

**Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/
Overseas Environmental Impact Statement
Mariana Islands Training and Testing**

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1 Purpose and Need

1.1 Introduction

The United States (U.S.) Department of the Navy (Navy) has prepared this supplement to the May 2015 Mariana Islands Training and Testing (MITT) Final Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) (U.S. Department of the Navy, 2015) pursuant to Council on Environmental Quality Regulations. The Navy proposes to conduct training activities (referred to as “training”), and research, development, testing and evaluation (referred to as “testing”) activities in the MITT Study Area, primarily within the existing Mariana Islands Range Complex (MIRC), as represented in Figure 1.1-1. Training and testing activities, collectively referred to as “military readiness activities,” that prepare the Navy to fulfill its mission to protect and defend the United States and its allies, have the potential to impact the environment. The Navy prepared this Supplemental EIS (SEIS)/OEIS to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Executive Order 12114, *Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions*, by reassessing the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed military readiness activities to be conducted within the Study Area.

This SEIS/OEIS was prepared to update the Navy’s assessment of the potential environmental impacts associated with proposed training and testing to be conducted at sea and on Farallon de Medinilla (FDM). These proposed activities are generally consistent with those at-sea and FDM activities analyzed in the May 2015 *Final Mariana Islands Training and Testing Activities Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement* (U.S. Department of the Navy, 2015), referred to as the 2015 MITT Final EIS/OEIS, and are representative of activities the military has been conducting in the Study Area for decades. These military readiness activities include the use of active sonar and explosives at sea off the coasts of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), throughout the in-water areas around the MIRC, the transit corridor between the MIRC and the Hawaii Range Complex, and at select Navy pierside and harbor locations.

The 2015 MITT Final EIS/OEIS also analyzed training and testing activities conducted at existing MIRC land-based training areas located on Guam, Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. The Navy consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding effects of the land-based training activities on terrestrial species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and received a Biological Opinion (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2015) and concurrence letter (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2016). As the Navy is not proposing any changes to those land-based activities on Guam, Saipan, Tinian, and Rota, the Navy will continue to rely on the 2015 MITT Final EIS/OEIS because there is no new information that would affect the EIS analysis. In addition, in accordance with 50 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 402.16, the 2015 and 2016 consultations remain valid as none of the factors necessary to trigger reinitiating consultation have been met.

New information specifically addressed in this SEIS/OEIS includes updates to training and testing requirements, an updated acoustic effects model, updated marine mammal density data, and evolving

and emergent best available science.¹ Using the updated information, the Navy will seek the reissuance of federal regulatory permits and authorizations under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and ESA to support training and testing requirements within the Study Area beyond the 2020 expiration of current authorizations and consultation. The Navy will consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to renew these authorizations. While the 2015 MITT Final EIS/OEIS Study Area remains unchanged, this SEIS/OEIS focuses on the at-sea and FDM portion of that area. The Study Area consists of three primary components: (1) the MIRC, (2) additional areas on the high seas, and (3) a transit corridor between the MIRC and the Hawaii Range Complex. Collectively, these areas continue to be referred to as the MITT Study Area (Figure 1.1-1).

The United States is facing increased global disorder, characterized by decline in the long-standing rules-based international order—creating a more complex and volatile security environment. Major conflicts, terrorism, outlaw actions, and natural disasters all have the potential to threaten national security of the United States. The security, prosperity, and vital interests of the United States are increasingly tied to other nations because of the close relationships between the United States and other national economies. The Navy operates on the world’s oceans, seas, and coastal areas—the international maritime domain—on which 90 percent of the world’s trade and two-thirds of its oil are transported. The majority of the world’s population also lives within a few hundred miles of an ocean. The U.S. Navy carries out training and testing activities to be able to protect the United States against its potential adversaries, to protect and defend the rights and interests of the United States and its allies to move freely on the oceans, and to provide humanitarian assistance.

