FINAL FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

FOR

LONG RANGE STRIKE WEAPON SYSTEMS EVALUTION PROGRAM AT THE PACIFIC MISSILE RANGE FACILITY, KAUAI, HAWAII

Contract No. W912BU-12-D-0027
Task Order No. CK02

This finding, and the analysis upon which it is based, was prepared pursuant to the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and its implementing regulations as promulgated at 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1500 (40 CFR 1500–1508), as well as the U.S. Air Force Environmental Impact Analysis Process as promulgated at 32 CFR Part 989.

The Department of the Air Force has conducted an Environmental Assessment/Overseas Environmental Assessment (EA/OEA) of the potential environmental consequences associated with the conduct of live ordnance testing in the Pacific Ocean as part of the 86th Fighter Weapons Squadron (86 FWS) Long Range Strike Weapon Systems Evaluation Program (WSEP). That EA/OEA (2017-2021) is hereby incorporated by reference into this finding.

PURPOSE AND NEED (EA/OEA Section 1.3, page 1-4)

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to authorize the 86 FWS to conduct operational evaluations of long range strike weapons and other munitions as part of Long Range Strike WSEP operations. Weapons include the Joint Air-to-Surface Stand-Off Missile (JASSM), JASSM-Extended Range (JASSM-ER), Small Diameter Bomb-I/II (SDB-I/II), High-Speed Anti-Radiation Missile (HARM), Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM), Laser JDAM (LJDAM), Miniature Air Launched Decoy (MALD), and MALD-Jamming (MALD-J). As a military readiness activity, units that participate in WSEP activities are provided a final opportunity to shoot actual weapons before deploying into combat.

The need for the Proposed Action is to properly train units to execute requirements within Designed Operational Capability Statements, which describe units' real-world operational expectations in a time of war. The munitions associated with the Proposed Action are not part of a unit's typical training allocations, and without WSEP operations, pilots would be dropping these weapons for the first time in combat.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Action (EA/OEA Section 2.1, page 2-1)

The Proposed Action is to authorize the 86 FWS to conduct operational evaluations of long range strike weapons in a location with adequate test capacity and instrumentation to track full-scale maneuvers and long flight paths of these weapons and contain large safety footprints. This

program, referred to as Long Range Strike WSEP, would primarily employ live long range strike weapon systems, along with other live and inert munitions from various aircraft, including bombers and fighter aircraft. No land-based operations or construction activities are associated with the Proposed Action. Operations would be conducted in accordance with approved aircraft and weapons standard operating procedures and instructions. Live weapons evaluations would include two fusing options: detonation at the water surface and below the water surface.

No Action Alternative (EA/OEA Section 2.2.1, page 2-6)

Under the No Action Alternative, Long Range Strike WSEP missions would not occur at the Pacific Missile Range Facility (PMRF), Kauai, Hawaii. The program would not achieve objectives to evaluate air-to-ground and maritime weapon employment data; evaluate tactics, techniques, and procedures in an operationally realistic environment; or determine the impact of tactics, techniques, and procedures on combat Air Force training.

Alternative 1: (Preferred Alternative) (EA/OEA Section 2.2.2, page 2-6)

