

NAVY

Hawaii-Southern California Training and Testing EIS/OEIS



Proposed Action and Alternatives

Background. The U.S. Navy is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) to evaluate the potential environmental effects associated with maintaining military readiness training and research, development, test and evaluation activities (referred to as “training and testing”) conducted in the Hawaii-Southern California Training and Testing study area. The study area consists of the seaspace and airspace within the Hawaii Range Complex (extended

to the International Dateline), the Southern California Range Complex (including San Diego Bay), the Silver Strand Training Complex, select Navy pierside locations, and transit areas between the range complexes. Each complex consists of various individual ranges that are used by the Navy for training and testing. In addition, Navy ships conduct some portions of their training in transit between the Hawaii and Southern California range complexes. The land portions of those range complexes, analyzed in previous EIS documents, are not a part of the Hawaii-Southern California Training and Testing study area and will not be analyzed in this EIS/OEIS.



To ensure critical training and testing requirements are met, the Navy’s goals in preparing the EIS/OEIS are to:

- ◆ Reassess and validate the environmental impacts evaluated in previous EISs/OEISs and consolidate three separate EIS/OEIS documents into a single document;
- ◆ Address current training and testing activities not covered under existing permits and authorizations; and
- ◆ Renew and combine current regulatory permits and authorizations necessary to support force structure changes and emerging and future training and testing requirements, including those associated with new platforms and weapons systems.

Proposed Action. The Navy proposes to conduct military readiness training and testing activities in the Hawaii-Southern California study area. These training and testing activities include the use of active sonar and explosives within the in-water areas of the existing Navy range complexes around the Hawaiian Islands and off the coast of Southern California, primarily in established operating and military warning areas.

Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action. The purpose of the proposed action is to achieve and maintain Fleet readiness by conducting military training and testing activities to meet the requirements of Title 10 of the U.S. Code. The proposed action would also allow the Navy to attain compliance with applicable environmental authorizations, consultations and other associated environmental requirements for those training and testing activities, including those associated with new platforms and weapons systems.

Evaluating Alternatives



Evaluating Alternatives. Three alternatives are being considered at this time for evaluation in the Draft EIS/OEIS to help determine the appropriate level and types of training and testing activities required to meet the needs outlined above. The alternatives to be analyzed in the Hawaii-Southern California Training and Testing EIS/OEIS are as follows:

No Action Alternative –

Continues current (baseline) training and testing activities and force structure requirements as defined by existing Navy environmental planning documents, which include the Records of Decision for the Hawaii Range Complex and Southern California Range Complex EISs/OEISs and the Silver Strand Training Complex Draft EIS Preferred Alternative.

Alternative 1 – Consists of the No Action Alternative, plus adjustments to the study area boundaries, and updates and/or adjustments to the locations and levels of current training and testing activities. This alternative also includes changes to training and testing requirements necessary to accommodate force structure changes and the development and introduction of new vessels, aircraft and weapons systems.

Alternative 2 – Consists of all elements of Alternative 1 plus an increased level of training and testing activities and additional range enhancements and infrastructure requirements.



Defending the Nation and Protecting the Environment

Defending the United States and protecting military personnel requires rigorous, real-life training. Conducting realistic training is one of the most important things the U.S. Navy does to ensure its people are ready and able to respond to national security challenges. Readiness requires specialized locations where military personnel can learn, through practical hands-on experience, the skills necessary to effectively plan, conduct and succeed in emergencies and national security threats. Military readiness also requires the Navy to test new and existing equipment in environments similar to those encountered during real-world missions.

The ocean and coastal areas of the Pacific Ocean off Hawaii and Southern California are some of the most ecologically diverse and productive areas in the world and are very important for commerce and recreation. These areas are home to a vast array of wildlife including whales, dolphins, seals, turtles, fish and birds. These areas provide a setting where people can make a living or have fun fishing, sailing, surfing and diving.

The marine areas of Hawaii and Southern California are also important to the Navy. The size, location and environment of the Hawaii-Southern California Training and Testing study area provide unparalleled and essential training opportunities. The training conducted here ensures Navy personnel can successfully protect the United States and keep its interests safe. While conducting this training, the Navy is committed to protecting the land, air and marine environment. Recognizing that its training and testing could affect the environment, the Navy has developed programs and implements protective measures to minimize their effects.