Department of Defense realignment/reassignment efforts in the Western Pacific have previously been, or are currently, the subject of various environmental planning processes, including the EIS and Supplemental EIS, which studied the realignment of Marine Corps forces to Guam, ongoing EIS efforts to address joint training and land-based training requirements in the CNMI, and EIS efforts to discuss Air Force divert landing and training requirements in the CNMI. The training and testing activities covered by the 2015 MITT Final EIS/OEIS, as well as in this supplement, are separate and distinct and have independent utility from the actions proposed by Marine Corps forces and those of the U.S. Air Force within the CNMI. This SEIS/OEIS only addresses ongoing and future at-sea and FDM training and testing activities that are independent and do not rely on any realignment efforts. Further, the training and testing activities covered by the 2015 MITT Final EIS/OEIS and this SEIS/OEIS have been occurring in the Study Area for decades and would continue regardless of whether any of the other Department of Defense efforts in the Western Pacific come to fruition.

¹ The 2015 MITT Final EIS/OEIS used a new modeling system known as the Navy Acoustics Effects Model and marine mammal density information, developed by the Navy in cooperation with the National Marine Fisheries Service, that was the best available information at the time. The Navy Acoustics Effects Model has been refined, marine mammal density estimates have been updated, NMFS has published new criteria, and criteria used in the acoustic model have been revised.