Fusing options for munitions have varying implications, as they will determine where detonations will occur and how resources will be impacted. Detonation scenarios that correspond to each fusing option (i.e., height of burst, point detonation, and time-delayed fusing) are airburst, surface, and subsurface detonations, which would result in varying levels of underwater sound intensity. A subsurface detonation would generate the most underwater sound and pressure, thereby resulting in greater acoustic impacts to marine resources. Under Alternative 1 (Preferred Alternative), the 86 FWS would employ weapons under all possible fusing options and detonation scenarios and provide the necessary level of evaluation to include a sufficient number of replicate operations for an acceptable statistical confidence level regarding munitions capabilities. The weapon impact point is 44 nautical miles (NM) offshore of Kauai within the northern portion of the Barking Sands Underwater Range Extension (BSURE) area. Weapon performance would be scored with the BSURE underwater hydrophone system. While Long Range Strike WSEP objectives require the evaluation of multiple munitions, immediate evaluations of JASSM/JASSM-ER and SDB-I were needed for 2016; therefore, only one JASSM-ER and eight SDB-I munitions were proposed for October 2016. The FONSI for this 2016 mission event was signed on October 4, 2016 and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issued an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) on September 27, 2016 and a Biological Opinion/Incidental Take Statement (BO/ITS) on September 28, 2016. On October 20, 2016, the 86 FWS released one JASSM-ER and eight SDB-I's. The JASSM-ER experienced engine failure and even though it impacted the water, it did not detonate. Of the eight SDB-I's that were released, six of them were live weapons that detonated on the water surface and the other two were inert munitions. All environmental impact assessment and consultation requirements were fulfilled for this mission event in 2016.

Missions proposed for 2017–2021 would occur once a year over a maximum of five consecutive days. Weapons analyzed in the EA/OEA for 2017-2021 missions included six live JASSM/JASSM-ER, 30 live SDB-I, 30 live SDB-II, 10 live HARM, 30 live JDAM/LJDAM, and four inert MALD/MALD-J, annually. All JDAM/LJDAM releases would use a delayed fusing option (10-millisecond delay), resulting in subsurface detonations occurring approximately 10 feet below the water surface. All other live weapons would detonate at the water surface upon impact.

Alternative 2: (EA/OEA Section 2.2.3, page 2-9)

Alternative 2 would authorize the release of the same number of munitions at the same location as proposed under Alternative 1 (Preferred Alternative). However fusing options would not include a 10-millisecond time delay for JDAM/LJDAMs, which would result in surface detonations as opposed to subsurface detonations.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Analysis was conducted to determine the potential impacts to the human and natural environment resulting from the No Action Alternative, Alternative 1 (Preferred Alternative), and Alternative 2. No significant impacts to resources have been identified (EA/OEA Chapter 3, pages 3-1 to 3-124). In addition, there would be no significant cumulative impacts caused by implementation of Alternative 1 (Preferred Alternative) when combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions that could affect air quality, noise impacts to the public, airspace, public safety, socioeconomics, cultural resources, physical resources, and biological resources (EA/OEA Chapter 4, pages 4-1 to 4-4).

Air Quality (EA/OEA Section 3.1.3, pages 3-4 to 3-6) – There would be no significant impacts to air quality under any of the alternatives. Based on air emissions modeling and analysis, the Preferred Alternative would not be expected to result in any significant increase in air emissions. Furthermore, given the distance from shore where most activities associated with the Preferred Alternative would occur, the variable wind patterns combined with fractional increases in emissions and high potential for pollutant disbursement makes the possibility for adverse impacts to onshore air quality very unlikely.

In-Air Noise Impacts to the Public (EA/OEA Section 3.2.3, pages 3-8 to 3-10) – There would be no impacts to the public from in-air noise. Noise levels that exceed criteria and thresholds for pain and annoyance to the public would not reach populated areas on land. Additionally, the safety hazard area, established for the protection of the public, including those participating in maritime transportation and commercial and recreational fishing, would prevent exposure to the noise levels that correspond with the threshold of pain to the public.

Airspace (EA/OEA Section 3.3.3, pages 3-11 to 3-13) – There would be no significant impacts to airspace utilization and capacity. The relatively small number of operations proposed on an annual basis is not anticipated to stress the airspace/range capacity at PMRF. The proponent would coordinate with the appropriate point of contact when scheduling specific airspace units.

Public Safety (EA/OEA Section 3.4.3, pages 3-14 to 3-15) – There would be no significant impacts under any of the alternatives with regard to public safety. Safety measures proposed for Long Range Strike WSEP missions have been implemented and effective for other similar missions at PMRF for years without incident. These safety measures and range clearance procedures would be observed to ensure safety of the public.

