

**RECORD OF DECISION
FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL AIRCRAFT RECAPITALIZATION PROGRAM
AT JOINT BASE ANDREWS-NAVAL AIR FACILITY, MARYLAND**

Introduction

The United States Air Force (Air Force) is issuing this Record of Decision for the Presidential Aircraft Recapitalization Program at Joint Base Andrews-Naval Air Facility, Washington, MD (hereafter referred to as “the Program”) Final Environmental Impact Statement (Federal Register Vol. No. 82 No. 199, Page 48227, October 17, 2017). In making this decision, the information, analysis, and public comments contained in the Presidential Aircraft Recapitalization Final Environmental Impact Statement, along with other relevant matters, were considered.

This Record of Decision is prepared in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations §1505.2 and Title 32 Code of Federal Regulations §989.21, Environmental Impact Analysis Process. The Air Force is the Lead Agency for the Program Environmental Impact Statement and there are no cooperating agencies.

Specifically, this Record of Decision:

- States the Air Force’s decision (pages 1-2 and 10-11);
- Identifies alternatives considered by the Air Force in reaching the decision and specifies the alternative(s) considered to be environmentally preferable (pages 2 and 3);
- Identifies and discusses relevant factors that were considered in making the decision among the alternatives, and states how those factors entered into the decision (page 3); and
- States whether all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the selected alternative were adopted, and if not, why they were not adopted, and summarizes the applicable mitigation (pages 6-10).

Decision Synopsis

The Air Force will construct and operate a two-bay Presidential Aircraft Recapitalization Hangar Complex (hereafter referred to as “the Hangar Complex”) facility on Joint Base Andrews at a location known as Alternative 4 to house two separately acquired Boeing 747-8 aircraft. These aircraft are being acquired to replace the aging VC-25A aircraft currently stationed at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland.

The Air Force will relocate the Joint Air Defense Operations Center Satellite Site to the northeastern quadrant of the installation, between New Hampshire Avenue and the installation boundary to accommodate development of the Hangar Complex at the Alternative 4 location.

The Air Force will utilize, on an interim basis during the Hangar Complex construction, the Taxiway C Interim Option for the Hazardous Cargo Pad.

The Air Force did not make a final decision for the Hazardous Cargo Pad and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Proficiency Range permanent siting. However, the Air Force hereby identifies Hazardous Cargo Pad and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Proficiency Range Southeast Option 1 or a variant thereof (e.g. Southeast Option 1A or 1A-3) as its preferred alternative for the permanent siting of these facilities.

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The Air Force is not making an absolute decision to relocate the Military Working Dog Kennel at this time. The decision to relocate the Kennel is contingent upon the final decision for relocating the Hazardous Cargo Pad and/or in the event that animals housed in the Kennel are exposed to unacceptable levels of noise or other pollution due to Presidential Aircraft Recapitalization operations. Either or both of these contingencies would result in the Air Force relocating the Kennel to the Vermont Road alternative (Final Environmental Impact Statement, §2.3.3.2).

The Air Force has adopted mitigations for the Hangar Complex and Joint Air Defense Operations Center Satellite Site as addressed within this Record of Decision.

Background

The White House, in March 2006, encouraged the Department of Defense to begin the formal process of replacing the VC-25A aircraft, as soon as necessary, by the estimated retirement date (2017). Basing of the replacement 747-8 at Joint Base Andrews was approved through an Expedited Strategic Basing decision on May 31, 2012.

The current Presidential Aircraft Hangar facility (Hangar 19) at Joint Base Andrews is not large enough to safely house the selected replacement 747-8 aircraft; consequently a new Hangar Complex must be located and constructed to accommodate the new 747-8 aircraft with associated personnel and support facilities.