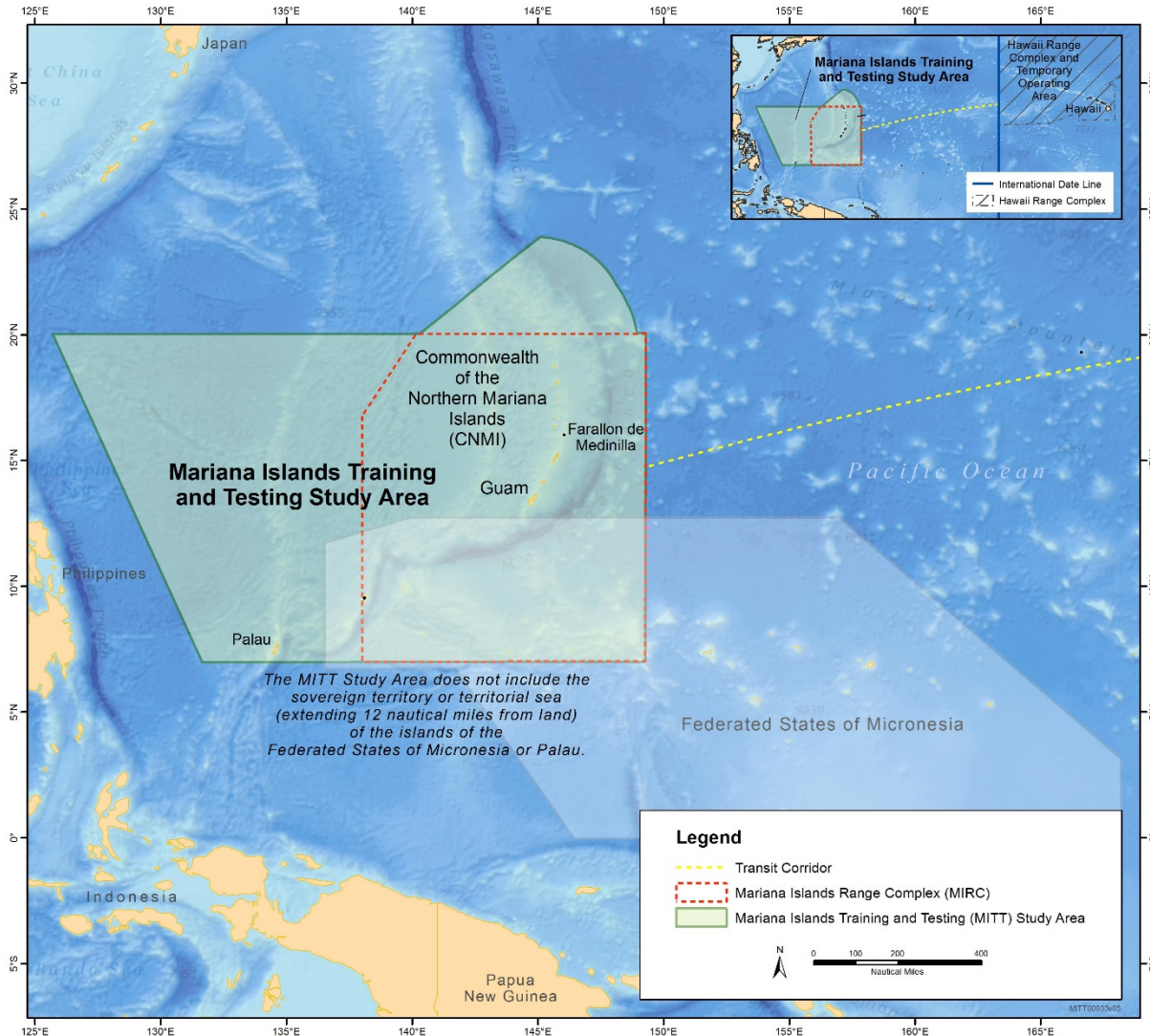


Figure 1.1-1: Mariana Islands Training and Testing Study Area

1.2 The Navy’s Environmental Compliance and At-Sea Policy

In 2000, the Navy completed a review of its environmental compliance requirements for exercises and training at sea. The Navy then instituted the “At-Sea Policy” (U.S. Department of the Navy, 2000) to ensure compliance with applicable environmental regulations and policies, and preserve the flexibility necessary for the Navy to train and test at sea. This policy directed, in part, that Fleet Commanders develop a programmatic approach to environmental compliance at sea for ranges and operational areas within their respective geographic areas of responsibility (U.S. Department of the Navy, 2000). Those ranges affected by the “At-Sea Policy” are designated water areas, sometimes containing instrumentation, which are managed and used to conduct training and testing activities. Some ranges are further broken down into operational areas, to better manage and deconflict military readiness activities.

In 2005, the Navy and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reached an agreement on a coordinated programmatic strategy for assessing certain environmental effects of military readiness activities at sea.

The Navy is currently in the third phase of implementing this programmatic approach, which covers similar types of military readiness training and testing activities in the same MITT Study Area analyzed in Phase II. As was done in Phase I and Phase II, the Navy will use the Phase III analysis to support regulatory consultations and a request for a letter of authorization under the MMPA and incidental take statements under the ESA. Given that the training and testing activities and many areas of environmental analysis remain similar to those addressed in Phase II, and the same Study Area is used for the proposed activities, the Navy determined an SEIS/OEIS to be appropriate for Phase III of the Navy's environmental compliance planning in the MITT Study Area. For further discussion of the first two phases, please see Section 1.2 (The Navy's Environmental Compliance and At-Sea Policy) of the 2015 MITT Final EIS/OEIS.

1.3 Proposed Action

The Navy's Proposed Action, described in detail in Chapter 2 (Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives), is to conduct military readiness training and testing activities in the Study Area (Figure 1.1-1).

1.4 Purpose and Need

The Navy and NMFS (as a cooperating agency) have coordinated from the outset and developed this document to meet each agency's distinct NEPA obligations and support the decision making of both agencies. The Navy's purpose of the Proposed Action is to conduct training and testing activities to ensure that the Navy and other Services meet their respective missions, which, for the Navy, is to maintain, train, and equip combat-ready military forces capable of winning wars, deterring aggression, and maintaining freedom of the seas. The respective missions are achieved in part by conducting training and testing within the Study Area in accordance with established Navy military readiness requirements. The sections that follow provide a description of the need for military readiness activities. Appendix A (Training and Testing Activities Descriptions) provides detailed Navy and other Services' activities descriptions.