Socioeconomics (EA/OEA Section 3.5.3, pages 3-18 to 3-19) – There would be no significant impacts to socioeconomics under the Preferred Alternative. Periodic closure of portions of the

Pacific Ocean could potentially impact the availability of these areas for commercial and recreational activities, including commercial and recreational fishing and vessel traffic, whale watching, and scientific research. The PMRF Control Officer is responsible for submitting Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs) and Notices to Mariners (NOTMARs) to be published by the Federal Aviation Administration and the U.S. Coast Guard, respectively, for one week prior to mission activities. The local NOTAMs and NOTMARs and would provide notice to aircraft, commercial ship operators, commercial fisherman, recreational boaters, and other users that the military will be operating in a specific area for a given timeframe. This allows other aircraft and vessel operators to plan activities accordingly and avoid the corresponding areas until mission activities are completed. Closed areas in the Pacific Ocean would not approach closer than 10 nautical miles from shore. The proximity of tourist activities near shore provides less incentive for recreational boaters and fishermen to travel to offshore distances in the Pacific Ocean.

Cultural Resources (EA/OEA Section 3.6.3, page 3-23) – No impacts to cultural resources would occur under the Preferred Alternative. Underwater detonations are not proposed within U.S. territorial waters, and no world heritage sites would be affected. No deep sea shipwrecks or cultural features have been identified within the area of potential effects for Long Range Strike WSEP missions. It is also highly unlikely that military expended materials or unexploded ordnance could sink and directly impact sediments on or near cultural resources or affect any shipwrecks. The Air Force presented a letter to the Hawaii State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) on March 30, 2016, with a finding of No Effect on Historic Properties, as defined in 36 CFR 800.16(i). The Air Force provided documentation of this finding to the SHPO, as required by 36 CFR 800.11(d). The Hawaii SHPO concurred with this finding of No Effect on Historic Properties in a letter dated April 20, 2016.

Physical Resources (EA/OEA Section 3.7.3, pages 3-24 to 3-26) – There would be no significant impacts to physical resources from the Preferred Alternative. Metals associated with weapons and other explosive byproducts that would be introduced into the water column would be quickly dispersed by waves, currents, and tidal action and would eventually be distributed throughout the surrounding open ocean waters. Explosive material that is not consumed in a detonation could sink to the substrate and bind to sediments. However, the quantity of such materials is expected to be inconsequential. Direct physical impacts to the seafloor could occur due to military expended materials and detonation shock waves. Calculations of the maximum radius of a gas bubble from the most impactful detonation scenario proposed under Long Range Strike WSEP missions indicate that the explosive bubble radius would not extend to the seafloor and, thus, would not cause sediment displacement or cratering. Additionally, adverse impacts to water resources from fuel releases are not anticipated.

Biological Resources (EA/OEA Section 3.8.3, pages 3-95 to 3-124) – There would be no significant impacts to biological resources under the Preferred Alternative. Marine mammals and sea turtles could be exposed to noise or pressure levels resulting in mortality, injury, or harassment. Given the differences between the level of intensity between 2016 missions and 2017–2021 missions, each mission set was analyzed separately for impacts to biological resources and separate consultations were conducted with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA). As a result, the 86 FWS received an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) for 2016

missions on September 27, 2016. The authorization was valid from October 1, 2016, through November 30, 2016. In addition, a Biological Opinion/Incidental Take Statement (BO/ITS) was issued on September 28, 2016, to cover October 2016 missions. NMFS concurred with the Air Force determinations that ESA-listed marine mammals are not likely to be adversely affected by the Preferred Alternative (Consultation Number FPR-2016-9160). In the BO, NMFS concluded that Long Range Strike WSEP 2016 missions are not likely to adversely affect hawksbill, loggerhead, olive ridley, and leatherback sea turtles. NMFS also concluded that Long Range Strike WSEP 2016 missions are likely to adversely affect, but are not likely to jeopardize, the continued existence of the Central North Pacific distinct population segment of green sea turtles. As previously stated, 2016 missions were accomplished on October 20, 2016 with the successful completion of all consultation requirements.