Alternatives Considered

The Air Force examined requirements of the Program in relation to the various locations at Joint Base Andrews that could both accommodate a new hangar complex as well as preserve mission capability of any displaced base assets and mission activities (Final Environmental Impact Statement, §§2.2.2 - 2.2.3). The Air Force considered the following alternatives for the Program:

- Hangar Complex
 - Alternative 3A
 - Alternative 4
- Hazardous Cargo Pad and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Proficiency Range
 - Hazardous Cargo Pad Southeast Option 1
 - Hazardous Cargo Pad Southeast Option 1A
 - Hazardous Cargo Pad Southeast Option 1A-3
 - Hazardous Cargo Pad Southeast Option 2 with Explosive Ordnance Disposal Option 1
 - Hazardous Cargo Pad Southeast Option 2 with Explosive Ordnance Disposal Option 2
 - Hazardous Cargo Pad Southwest Option
 - Hazardous Cargo Pad Taxiway W Option
 - Taxiway C Interim Option
- Joint Air Defense Operations Center Satellite Site (single alternative)
- Military Working Dog Kennel
 - Tyler Road
 - Vermont Road
- No-Action

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Environmentally Preferable Alternative

The environmentally preferable alternative is considered to be the No-Action Alternative. The No-Action Alternative constitutes the affected environment at Joint Base Andrews and causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment. It also best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources on or surrounding Joint Base Andrews.

Basis of Decision

The Air Force selected Alternative 4 for the Hangar Complex because it best meets the purpose and need and selection standards established for the Program, in terms of:

- 1) operating in accordance with all applicable design criteria;
- 2) providing at least one taxiway access point to the Hangar Complex;
- 3) maintaining operational capability and preserving existing response times for the Presidential Airlift Group and other missions at Joint Base Andrews;
- 4) enabling the continued use of the existing Hangar 19 during the Hangar Complex construction; and
- 5) providing options to relocate any impacted missions or assets in accordance with the Program schedule (Final Environmental Impact Statement, §2.2.3.2).

Alternative 4 was selected as the course of action for the Hangar Complex since it provides additional taxiway access opportunities and flexibility for the complex if multiple locations are ever needed. Alternative 4 also alleviates the need to relocate a portion of Virginia Avenue and adjacent housing units that would be required with Alternative 3A, and leaves the existing golf course maintenance facility intact.

The Air Force located the Joint Air Defense Operations Center Satellite Site to the northeastern quadrant of the base due to the unique nature of operations of the facility, adherence to Department of Defense safety and security requirements, and the ability to minimize site vulnerabilities (Final Environmental Impact Statement, pg. 2-5).

Relocation of the existing Hazardous Cargo Pad is required in order to allow for construction of the Hangar Complex at Alternative 4. In order to support its on-going mission requirements the Air Force will utilize Taxiway C Interim Option.

Public Involvement

The Air Force solicited and considered comments from agencies and the interested public during scoping, at public hearings, and during the public comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Information reflecting public involvement is addressed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final Environmental Impact Statement, §1.1.3 and Appendix A-4). Public notices and meetings included:

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- Notice of Intent to Prepare the Environmental Impact Statement: Published May 4, 2016, in the Federal Register, Volume 81, Number 86, page 26779
- Scoping Period: Initiated May 4, 2016 and ended May 28, 2016. Scoping meetings were held in Morningside, Maryland on May 23 and 24, 2016
- Draft Environmental Impact Statement Notice of Availability: Published February 3, 2017, in the Federal Register, Volume 82, Number 22, page 9212
- Public Comment and Review Period: A 45-day comment period was initiated with the publication of the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register, and ended on March 20, 2017
- Public Hearings: During the public comment period, two hearings were held on March 2, 2017 in Upper Marlboro, Maryland
- Final Environmental Impact Statement Notice of Availability: Published October 17, 2017 in the Federal Register (Volume 82, No. 199, page 48227). Publication on this date initiated the mandatory minimum 30-day waiting period prior to the signature of this Record of Decision.

Comments Received Post Final EIS

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (The Agency) provided comments during the 30-day waiting period between publication of the Final Environmental Impact Statement and earliest issuance of the Record of Decision. The Agency assigned the Final Environmental Impact Statement a "Lack of Objection" rating.