Title 10 section 5062 of the U.S. Code provides: "The Navy shall be organized, trained, and equipped primarily for prompt and sustained combat incident to operations at sea. It is responsible for the preparation of naval forces necessary for the effective prosecution of war except as otherwise assigned and, in accordance with integrated joint mobilization plans, for the expansion of the peacetime components of the Navy to meet the needs of war."

The Navy has requested authorization to take marine mammals incidental to conducting their training and testing activities in the Study Area by Level A and B harassment, serious injury, and/or mortality. Take under the MMPA is defined as "to harass, hunt, capture, or kill, or attempt to harass, hunt, capture, or kill any marine mammal." For military readiness activities, harassment is defined as "(i) any act that injures or has the significant potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild [Level A harassment] or (ii) any act that disturbs or is likely to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of natural behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, surfacing, nursing, breeding,

feeding, or sheltering, to a point where such behavioral patterns are abandoned or significantly altered [Level B harassment].”

NMFS has issued proposed regulations and is considering issuance of a subsequent Letter of Authorization (LOA) under section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA of 1972, as amended (16 United States Code [U.S.C.] 1361 et seq.) that would govern the taking of marine mammals incidental to the Navy training and testing activities within the Study Area. The issuance of regulations and associated LOA to the Navy is a major federal action requiring NMFS to analyze the effects of their issuance on the human environment pursuant to NEPA requirements and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration policies.

The purpose of issuing an incidental take authorization is to provide an exception to the take prohibition in the MMPA and to ensure that the action complies with the MMPA and implementing regulations. Incidental take authorizations may be issued as either (1) regulations and associated LOA under section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA or (2) Incidental Harassment Authorization under section 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA. An Incidental Harassment Authorization can be issued only when there is no potential for serious injury or mortality or where any such potential can be negated through required mitigation measures. Because some of the activities under the Proposed Action may create a potential for lethal takes or takes that may result in serious injury that could lead to mortality, the Navy is requesting rulemaking and the issuance of an LOA for this action.

NMFS’s purpose is to evaluate the Navy’s Proposed Action pursuant to NMFS’s authority under the MMPA, and to make a determination whether to issue incidental take regulations and an LOA, including any conditions needed to meet the statutory mandates of the MMPA. To authorize the incidental take of marine mammals, NMFS evaluates the best available scientific information to determine whether the take would have a negligible impact on the affected marine mammal species or stocks and an unmitigable impact on their availability for taking for subsistence uses (not relevant here for Navy’s proposed action). NMFS must also prescribe permissible methods of taking, other “means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact” on the affected species or stocks and their habitat, and monitoring and reporting requirements. NMFS cannot issue an incidental take authorization unless it can make the required findings. The need for NMFS’s action is to consider the impacts of the Navy’s activities on marine mammals and meet NMFS’ obligations under the MMPA. This SEIS/OEIS analyzes the environmental impacts associated with issuance of the requested authorization of the take of marine mammals incidental to the training and testing activities within the Study Area, to include a variety of mitigation measures that were considered during the MMPA authorization process. The analysis of mitigation measures considers benefits to species or stocks and their habitat, and analyzes the practicability and efficacy of each measure. This analysis of mitigation measures was used to support requirements pertaining to mitigation, monitoring, and reporting that would be specified in final MMPA regulations and subsequent LOA.