A separate request for a Letter of Authorization (LOA) under the MMPA and a Programmatic Biological Assessment under the ESA were also submitted to NMFS for 2017–2021 missions, to account for the higher level of intensity in the proposed activities. During the consultation process, the 86 FWS re-evaluated the Long Range Strike WSEP mission requirements and determined that the amount of live weapon employments originally proposed could be significantly reduced and still meet WSEP objectives. This includes substituting inert munitions for live munitions in scenarios where mission objectives can still be achieved. Table 1 compares the annual number of live weapons originally proposed with the reduced numbers of live weapons adjusted based on the re-evaluation of Long Range Strike WSEP mission requirements. As shown in Table 1, 2017 missions will be similar to 2016 missions and include a low number of live weapon releases. However beginning 2018 missions, the number of live weapons increases, and continues to gradually increase annually through 2021. However, annual numbers of live releases is still significantly less than originally proposed and the total reduction of live munitions across all five years (2017 to 2021) is nearly 60 percent.

Table 1. Comparison of Proposed Annual Weapon Releases with Reduced Annual Weapon Releases

Type of Munition	NEW (lb)	Detonation Scenario	Number of Proposed Live[1] Weapon Releases											
			2017		2018		2019		2020		2021		5- year Total	
			Original	Reduced	Original	Reduced	Original	Reduced	Original	Reduced	Original	Reduced	Original	Reduced
JASSM/ JASSM-ER	300	Surface	6	0	6	2	6	4	6	4	6	4	30	14
SDB-I	37	Surface	30	8	30	14	30	14	30	14	30	14	150	64
SDB-II	23	Surface	30	0	30	0	30	10	30	16	30	20	150	46
HARM	45	Surface	10	0	10	6	10	6	10	10	10	10	50	32
JDAM/LJDAM	192	Subsurface[2]	30	0	30	16	30	16	30	16	30	16	150	64
ANNUAL TOTAL			**106**	**8**	**106**	**38**	**106**	**50**	**106**	**60**	**106**	**64**	**530**	**220**
% Reduction			**92%**		**64%**		**53%**		**43%**		**40%**		**58%**	

[1] The original proposal included four MALD/MALD-J munitions, which are inert weapons, making the total number of munitions originally proposed 110 annually (550 over five years). This table only shows the reduction in the number of live weapons that will be released and detonated either on the water surface or just below the water surface.

[2] Subsurface detonations were analyzed to occur at 10-feet below the water surface, corresponding to a 10-millisecond delayed fuze

Based on the reduction in the number of live weapons, NMFS recalculated the take estimates to protected species to reflect the lower level of live detonations. The 86 FWS worked closely with NMFS and the Navy throughout the consultation process to develop mitigation measures that would further minimize the impacts to protected marine species and a marine mammal acoustic monitoring plan that will help assess the effects of the missions on marine mammals. These measures were included in the LOA issued to the 86 FWS, which is effective beginning August 21, 2017 through August 20, 2022. In addition, on August 18, 2017, NMFS issued a Programmatic BO/ITS (FPR-2016-9160) to the 86 FWS which will also cover Long Range Strike WSEP missions over the next five years. In the BO, NMFS concluded that Long Range Strike WSEP 2017-2021 missions would result in adverse behavioral effects on sei whales. For sea turtles, NMFS concluded that temporary threshold shift (TTS) and behavioral effects would occur to a leatherback sea turtles, loggerhead sea turtles, and olive ridley sea turtles. However, NMFS determined that the amount or extent of anticipated take, coupled with other effects of the proposed action is not likely to result in jeopardy to sei whales, leatherback, loggerhead, or olive ridley sea turtle species; or the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat.