During the 30-day waiting period between publication of the Final Environmental Impact Statement and earliest issuance of the Record of Decision, comments were received from Soil Safe, Incorporated, whose property and business operations are potentially affected by some Hazardous Cargo Pad alternatives studied in the Final Environmental Impact Statement. Soil Safe, Incorporated indicated that it could not support Air Force selection and implementation of any of the Hazardous Cargo Pad Southeast Option 2 alternatives. Soil Safe, Incorporated also stated that Southeast Option 1 was more favorable but would involve extensive re-permitting and costs associated with its grading plans, stormwater management and resource inventory efforts. In contrast, the Southeast Option 1 variants 1A and 1A-3 have fewer impacts which could be mitigated through coordinated effort with the Air Force and applicable regulatory agencies, with the Southeast Option variant 1A-3 requiring no re-permitting whatsoever. In light of these comments from Soil Safe, Incorporated, this Record of Decision identifies the preferred alternative for the permanent siting of the Hazardous Cargo Pad.

Agency Coordination and Consultation

The Air Force consulted early with federal and state agencies, agencies with jurisdiction over biological and cultural resources, and Federally Recognized Tribes (Tribes) on the alternatives considered in the Environmental Impact Statement.

Consultations included informal consultation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, addressing the *sandplain gerardia*, which exists in marginal habitat on Joint Base Andrews in a fenced area proximal to Hazardous Cargo Pad

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Southeast Option 1. Field reconnaissance conducted in the summer of 2016 revealed that the habitat area has little to no open ground and is currently dominated by non-native invasive species. Disturbance activities associated with the Program would not likely adversely affect the *sandplain gerardia* or its habitat.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with the Air Force's finding that the Program is not likely to adversely affect the *sandplain gerardia* or its habitat on Joint Base Andrews in April of 2017 (Final Environmental Impact Statement §4.3.1.1).

The Air Force initiated consultation with the Maryland Historical Trust, which acts as the Maryland State Historic Preservation Office per Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The Air Force evaluated potential historic architectural significance of facilities within the Program's Areas of Potential Effect by applying National Register of Historic Places criteria. The Air Force concluded that no resources are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, including the Joint Base Andrews "Belle Chance" area, per 36 CFR § 800.4(c), (Final Environmental Impact Statement, §4.4.1.1).

The Air Force determined that the Suitland Parkway is not within the current undertaking's Area of Potential Effect. Secondary impacts resulting from the Program are not expected to impact its status as a historic resource and construction truck traffic would avoid the use of Suitland Parkway (Final Environmental Impact Statement, § 4.6). The Air Force's construction contractors will secure necessary permits through the National Park Service if the Suitland Parkway is used. The frequency of use in these circumstances would not adversely affect the Parkway's status as a historic resource.

The Air Force did not identify areas on base eligible for listing to the National Register of Historic Places on the basis of archaeological significance. Field reconnaissance was conducted in summer of 2016 and revealed that pre-existing soil disturbance and development were part of the affected environments related to the Hazardous Cargo Pad alternatives and no archaeological materials were recovered from these areas during the reconnaissance. The Maryland Historical Trust concurred with the Air Force's finding that the Program is not likely to adversely affect historic architectural or archaeological resources within or surrounding Joint Base Andrews in December of 2016 (Final Environmental Impact Statement, §4.4.6).

The Air Force determined that no adverse Section 106 impacts to tribal resources are anticipated, through Section 106 government-to-government consultations with potentially affected Tribes. The Oneida Indian Nation, Delaware Nation, and the Delaware Tribe responded to the Air Force's request for consultation, and concurred with Air Force's effects determination. None of the tribes consulted identified any properties of religious and cultural significance associated with the undertaking. Therefore, Section 106 agency and tribal consultation with respect to archaeological resources for this Environmental Impact Statement is complete (Final Environmental Impact Statement, §4.4.6).

A General Conformity Determination is not required for the Proposed Action and alternatives (Final Environmental Impact Statement, §4.2.7.3), because air emissions estimates presented in the Environmental Impact Statement indicate that both operational and construction phase air emissions are within applicable *de minimis* thresholds specified by the General Conformity

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Regulations of the Clean Air Act and its amendments. Therefore, no agency coordination or consultation was conducted for air quality.

