as maintain tactical superiority in operations throughout USAF. 58 SOW would continue to train all rotary-wing graduate level aircrew for the foreseeable future, to include the MH-139. Increases in manning for the MH-139 have been mandated by AFGSC. The additional training throughput for the MH-139 drives the increases in flight hours and aircraft assigned. As the MH-139 model replaces the UH-1N model throughout the USAF fleet, 58 SOW would need to accept the MH-139 in order to continue training aircrew for those operations. It is anticipated that all UH-1N helicopters at Kirtland AFB would be phased out by FY 2027.

Kirtland AFB is considered the prime location for USAF graduate level vertical lift training. It has all of the required established training assets to include: refueling tracks, high-desert/high-density altitude training, and access to gunnery ranges. Separating the MH-139 from the existing training assets would greatly reduce effectiveness and increase training costs. Further, the helicopter/aircraft maintenance personnel and logistics lines are already in place at Kirtland AFB within 58 SOW. To support the beddown and mission of the MH-139 aircraft, it would be necessary to demolish and construct facilities to provide space for additional personnel and training facilities.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The scope of the EA will include the actions proposed; alternatives considered; a description of the existing environment; and direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts. The scope of the Proposed Action and the range of alternatives to be considered are presented in **Section 2**. USAF NEPA-implementing regulations, 32 CFR Part 989 (as amended), require consideration of the No Action Alternative, which will be analyzed to provide the baseline against which the environmental impacts of implementing the range of alternatives addressed can be compared. The EA will identify appropriate measures that are not already included in the Proposed Action or alternatives in order to avoid, minimize, or reduce adverse environmental impacts, if necessary.

The EA will identify the environmental impacts of the Proposed Action and No Action Alternative on affected resource areas. Per CEQ regulations (40 CFR §1501.7[a][3]), only those resource areas that apply to the Proposed Action and alternatives will be analyzed. The following resource areas will be analyzed and discussed for potential impacts from implementation of the Proposed

Action and No Action Alternative: Airspace Management, Noise, Land Use, Visual Resources, Air Quality, Water Resources, Geological Resources, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Infrastructure, Hazardous Materials and Wastes, Safety, Socioeconomics, and Environmental Justice.

[[Preparer's Note: Resource areas will be analyzed and could be eliminated from detailed analysis in the Preliminary Draft EA. The list of resource areas will be updated accordingly.]]

1.4.1 NEPA Compliance Requirements

NEPA is a federal law requiring the analysis of potential environmental impacts associated with proposed federal actions before the actions are taken. The intent of NEPA is to make decisions informed by potential environmental consequences and take actions to protect, restore, or enhance the environment. NEPA established the CEQ, which is responsible for ensuring federal agency compliance with NEPA. CEQ regulations mandate all federal agencies use a prescribed approach to environmental impact analysis. The approach includes an evaluation of the potential environmental consequences associated with a proposed action and considers alternative courses of action.

The process for implementing NEPA is outlined in 40 CFR §§ 1500–1508, *Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act*. These CEQ regulations specify that an EA be prepared to determine whether a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is appropriate or if preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is necessary. An EA considers the effects (direct, indirect, and cumulative) of a proposed action on the natural and human environment. It uses a systematic, interdisciplinary approach to evaluate a proposed action and possible alternatives and must disclose all considerations to the public. An EA can aid in an agency's compliance with NEPA when an EIS is unnecessary and facilitate preparation of an EIS when one is required.

USAF regulations under 32 CFR Part 989 provide procedures for environmental impact analysis for the USAF to comply with NEPA and CEQ NEPA regulations. USAF Policy Directive 32-70, *Environmental Quality*, states the USAF will comply with applicable federal, state, and local environmental laws and regulations, including NEPA. If significant impacts are predicted under NEPA, the USAF would decide whether to conduct mitigation to reduce impacts below the level of significance, prepare an EIS, or abandon the Proposed Action. The EA would also be used to guide the USAF in implementing the Proposed Action in a manner consistent with USAF standards for environmental stewardship should the Proposed Action be approved for implementation.