Terms and conditions of the BO/ITS and mitigation measures included in the LOA primarily consists of conducting aerial surveys prior to weapons releases to ensure the area is clear of protected marine species. The 86 FWS will also conduct post-mission surveys to visually determine whether any protected species were impacted by the mission activities. In addition, monitoring measures were included in the LOA. Acoustic data will be collected passively from the hydrophone array before, during, and after each mission event. The passive acoustic monitoring data will be stored by the 86 FWS and analyzed after 2019 mission activities have been completed to determine whether any effects to marine mammals were documented on the array and to assess the effectiveness of the visual monitoring techniques used for the pre-mission and post-mission surveys. The results of the analysis will accompany any subsequent LOA request or will be provided by the Air Force no later than 90 days after expiration of this LOA. A Mitigation and Monitoring Plan for 2017–2021 missions has been developed, which describes these measures in detail and are summarized below.

Marine fish may be injured or killed by detonations, but the number is expected to be negligible relative to overall populations. Detonations would not significantly affect benthic communities. Known hardbottom habitats and artificial reefs would be avoided. Essential fish habitat would not be significantly impacted. No impacts to marine birds, including ESA-listed and migratory species, are expected.

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (EA/OEA Section 5.0, pages 5-1 to 5-2)

No special operating procedures or mitigations would be required to mitigate impacts to resource areas, except for biological resources. Management practices applicable to biological resources consist of mitigation measures required by NMFS as a result of consultations under the ESA and MMPA.

Mitigation Measures for Protected Marine Species

For marine mammals protected under the MMPA:

- Missions must be completed during day-light hours, no more than four hours per day, no more than one day during 2017, no more than four days per year for 2018 through 2022 over a five day period, on weekdays, and only during summer (June through August) or fall (September through November) months.

- Delay live munition detonations if a marine mammal is observed within the designated exclusion zone (2.3 mile (mi) (3,704 m) from the weapon impact site), resuming only after the animal is observed exiting the exclusion zone or the exclusion zone has been clear of any additional sightings for a period of 30 minutes.

- Delay live munition detonations if a marine mammal is observed in an impact zone but outside of the 2.3 mi exclusion zone and if the manner of taking is not authorized (*e.g.*, animal is observed in Level A impact zone for that species and no Level A take is authorized), resuming only after the animal is observed exiting the zone.

- Shift the target site as far as possible from an observed marine mammal's location (but within the two-mile wide weapon impact area) if a marine mammal is observed during the pre-mission survey or during missions and continuing the mission will not result in an unauthorized take of a marine mammal.

- Suspend live munition detonations if an unauthorized take of a marine mammal occurs, and report the incident to OPR, PIRO, and the Pacific Islands Region Stranding Network representative immediately followed by a report to NMFS within 24 hours.

- Implement a best management practice, on a daily basis, of conducting inert munition training or small bomb detonations prior to detonating large bombs if the Project Engineer/Program Manager determines this practice does not interfere with mission objectives.

- Requirements for Monitoring and Reporting:

    - The 86 FWS are required to cooperate with NMFS, and any other Federal, state, or local agency with authority to monitor the impacts of the activity on marine mammals. Unless specified otherwise in the LOA, the 86 FWS must notify the Pacific Islands Region Stranding Coordinator, NMFS, by email, at least 72 hours prior to Long Range Strike WSEP missions.

    - All marine mammal monitoring will be carried out in compliance with the 86 FWS Marine Mammal Mitigation and Monitoring Plan, dated August 2017.

    - Aerial surveys: The 86 FWS will conduct pre-, during, and post-training surveys each mission day.

        - The marine mammal survey monitoring area will extend no less than approximately 8 mi (13 kilometers (km)) from the designated impact site.

        - Surveys will utilize military aircraft equipped with advanced targeting sensor pods (*e.g.*, SNIPER pods) at altitudes and speeds ideal for detecting

marine mammals using such equipment; aircraft will fly transect lines covering the entire eight mi monitoring area. A helicopter-based survey may substitute the military aircraft survey platform and use of sensor pods only if a sensor pod is not be available.