Mitigation Measures

The Air Force has considered all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm that could result from the Program. Compliance with laws and regulations administered by federal and state regulatory agencies are mandated, and are not considered discretionary with respect to Air Force decision making. Because some of these laws and regulations have mitigating effects, they will be tracked along with other mitigations identified in this Record of Decision.

The Air Force will develop a Mitigation Monitoring Plan which identifies requisite mitigations and principal and subordinate organizations having responsibility for oversight and execution of specific mitigation actions. Impact-inducing actions will not be taken or implemented prior to application of mitigation measures described within this Record of Decision and the follow-on Mitigation Monitoring Plan which is due within 90 days of the signature of this Record of Decision.

Mitigations for impacts related to the Program are described in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final Environmental Impact Statement, §2.5.1) and generally listed below by resource categories. The Air Force will:

Air Quality:

- Minimize operational emissions to the maximum extent practical by adopting alternatively-fueled equipment and stationary combustion devices, minimizing auxiliary power unit operating times, and using the most expeditious taxi routes between the runways and the Hangar Complex facilities at Joint Base Andrews
- Minimize construction-related emissions to the maximum extent practical by applying fugitive dust suppression measures in accordance with state regulations, reducing equipment and vehicle idling, encouraging carpooling/ridesharing, and using environmentally friendly construction materials

Biological Resources:

- Schedule land clearing to occur outside migratory bird nesting periods
- Maintain existing forested corridors to allow for connectivity between forested areas
- Implement reforestation initiatives to create or enhance natural habitats
- Continue adherence to Bird/Wildlife Aircraft Strike Hazard Program
- Continue adherence to Management Action Plan for the *sandplain gerardia*, including procedures to control non-native and invasive plants in the fenced area

Cultural Resources:

- Cease activities and notify the Joint Base Andrews Cultural Resources Manager and the Maryland Historical Trust to ensure compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act in the event of inadvertent or unanticipated cultural resource discoveries

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- Suspend construction work until a qualified archaeologist can determine the significance of any encountered resources

Hazardous Materials, Hazardous Waste and Solid Waste:

- Dispose of all hazardous materials and hazardous waste consistent with Joint Base Andrews' Hazardous Waste Management Plan, Air Force Instruction 32-7086, Hazardous Materials Management and other relevant regulations and requirements
- Manage any encountered asbestos-containing materials per the Joint Base Andrews asbestos management program and state requirements for containing, providing interim storage, removing, transporting and storing the material
- Secure a soil remediation permit from the Maryland Department of the Environment for any contaminated soil encountered during construction
- Ensure any storage tank removals and installations are conducted in accordance with Maryland Department of the Environment regulations
- Update Hazardous Waste Management Plans to account for any new and/or changed waste streams or new procedures, if any, for managing hazardous materials and waste associated with Presidential Airlift Group operations

Safety:

- Ensure construction contractors review potential work hazards, monitor safety exposure, and maintain a response plan
- Avoid compromise of airfield operations by siting construction materials staging and laydown areas outside of runway clear zones
- Secure Federal Aviation Administration and Air Force permits and approvals for cranes and other tall construction equipment in the vicinity of the airfield

Soils and Hydrology:

- Adhere to stormwater general permit requirements by implementing erosion and sediment control best management practices to limit the potential for exposed soils or contaminants from construction activities

Transportation:

- Stagger truck traffic or constrain deliveries to nighttime hours to the extent practicable in order to minimize impact on vehicular travel
- Avoid congested haul route segments, as identified in the Final Environmental Impact Statement, during peak hours of congestion

The primary means of construction truck traffic access will be through the Pearl Harbor Gate during the construction period for the Program. If traffic flow limits are exceeded, transportation-related mitigation measures will be applied (Final Environmental Impact Statement §4.6.1.1).