1.4.2 Intergovernmental and Stakeholder Coordination

NEPA requirements help ensure that environmental information is made available to the public during the decision-making process and prior to an action's implementation. A premise of NEPA is that the quality of federal decisions will be enhanced if the public is involved in the planning process. Executive Order (EO) 12372, *Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs*, as amended by EO 12416, requires federal agencies to provide opportunities for consultation by elected officials of state and local governments that would be directly affected by a federal proposal. In compliance with NEPA, Kirtland AFB will notify relevant stakeholders about the Proposed Action and alternatives (see **Appendix A** for stakeholder coordination materials). The notification process will provide these stakeholders the opportunity to cooperate with Kirtland AFB and provide comments on the Proposed Action and alternatives.

Per the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 and implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800), and Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act and implementing regulations (50 CFR Part 17), including the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, findings of effect and a request for concurrence will be transmitted to the State Historic Preservation Officer and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Correspondence regarding the findings and concurrence and resolution of any adverse effect will be included in **Appendix A.**

NHPA requires federal agencies to consult with federally recognized Native American tribes on proposed undertakings that have the potential to affect properties of cultural, historical, or religious significance to the tribes. The tribal consultation process is distinct from NEPA consultation or the intergovernmental coordination process, and it requires separate consultation with all relevant tribes. The timelines for tribal consultation are also distinct from those of other consultations. The Kirtland AFB point-of-contact for Native American tribes is the Installation Commander. Consultation with the tribes will be conducted concurrently with the scoping and Draft EA review periods. The Native American tribal governments to be coordinated or consulted with regarding the Proposed Action will be listed in **Appendix A** along with all USAF correspondence. Comments received from the various stakeholders and Native American tribes will be considered during preparation of the EA and included in **Appendix A**.

Scoping letters will be provided to relevant federal, state, and local agencies and Native American tribes notifying them that the USAF is preparing an EA to evaluate the transition of UH-1N helicopters to the MH-139 model at Kirtland AFB. The agencies and tribes will be requested to provide information regarding impacts of the Proposed Action on the natural environment or other environmental aspects that they feel should be included and considered in the preparation of the EA. The federal, state, and local agencies and Native American tribal governments to be coordinated or consulted with regarding the Proposed Action are listed in **Appendix A**.

1.4.3 Public and Agency Review of Draft EA

A Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Draft EA will be published in *The Albuquerque Journal* announcing the availability of the Draft EA. Letters will be provided to relevant federal, state, and local agencies and Native American tribal governments informing them that the Draft EA is available for review. The publication of the NOA will initiate a 30-day comment period. A copy of the Draft EA will be made available for review at the San Pedro Public Library at 5600 Trumbull Avenue SE, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87108. A copy of the Draft EA will also be made available for review online at *http://www.kirtland.af.mil* under the Environment Information tab. At the closing of the public review period, applicable comments from the general public and interagency and intergovernmental coordination/consultation will be incorporated into the analysis of potential environmental impacts performed as part of the EA, where applicable, and included in **Appendix A** of the Final EA.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

As discussed in **Section 1.4.1**, the NEPA process provides for an evaluation of potential environmental consequences associated with a proposed action and considers alternative courses of action. Reasonable alternatives must satisfy the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action, as defined in **Section 1.3**. In addition, CEQ guidance recommends the inclusion of a No Action Alternative against which potential impacts would be compared. While the No Action Alternative would not satisfy the purpose of or need for the Proposed Action, it is analyzed in detail in accordance with USAF NEPA-implementing regulations (32 CFR Part 989, as amended).

