



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Navy to Host Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing Draft Environmental Impact Statement Public Meeting in Panama City, Fla.

The Navy has prepared and filed with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Overseas EIS (OEIS) to evaluate the potential environmental effects from training and testing activities conducted within the Navy's Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing (AFTT) Study Area.

With the filing of the Draft EIS/OEIS, the Navy initiated a 60-day public comment period and scheduled five public meetings to receive comments on the Draft EIS/OEIS. The fifth and final public meeting will be held Thursday, August 3, at Gulf Coast State College Conference Center, 5230 W. Highway 98, Panama City, Fla., from 4-8 p.m.

The Draft EIS analyzes training and testing activities planned to occur across all operating areas off the East Coast and the Gulf of Mexico starting in November of 2018, and analyzes the potential impacts on the physical, biological, and socioeconomic environments within the Study Area, along with extensive mitigation measures used to reduce impacts. The activities described in this EIS are consistent with the activities analyzed in the previous Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing EIS completed in August of 2013 and have been on-going in the study area for decades.

This is the third time the Navy has conducted comprehensive planning and permitting for Navy training and testing (Phase I covered 2008–2013, Phase II covers 2013-2018). The Phase III AFTT EIS will support re-authorizations of Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) permits by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for Navy training and testing activities, with the new permits taking effect in November of 2018. The Navy does not plan to change the type or tempo of these activities from previous levels analyzed in the 2013 AFTT EIS.

The public meeting will be conducted in an open-house format with informational stations staffed by Navy representatives. These representatives will be available during the meeting to clarify information related to the Draft EIS/OEIS. Federal, state, and local agencies and officials, and interested groups and individuals are encouraged to provide written comments in person at any of the public meetings. Comments may also be submitted by U.S. postal mail or electronically via the project website (www.AFTTEIS.com).

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Written comments may be submitted by mail to Naval Facilities Engineering Command Atlantic, Attn: Code EV22KP (AFTT EIS Project Managers), 6506 Hampton Boulevard, Norfolk, VA 23508-1278 and through the project website; all written comments must be postmarked or received by August 29, 2017. All statements submitted during the public review period will become part of the public record on the Draft EIS/OEIS and will be considered in preparation of the Final EIS/OEIS.

Copies of the Draft EIS/OEIS are available for public review at the following libraries:

- Jacksonville Public Library, 303 North Laura Street, Jacksonville, Fla.
- Bay County Public Library, 898 West 11th Street, Panama City, Fla.
- Camden County Public Library, 1410 Highway 40 E, Kingsland, Ga.
- West Florida Public Library, Pensacola Library, 239 North Spring Street, Pensacola, Fla.
- Walton County Library, Coastal Branch Library, 437 Greenway Trail, Santa Rosa Beach, Fla.
- West Florida Public Library, Southwest Branch, 122248 Gulf Branch Highway, Pensacola, Fla.
- West Palm Beach Library, 411 Clematis Street, West Palm Beach, Fla.
- Monroe County Public Library, 700 Fleming St., Key West, Fla.

Copies of the AFTT Draft EIS/OEIS are also available for electronic viewing at www.AFTTEIS.com. A paper copy of the Executive Summary and a single compact disc (CD) of the Draft EIS/OEIS will be made available upon written request by contacting: Naval Facilities Engineering Command Atlantic, Attn: Code EV22KP (AFTT EIS Project Managers), 6506 Hampton Boulevard, Norfolk, VA 23508-1278.

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