The Air Force will:

- Increase the processing capacity of the Pearl Harbor Gate by up to five trucks per hour

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- Route overflow or long-load trucks to an alternative entrance on Joint Base Andrews such as the Maryland Gate
- Avoid the use of the Suitland Parkway as a construction haul route to the maximum extent practicable
- Ensure that construction contractors obtain a special use permit or letter of authorization from the National Park Service in accordance with 36 CFR §§ 1.6, 5.4 and 5.6, if extenuating circumstances dictate the incidental use of Suitland Parkway for commercial vehicles

Mitigations specific to the Hangar Complex and Joint Air Defense Operations Center Satellite Site have been identified (Final Environmental Impact Statement §2.5.1). For the Hangar Complex, the Air Force will:

- Provide 24.88 acres of reforestation by planting trees at the Brandywine Globecom Annex and/or Joint Base Andrews Arbor Plan reforestation areas
- Provide mitigation consisting of 1.32 acres of palustrine forested wetland, 0.12 acre of palustrine scrub-shrub wetland and 0.72 acre of palustrine emergent wetland area, by applying mitigation credits acquired from wetland restoration activities at the Mattawoman Creek Mitigation Bank or another approved site
- Provide mitigation for the loss of 3,363 lineal feet of streams considered Waters of the United States, by applying mitigation credits acquired from stream restoration activities at the Mattawoman Creek Mitigation Bank or another approved site
- Provide Environmental Site Design storage volume to maximum extent practicable of 6.12 acre feet of stormwater
- Treat the 95th percentile rainfall event (approximately 1.7 inches of rainfall) using a combination of Environmental Site Design and green infrastructure (i.e., micro bio-retention, bio-retention and underground infiltration facilities), to comply with Section 438 of the Energy Independence and Security Act
- Incorporate the following design elements to the maximum feasible extent: reduction of building footprints to minimize floodplain encroachment; constructing buildings on land elevated above the Base Flood Elevation; establishing first-floor elevations consistent with potential flood levels; and elevating utilities and equipment that may be hazardous to life if submerged
- Provide compensatory storage to avoid altering the function and capacity of 100-year and 500-year floodplain areas, by excavating material within or adjacent to the same floodplain to be used as fill (avoiding endangered vegetation and potential cultural sites) where necessary during cut and fill activities

Joint Air Defense Operations Center Satellite Site: Mitigations required include:

- Provide 3.18 acres of reforestation by planting trees at the Brandywine Globecom Annex and/or Joint Base Andrews Arbor Plan reforestation areas
- Provide mitigation consisting of 0.16 acre of palustrine forested wetland, by applying mitigation credits acquired from wetland restoration activities at the Mattawoman Creek Mitigation Bank or another approved site

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- Provide mitigation for the loss of 610 lineal feet of streams considered Waters of the United States, by applying mitigation credits acquired from stream restoration activities at the Mattawoman Creek Mitigation Bank or another approved site
- Provide Environmental Site Design storage volume to maximum extent practicable of 0.05 acre feet of stormwater
- Comply with Section 438 of the Energy Independence and Security Act by treating the 95th percentile rainfall event (approximately 1.7 inches of rainfall) using a combination of Environmental Site Design and green infrastructure
- Incorporate the following design elements to the maximum feasible extent: reduction of building footprints to minimize floodplain encroachment; use of two-story structures; constructing buildings on land elevated above the Base Flood Elevation; establishing first-floor elevations consistent with potential flood levels; enhancement of building structural strength to withstand high velocity or high pressure water flow; and elevating utilities and equipment that may be hazardous to life if submerged
- During cut and fill activities, provide compensatory storage to avoid altering the function and capacity of 100-year and 500-year floodplain areas, by excavating material within or adjacent to the same floodplain to be used as fill (avoiding endangered vegetation and potential cultural sites)

The mitigation requirements applicable to the permanent siting location of the Hazardous Cargo Pad and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Proficiency Range will be identified in a subsequent Record of Decision.

Finding of No Practicable Alternative

Considerations for the Hangar Complex included the ability of a proposed site to comply with all applicable airfield design criteria, provide access flexibility for the Presidential Airlift Group, maintain existing operational capability and preserve response times, enable the continued use of the existing Presidential Hangar during construction, and provide options to relocate any existing missions or assets on Joint Base Andrews (Final Environmental Impact Statement, §2.2.1).