2.1 PROPOSED ACTION

The USAF proposes to replace the aging Bell UH-1N aircraft at Kirtland AFB with the Boeing MH-139 medium lift aircraft. The current fleet of 6 UH-1N PAI assigned to 58 SOW would be replaced with 8 PAI and 2 BAI, for a total of 10 MH-139 aircraft. There would be a period of overlap of UH-1N and replacement MH-139 aircraft operating at the installation until all MH-139 aircraft arrive and operations decrease to a steady-state. It is expected that the six UH-1N helicopters would remain at Kirtland AFB until FY 2027 before they are finally phased out. Increases in manning for the MH-139 have been mandated by AFGSC. The additional training throughput for the MH-139 drives the increases in flight hours and aircraft assigned.

Table 2-1 presents current and projected flight operations. Current operations at Kirtland AFB would increase by approximately 70 percent from current UH-1N operations by FY 2025 due to the overlap in operations between the UH-1N and MH-139. In FY 2032, the steady state would be a 31 percent increase in the MH-139 operations compared to current UH-1N operations. An increase in personnel is also anticipated during the overlap of UH-1N and MH-139 aircraft, which would then decrease to a steady-state. However, because of the increase in PAI and BAI, the Proposed Action would result in an increase in personnel from current UH-1N training activities of approximately 25 students (Average Daily Student Load [ADSL]) and approximately 37 permanent party personnel. In FY 2024 through FY 2026, the highest overlap years, the increase in students would be approximately 22 students (ADSL) and approximately 19 permanent party members.

Table 2-1. Current and Projected Flight Operations

	Current through December 2023	**FY 2024 Quarter 1**	**FY 2024 Quarter 2**	**FY 2024 Quarter 3 through FY 2026 Quarter 4**	**FY 2027 Quarter 1 Full MH-139 Transition Complete**
Aircraft	6 UH-1N	6 UH-1N	6 UH-1N	6 UH-1N	0 UH-1N
	0 MH-139	5 MH-139	6 MH-139	10 MH-139	10 MH-139
Flight Operations (Sorties)	945 Annually	945 Annually	945 Annually	1,607 Annually	1,238 Annually
Personnel	ADSL = 25	25	25	47	31
	37 Permanent Party Members (17 Pilot/20 SMAs/UMD	48	48	48	56

Source: (Beck 2019)
Note: SMA = Special Mission Aviator
UMD = Unit Manning Document

Table 2-2 presents the comparison of the UH-1N and the MH-139. As identified in the table, the MH-139 has a slightly smaller rotor diameter and length; however, its five bladed rotor system

would require more hanger space than is required for the same number of UH-1N aircraft. The height of the MH-139 is approximately 1.5 ft taller than the UH-1N. The overall speed of the MH-139 is 202 miles per hour (mph) compared to UH-1N at 139.15 mph. The MH-139 also has a greater ceiling altitude and range. Overall, the UH-1N and MH-139 are similar in size, but the MH-139 has updated technology, which improves its performance and effectiveness (USAF 2015, Boeing 2019).

Table 2-2. UH-1N and MH-139 Comparison

Characteristics	UH-1N	MH-139
Rotor Diameter	48 ft	45.28 ft
Length	57.3 ft	54.63 ft
Height	14.9 ft	16.4 ft.
Weight (maximum)	10,500 pounds	14,330 pounds
Speed	139.15 mph	202 mph
Ceiling Altitude	17,300 ft	20,341 ft
Range	286 miles	808 miles
Crew	Three (pilot, co-pilot, and flight engineer)	Three (pilot, co-pilot, and flight engineer)
Engine	Pratt & Whitney Turbo Twin-Pac T400-CP-400 developing 1,134 horsepower	Two Pratt & Whitney PT6C turboshaft engines developing 1,750 horsepower each and driving a five bladed main rotor and four bladed tail rotor.
Introduction Date	1971	2022 (projected)

Source: (KAFB 2015, MF 2018)

Under the Proposed Action, 58 SOW activities would increase student production, because as the Formal Training Unit for the MH-139, Kirtland AFB would have to convert all aircrew from the UH-1N to the MH-139 while also producing initial qualification to new aircrew. The flight approach and flight departure tracks to and from Kirtland AFB are believed to remain unchanged. Approximately 148,512 air operations (i.e., a single take-off or landing) occur at the Sunport each year, or 407 each day on average. 58 SOW conducts 945 air operations with the UH-1N at the Sunport each year (2.6 each day on average), which accounts for approximately 0.6 percent of the airport-wide operations.