- A pre-mission marine mammal survey will commence no later than 30 minutes prior to beginning training activities.
- Aircraft personnel will also observe for marine mammals during training (*e.g.*, on approach to weapon launch location).
- Aircraft personnel will conduct a post-mission survey for marine mammals immediately following the end of training each mission day. A helicopter may be used in lieu of mission aircraft only if sensor pod is not available

- Range Camera Surveys: 86 FWS personnel will use the Makaha Ridge range cameras to monitor for marine mammals within the weapon impact area at least 30 minutes prior to, during, and immediately after training activities.
- Helicopter surveys: If military aircraft equipped with a sensor pod cannot be used for marine mammal surveys, the 86 FWS may substitute a helicopter as the survey platform. The helicopter will fly at an approximately 200 feet altitude and will cover the 8 mi monitoring area. If adverse weather conditions preclude the ability for aircraft to safely operate, missions would either be delayed until the weather clears or cancelled for the day
- Passive acoustic monitoring (PAM)
  - The 86 FWS will comply with all acoustic monitoring as described in the 86 FWS Mitigation and Monitoring Plan.
  - Acoustic data from the PRMF hydrophones will be collected and stored by the 86 FWS. Data will be analyzed to better understand the effects of LRS WSEP missions. The results of the analysis will accompany any subsequent LOA request or, if no request is made, no later than 90 after expiration of the LOA.
- The 86 FWS will contact the Pacific Islands Region stranding coordinator, NMFS, by email, at least 72 hours prior to mission onset and one business day after completion of missions to declare that missions are complete.

- Reporting:
  - The 86 FWS is required to submit a draft annual report to NMFS OPR on all monitoring conducted under the LOA within 90 days of the completion of marine mammal monitoring or accompanying a subsequent application for regulations. A final annual report shall be prepared and submitted within 30 days following resolution of comments on the draft annual report from NMFS. This report must include:

- Date and time of each Long Range Strike WSEP mission
- A complete description of the pre-mission and post-mission activities related to mitigating and visually monitoring the effects of Long Range Strike WSEP missions on marine mammal populations
- Results of the pre- and post-mission surveys, including numbers by species/stock of any marine mammals noted injured or killed as a result of the Long Range Strike WSEP mission and number of marine mammals (by species if possible) that may have been harassed due to presence within the monitoring area

- The 86 FWS is also required to submit a draft Marine Mammal Acoustic Monitoring Report after the 3rd year of Long Range Strike WSEP missions have been completed as authorized under the 5-year LOA.
- All draft reports will be subject to review and comment by NMFS. Any recommendations made by NMFS must be addressed in the final reports prior to acceptance by NMFS. Draft reports will be considered final reports if NMFS has not provided comments and recommendations within 90 days of receipt of the draft report.

- Reporting injured or dead marine mammals:
  - In the unanticipated event that the specified activity clearly causes the take of a marine mammal in a manner prohibited by the LOA, such as an injury for species not authorized (Level A harassment), serious injury, or mortality, 86 FWS shall immediately cease the specified activities and report the incident to the Pacific Islands Regional Stranding Coordinator, NMFS, (888-256-9840), followed by a report submitted to NMFS Office of Protected Resources and the Pacific Islands Regional Office within 24 hours. The report must include the following information:
    - Time, date, and location of the incident
    - Description of the incident
    - Environmental conditions (e.g., wind speed and direction, Beaufort sea state, cloud cover, and visibility)
    - Description of all marine mammal observations in the 24 hours preceding the incident
    - Species identification or description of the animal(s) involved
    - Fate of the animal(s)
    - Photographs or video footage of the animal(s)
  - Activities shall not resume until NMFS is able to review the circumstances of the prohibited take. NMFS will work with 86 FWS to determine what measures are necessary to minimize the likelihood of further prohibited take and ensure MMPA compliance. 86 FWS may not resume their activities until notified by NMFS.