Two Alternatives for the Hangar Complex, Alternative 3A and Alternative 4, meet the site selection standards described above (Final Environmental Impact Statement, §2.2.3).

Alternatives 3A and 4 are situated within the 100-year and 500-year floodplain, and each would impact a combination of palustrine forested, palustrine scrub-shrub and palustrine emergent wetland areas. Although other candidate sites for the Hangar Complex were not situated within these floodplain or wetland areas, those sites did not meet the established selection standards related to operational, infrastructural, schedule and mission constraints.

Only one location on Joint Base Andrews could meet the unique operational, safety, security and siting requirements of a relocated Joint Air Defense Operations Center Satellite Site, which is also situated within the 100- and 500-year floodplain and would impact a palustrine forested wetland area. As stated in the Final Environmental Impact Statement, current design efforts for the Joint Air Defense Operations Center Satellite Site have identified opportunities to avoid the potentially impacted wetland area (Final Environmental Impact Statement, §4.3.7).

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Therefore, with respect to the Hangar Complex and Joint Air Defense Operations Center Satellite Site, and pursuant to Executive Orders 11988 (*Floodplain Management*) and 11990 (*Protection of Wetlands*), the Air Force finds that there is no practicable alternative to siting and constructing the Hangar Complex and Joint Air Defense Operations Center Satellite within the 100-year and 500-year floodplain and delineated wetland areas (Final Environmental Impact Statement, §§ 4.3.7 and 4.11.3.1).

Implementing the floodplain and wetland mitigations defined in this Record of Decision will serve to minimize environmental harm to wetland and floodplain areas.

Decision

The Air Force will construct and operate a two-bay Hangar Complex facility on Joint Base Andrews at a location known as Alternative 4 (Final Environmental Impact Statement, §2.1 and §2.2.3.2), to house two separately acquired Boeing 747-8 aircraft replacing the VC-25A aircraft (Final Environmental Impact Statement, §1.1) at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland.

The Joint Air Defense Operations Center Satellite Site will be relocated to the northeastern quadrant of the installation, between New Hampshire Avenue and the installation boundary (Final Environmental Impact Statement §2.3.2 and Fig. 2.1-1) to accommodate development of the Hangar Complex at Alternative 4.

The Air Force will utilize, on an interim basis at least during the Hangar Complex's construction, the Taxiway C Interim Option for the Hazardous Cargo Pad (Final Environmental Impact Statement, §2.1.1.2 and §2.3.1). Additionally, the Air Force has determined that some of the options for the permanent location of the Hazardous Cargo Pad and the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Proficiency Range are not fully ripe for a final decision and that the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act would be furthered by conducting additional consideration of these alternatives. Operational safety considerations and further investigation of adjacent properties will further inform a decision on the permanent siting of the Hazardous Cargo Pad and/or the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Proficiency Range.

For the permanent siting of the Hazardous Cargo Pad and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Proficiency Range, the Air Force is hereby identifying as its preferred alternative Southeast Option 1 or one of its variants, Southeast Option 1A and Southeast Option 1A-3. The decision on Hazardous Cargo Pad and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Proficiency Range permanent siting may be documented in a subsequent Record of Decision no sooner than 30 days after this Record of Decision is made available to the public.

The Air Force is not making an absolute decision to relocate the Military Working Dog Kennel at this time. The decision to relocate the Kennel is contingent upon the final decision for relocating the Hazardous Cargo Pad and/or in the event that animals housed in the Kennel are exposed to unacceptable levels of noise or other pollution due to Presidential Aircraft Recapitalization operations. Either or both of these contingencies would result in the Air Force relocating the Kennel to the Vermont Road alternative (Final Environmental Impact Statement, §2.3.3.2).

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Mitigation requirements for the Hangar Complex and the Joint Air Defense Operations Center Satellite Site adopted for the alternatives selected within this Record of Decision will be fully developed in a Mitigation and Monitoring Plan.



JENNIFER L. MILLER

Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force

Installations



(Date)