The average increase in flight operations from FY 2023 to FY 2028 would be 70 percent. This would equate to an increase to 1,607 flight operations per year. By FY 2027, the steady state would be a 31 percent increase with the full transition to the MH-139 helicopter compared to the current UH-1N flight operations. It is expected that from FY 2027 forward, 1,238 flight operations would be conducted by the 58 SOW MH-139s in a year (Beck 2019).

To support the beddown and mission of the MH-139 aircraft, the USAF proposes to demolish and construct facilities to provide space for additional personnel and training facilities. **Figure 2-1** presents the proposed demolition and construction associated with the Proposed Action. The USAF proposes to construct a 35,776 square foot (SF) addition to Building 951, the newly constructed CRH simulator facility, and a 4,800 SF addition to Building 957, which was constructed in 1997. The addition to Building 951 would include a 120-ft by 60-ft bay room (7,200 SF) and a 90-ft by 40-ft room (3,600 SF) to accommodate MH-139 flight simulators and other training equipment."

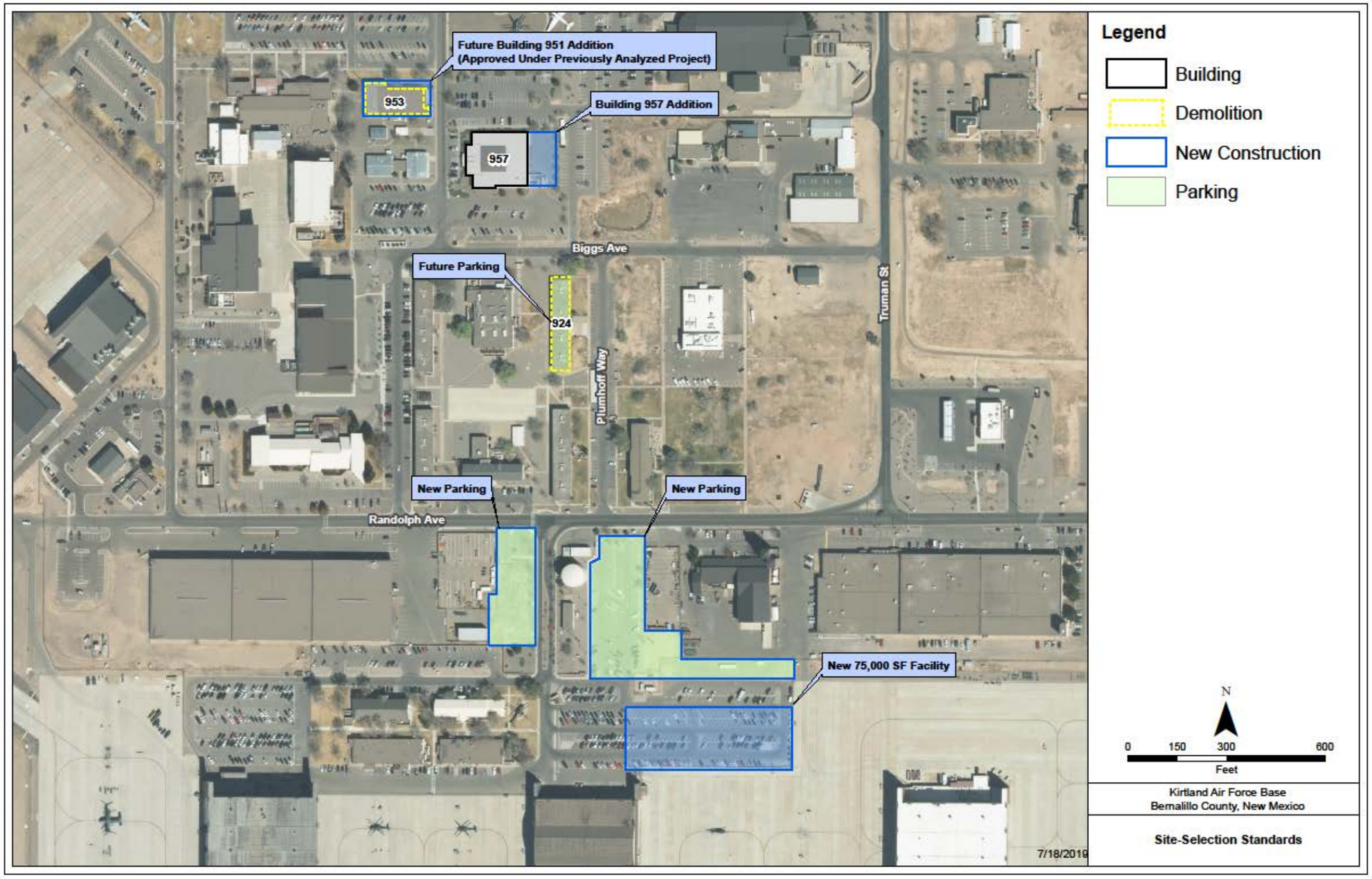


Figure 2-1. Proposed Demolition and Construction Activities under the Proposed Action

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The 4,800 SF addition to Building 957 would include areas for functions and personnel displaced by demolition such as, registrar office, library, student equipment storage, and night vision goggle storage. Building 953 would be demolished to provide adequate space for the addition to Building 951. Building 924 would be demolished to provide additional parking spaces. Building 924, a 17,287 SF facility, was constructed in 1955 and Building 953, an 11,948 SF facility, was constructed in 1964. Because of their age, it is anticipated that testing and abatement of asbestos-containing material and lead-based paint would be required for the demolition of these buildings. The Proposed Action includes the addition or reconfiguration of parking areas as shown on **Figure 2-1**. Approximately 450 parking spaces, covering an estimated 