- In the event that 86 FWS discovers an injured or dead marine mammal, and the lead observer determines that the cause of the injury or death is unknown and the death is relatively recent (e.g., in less than a moderate state of decomposition), 86 FWS shall immediately report the incident to the Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, and the Pacific Islands Regional Stranding Coordinator, NMFS. The report must include the same information identified above. Activities may continue while NMFS reviews the circumstances of the incident. NMFS will work with 86 FWS to determine whether additional mitigation measures or modifications to the activities are appropriate.
- In the event that 86 FWS discovers an injured or dead marine mammal, and the lead observer determines that the injury or death is not associated with or related to the activities authorized in the LOA (e.g., previously wounded animal, carcass with moderate to advanced decomposition, scavenger damage), 86 FWS shall report the incident to the Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, and the Pacific Islands Regional Stranding Coordinator, NMFS, within 24 hours of the discovery. 86 FWS shall provide photographs or video footage or other documentation of the stranded animal sighting to NMFS.

- Additional conditions:
  - The 86 FWS must inform the Office of Protected Resources of NMFS (301-427-8400) or designee (301-427-8401) prior to the initiation of any changes to the monitoring plan for a specified mission activity.
  - A copy of the LOA must be in the possession of the safety officer or project engineer on duty each mission day.
  - The LOA may be modified, suspended, or withdrawn if the 86 FWS fails to abide by the conditions prescribed herein or if NMFS determines the authorized taking is having more than a negligible impact on the species or stock of affected marine mammals.

<u>For marine mammals and sea turtles protected under the ESA</u>:

- The Air Force must implement all mitigation and monitoring measures as described in the 2016 BO, the 2017-2021 Mitigation and Monitoring Plan, and in Section 2.4 of the 2017-2021 BO.
- If a dead or injured marine mammal or sea turtle is observed during or following Long Range Strike WSEP activities, the Air Force shall immediately (within 24 hours of the discovery) contact NMFS and appropriate stranding networks.
- Within 90 days following completion of Long Range Strike WSEP mission activities, the Air Force shall submit a report to NMFS containing the following information:
  - Date and time of Long Range Strike WSEP missions
  - A complete description of the pre-mission and post-mission activities related to mitigating and monitoring the effects of Long Range Strike WSEP missions on marine mammals and sea turtles

- Results of the protected species monitoring including numbers (by species if possible) of any marine mammals or sea turtles noted injured or killed as a result of Long Range Strike WSEP missions and the number of marine mammals or sea turtles (by species if possible) that may have been harassed due to presence within the zone of influence

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

A public notice was published in two newspapers for two days; *The Garden Island* and the *Honolulu Star Advertiser* on July 27, 2016, and July 30, 2016 inviting the public to review and comment on the Draft EA/OEA and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The public comment period closed on August 26, 2016, and no public comments were received.

In addition, the Air Force Civil Engineering Center Public Affairs Office released a statement on 21 July 2017 informing the public on the 86 FWS's plans to reduce the total number of live weapons to be released under the Long Range Strike WSEP mission activities proposed for 2017-2021. The notification informed the public that based on a re-evaluation of the program's operational needs, the total number of live weapons released between 2017 and 2021 would be reduced by nearly 60 percent. As a result the potential for impacts to marine resources are expected to decrease. The press release also discussed the 86 FWS's coordination with NMFS to develop mitigations measures that would reduce potential impacts to marine mammals and to collect passive acoustic monitoring data to be analyzed in the future for effects analysis of Long Range Strike WSEP activities on marine mammals.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based on my review of the facts and analysis contained in the attached EA/OEA, conducted pursuant to the relevant requirements of NEPA (42 United States Code 4321 et. seq.), the CEQ NEPA implementing regulations (40 CFR 1508.13 et. seq.), and the Air Force Environmental Impact Analysis Process (32 CFR 989.15), and after careful review of the potential impacts, I conclude that implementation of the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 1) will not result in significant impacts on the quality of the human or natural environment. Therefore, a FONSI is warranted, and an Environmental Impact Statement is not required for these actions.

Jennifer L. Kilbourn

JENNIFER L. KILBOURN, Colonel, USAF
Chief, Civil Engineer Division

22 August 2017
Date