



Cochise County Board of Supervisors

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April 21, 2015

Mr. Ken Marion
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
1331 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 1525, MS 1226
Washington, DC 20229
kenneth.r.marion@cbp.dhs.gov

(202) 344-3087

RE: Cochise County Letter of Support for Proposed Action Alternative within the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Joint Permanent Air Facility for the United States Customs and Border Protection Office of Air and Marine At Libby Army Airfield, Fort Huachuca, Sierra Vista, Cochise County, Arizona

Dear Mr. Marion:

Cochise County Board of Supervisors would like to document our strong support for the proposed action to create a Joint Permanent Air Facility US Customs and Border Protection Office at Libby Army Airfield, Fort Huachuca, Sierra Vista, Cochise County, Arizona.

It is our understanding that the Customs and Border Protection Office proposes relocating operations to a joint permanent air operations facility to fulfill its mission along the U.S. – Mexico International Border. The proposed action would provide for the construction of a joint permanent facility for 69 personnel to support the existing Sierra Vista Air Unit and Unmanned Aircraft System operations including office space. The Sierra Vista Air Unit assigned to Fort Huachuca will consist of three AS-350 helicopters. The Unmanned Aircraft Systems Squadron permanently assigned to the Installation will consist of three MQ-9 Predator aircraft.

Fort Huachuca's Real Property Master Plan Update (2007) estimates current combined flight operations (departures and landings of civilian and military aircraft) of 160,000 per year at Libby Army Airfield and Sierra Vista Municipal Airport. Air operations for the proposed action may occur on a 24 hour/day, 7 day/week basis, resulting in approximately 22 air operations daily for a total 8,030 air operations annually (U.S. Army 2007b). This would represent 5 percent of the current flight operations at the Libby Army Airfield/ Sierra Vista Municipal Airport.

The Cochise County Comprehensive Land Use Plan states: "Fort Huachuca, the County's largest single employer, has been and remains a significant part of the County's history... Fort Huachuca provides a major anchor in the County's economy, providing high-quality jobs and supporting Sierra Vista as a regional hub for retail goods and services. Cochise County supports the missions of Fort Huachuca, the men and women who serve on the Post, and the associated civilian workforce. This support is

evidenced in the Cochise County Land Use Policy: a. Continue to support Fort Huachuca, the Ports of Entry, and related businesses as regional economic clusters.”

We feel that the proposed joint permanent air facility for the United States Customs and Border Protection Office of Air and Marine at Libby Army Airfield supports the mission of Fort Huachuca and therefore is of utmost importance to Cochise County.

The proposed project is also consistent with the City of Sierra Vista Economic Development Element 15 of Vista 2020 which states: “Economic development is extremely important to the future of Sierra Vista and surrounding communities. Policies and objectives must be carefully coordinated in order to promote desirable types of economic development. Sierra Vista’s economy is largely dependent on Fort Huachuca.”

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this project and desire to continue to be on the mailing list for future updates.

Respectfully submitted by Cochise County Board of Supervisors.

Patrick G. Call
Chairman

Ann English
Vice-Chairman

Richard R. Searle
Supervisor

cc: Congresswoman Martha McSally