186,250 square feet, would be included to make up for those displaced during construction and for the proposed additional personnel that the MH-139 beddown would require. This estimate is based on a standard parking dimension per car of 18 ft by 9 ft (162 SF) as recommended by the American Institute of Architects. Drive areas measuring 24 ft in width would be required between parking rows.

In addition, a 75,000 SF facility would be constructed to support helicopter squadron operations for the 512th Rescue Squadron (RQS) Operations Aircraft Maintenance Unit and 58th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron (AMXS). Hangar 1001 would remain in operation after the new SquadOps/AMU facility is constructed. Islands A and B of Hangar 1001 would likely require renovations in the future to support helicopter operations. All utilities would be protected during construction activities, particularly underground cables in the vicinity of Buildings 924, 953, 954, and 960.

[[Preparer's Note: Kirtland AFB acknowledges that the 58 SOW Hangars are eligible to the NRHP. Release of this DOPAA and receipt of the scoping letters by consulting parties will begin the Section 106 consultation process. Results will be incorporated into Section 3 of the EA.]]

2.2 SELECTION STANDARDS

In accordance with 32 CFR §989.8 (c), the development of selection standards is an effective mechanism for the identification, comparison, and evaluation of reasonable alternatives. The following selection standards were developed to be consistent with the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action and to address pertinent mission, environmental, safety, and health factors. These site-selection standards were used to identify reasonable alternatives for analysis in the EA:

- Reduce USAF operations and maintenance costs associated with the UH-1N.
- Keep new helicopters co-located with existing training assets at Kirtland AFB to maximize the effectiveness of 58 SOW.
- Use established helicopter training assets to include: refueling tracks, high-desert/high-density altitude training, and access to gunnery ranges.

2.3 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the No Action Alternative, replacement of aging UH-1N aircraft with modern MH-139 medium lift aircraft at Kirtland AFB would not occur. Demolition and construction for additional personnel and training facilities would not be required. 58 SOW would continue to conduct their mission using the UH-1N aircraft and support facilities. Maintenance costs for the aging UH-1N would continue to increase and AETC would no longer meet its requirement to train aircrew for weapon site security, missile convoy operations, or emergency evacuation operations. Additionally, the UH-1N is not capable of meeting mission requirements at AFGSC and USAF District of Washington. In addition, UH-1N operations/maintenance costs would

continue to increase, making it critical for the USAF to replace it for the purposes of National Defense. If the UH-1N is not replaced at Kirtland AFB, there would not be a training unit to support the MH-139. The mission support now provided by the UH-1N would eventually fail due to its inability to continue to effectively support this mission.

The No Action Alternative would not meet the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action as described in **Section 1.3**; however, the USAF Environmental Impact Analysis Process (32 CFR § 989.8[d]) requires consideration of the No Action Alternative. In addition, CEQ guidance recommends inclusion of the No Action Alternative in an EA to assess any environmental consequences that may occur if the Proposed Action is not implemented. Therefore, this alternative will be carried forward for detailed analysis in the EA. The No Action Alternative also serves as a baseline against which the Proposed Action can be compared.

2.4 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED ANALYSIS

The Vice Chairman Joint Chiefs of the Staff approved replacement of the UH-1N in 2016. Following this decision, USAF executed an open bid competition for an off-the-shelf helicopter with minimum requirements conservative enough to allow multiple manufacturers to participate. In 2018, USAF selected the Boeing MH-139 as the replacement aircraft after considering other helicopters, the Sikorsky UH-60M and Sierra Nevada UH-60A. Strong competition drove down costs for the program, resulting in $0.3 billion cost savings to the taxpayer. The original service cost estimate was $4.1 billion. The total program cost for the UH-1N Replacement Program reflects the exercise of all options and provides for the acquisition and sustainment of up to 84 MH-139 helicopters, training devices, and associated support equipment to replace the legacy UH-1Ns. The USAF pursued a full and open competition to deliver increased capabilities to warfighters. This replacement will provide the necessary speed, range, endurance, and carrying capacity needed to meet the requirements of five USAF major commands.

The MH-139, which is smaller and lighter than the UH-60-series, offered a commercial-off-the-shelf airframe that required minimal modifications to perform the missions that the USAF presently assigns to its UH-1Ns. The MH-139 is cheaper to purchase, will be cheaper to operate, and over the long term, a lot cheaper for the USAF to sustain.

Other locations for operation of the new MH-139 fleet at Kirtland AFB were considered but were deemed unsuitable as they lacked the needed proximity to the flight line. In addition, the construction of new support facilities was cost prohibitive versus remodeling existing facilities and construction of new facilities used by 58 SOW at their current complex on Kirtland AFB.

2.5 COMPARATIVE SUMMARY OF IMPACTS

Table 2-3 presents a summary of the impacts anticipated under the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative.

Table 2-3. Summary of Potential Impacts

Affected Resource	Proposed Action	No Action Alternative
Airspace Management		
Noise		
Land Use		
Visual Resources		
Air Quality		
Geology and Soils		
Water Resources		
Biological Resources		
Cultural Resources		
Infrastructure		
Hazardous Materials and Wastes		
Safety		
Socioeconomics		
Environmental Justice		

[[Preparer's Note: Resource areas will be analyzed and could be eliminated from detailed analysis in the Preliminary Draft EA. Summary of potential impacts will be complete in the Preliminary Draft EA.]]

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3.0 REFERENCES

Beck 2019 — Beck, Major Beck, USAF 58 SOW Chief CRH Integration. “Re: Request for Assistance Obtaining Information UH-1N Helo Replacement.” Email correspondence to Martha Garcia. 9 May 2019 and 16 July 2019.

KAFB 2012 — Kirtland Air Force Base (KAFB). 2012. *Kirtland Air Force Base Real Estate Management Existing Facilities.*

KAFB 2018 — KAFB. 2018. *US Air Force Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan Kirtland Air Force Base Albuquerque, New Mexico.* 16 February 2018.

Malloy 2019 — Malloy, Laura, Kirtland AFB 58 SOW Historian. “Re: Review of Section 1.2.2 of the DOPAA.” Email correspondence to Philip Dula. 13 May 2019.

MF 2018 — Military Factory (MF). 2018. Boeing MH-139 Multi Mission Medium Lift Military Helicopter, Fact Sheet Technical Specifications. 25 September 2018. Available online: https://www.militaryfactory.com/aircraft/detail.asp?aircraft_id=1907. Accessed 26 June 2019.

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APPENDIX A
INTERAGENCY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MATERIALS

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Appendix A

Interagency and Intergovernmental Coordination for Environmental Planning and Public Involvement Materials

The 377th Air Base Wing will solicit comments on the Environmental Assessment by distributing letters to potentially interested federal, state, and local agencies; Native American tribes; and other stakeholder groups or individuals. Following is a list of potentially interested parties:

Federal, State, and Local Agencies – Scoping Letter

Ms. Amy Leuders
Southwest Regional Director
US Fish & Wildlife Service
PO Box 1306
Albuquerque NM 87103-1306

Ms. Priscilla J. Avila
Acting Regional Director and Regional Environmental Specialist
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Southwest Regional Office
1001 Indian School Road NW
Albuquerque NM 87104

Ms. Danita Burns, District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
New Mexico State Office
Albuquerque District Office
100 Sun Avenue NE, Suite 330
Pan American Building
Albuquerque NM 87109-4676

Mr. Stephen Spencer
Regional Environmental Officer
US Department of Interior
Office of Environmental Policy & Compliance - Albuquerque Region
1001 Indian School Road NW, Suite 348
Albuquerque NM 87104

Mr. Terry Biggio, Regional Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
Southwest Region
10101 Hillwood Parkway
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Ms. Pearl Armijo, District Conservationist
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Albuquerque Service Center
100 Sun Avenue NE, Suite 160
Albuquerque NM 87109

Mr. George Macdonell, Chief Environmental Resources Section
US Army Corps of Engineers
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Albuquerque NM 87109

Ms. Anne L. Idsal, Regional Administrator
US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue
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Ms. Cheryl Prewitt, Regional Environmental Coordinator
US Forest Service
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Mr. John Weckerle
DOE/NNSA Office of General Counsel
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Albuquerque NM 87187

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
US Senate
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Albuquerque NM 87102

The Honorable Tom Udall
US Senate
400 Gold Avenue SW, Suite 300
Albuquerque NM 87102

The Honorable Xochitl Torres Small
US House of Representatives
430 Cannon HOB
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Debra Haaland
US House of Representatives
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The Honorable Ben R. Luján
US House of Representatives
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Santa Fe NM 87505

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State Historic Preservation Officer and Director
New Mexico Historic Preservation Division
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Commissioner of Public Lands
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Mr. Matt Wunder, Chief
Conservation Services
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Mr. Craig Johnson, Assistant Commissioner of Commercial Resources
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Ms. Jennifer L. Hower
Office of General Counsel & Environmental Policy
New Mexico Environment Department
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New Mexico Department of Agriculture
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Las Cruces NM 88003

Ms. Sarah Cottrell Propst, Cabinet Secretary
New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department
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Department Director
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Mid-Region Council of Governments
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Albuquerque City Councilmembers
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Native American Tribes – Scoping Letter

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Acoma Pueblo NM 87034

Governor Dwayne Herrera
Pueblo of Cochiti
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Governor Ron Lavato
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Governor Craig Quanchello
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Governor Joseph M. Talachy
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