1.4.1 Why the Navy Trains

As described above, the Navy is statutorily mandated to protect U.S. national security by being ready, at all times, to effectively prosecute war and defend the nation by conducting operations at sea. The Navy is essential to protecting U.S. national interests, considering that 70 percent of the earth is covered in water, 80 percent of the planet’s population lives within close proximity to coastal areas, and 90 percent of global commerce is conducted by sea. Naval forces must be ready for a variety of military operations to address the dynamic, social, political, economic, and environmental issues that occur in today’s rapidly evolving world. Through its continuous presence on the world’s oceans, the Navy can respond to

a wide range of situations because, on any given day, over one-third of its ships, submarines, and aircraft are deployed overseas. Units must be able to respond promptly and effectively while forward deployed. This presence helps to dissuade aggression, which prevents conflict escalation, and provides the President with options to promptly address global contingencies. Before deploying, naval forces must train to develop a broad range of capabilities to respond to threats, from full-scale armed conflict in a variety of different geographic areas and environmental conditions to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts. Training prepares Navy personnel to be proficient in safely operating and maintaining the equipment, weapons, and systems they will use to conduct their assigned missions. The training process provides personnel with an in-depth understanding of their individual limits and capabilities; the training process also helps the testing community improve new weapon systems' capabilities and effectiveness. Refer to Chapter 1, Section 1.4.1 (Why the Navy Trains) in the 2015 MITT Final EIS/OEIS for additional information on Navy training.

1.4.2 Why the Navy Tests

The Navy's research and acquisition community, including research-funding organizations, laboratory facilities, and systems commands, has a mission to provide weapons, systems, and platforms for the Navy to support its missions and ensure a technological edge over the United States' potential adversaries. This community is at the forefront of researching, developing, testing, evaluating, acquiring, and delivering modern platforms, systems, and related equipment to meet Fleet capability and readiness requirements. The Navy's research funding organizations and laboratories concentrate primarily on the development of new science and technology, and the initial testing of concepts that are relevant to the Navy of the future. As a result, systems commands develop ship, aircraft, and weapons products that support all Navy platforms throughout their lifecycles from systems acquisition through sustainment to end of life. Refer to Chapter 1, Section 1.5.1 (Why the Navy Tests) in the 2015 MITT Final EIS/OEIS for additional information on Navy testing. The Navy's research and acquisition community operating in the Study Area includes the following:

- The Naval Sea Systems Command, which develops, acquires, delivers, and maintains surface ships, submarines, unmanned vehicles, and weapon system platforms.
- The Naval Air Systems Command, which develops, tests, acquires, delivers, and sustains naval aviation aircraft, unmanned aerial systems, weapons, and systems.
- The Office of Naval Research, which plans, fosters, and encourages scientific research that promotes future naval sea power and enhances national security.

1.5 Overview and Strategic Importance of Existing Range Complex

The Navy has historically used areas in the Study Area for training and testing. The Navy has designated a portion of the Study Area as a "range complex." A range complex provides a controlled environment where military ship, submarine, and aircraft crews can train in realistic conditions while safely deconflicting with non-military activities, such as civilian shipping and aircraft. Sufficient sea and airspace in proximity to land training ranges, airfields, nearshore amphibious landing sites, and special use airspace is critical to realistic training and testing. Diverse and realistic training is critical to ensuring U.S. Forces, when needed, are both ready and able to effectively conduct operations in myriad environments.

Systems commands also require access to a realistic environment to conduct testing. The systems commands frequently conduct tests on Fleet range complexes and use Fleet assets to support the testing. The MIRC, which is primarily used by the systems commands, must provide the flexibility to

meet diverse testing requirements, given the wide range of various advanced platforms and systems and capabilities that the fleets and systems commands must demonstrate before certification for deployment for the Fleet. This is important because testing in conditions that reflect (or are similar to) those in which the technology could be employed enhances combat readiness.

The MIRC is characterized by a unique combination of attributes that make it a strategically important range complex, including:

- Location within and adjacent to a U.S. territory
- Ranges and operating areas on the islands of Guam, Rota, Saipan, Tinian, and FDM
- Expansive airspace, surface sea space, and underwater sea space
- Authorized use of multiple types of explosive and non-explosive ordnance on FDM
- Support for all Navy warfare areas and numerous other service roles, missions, and tactical tasks
- Support for service units based at military installations on Guam
- Training support for deployed forces
- Ability to conduct joint and combined force exercises, including those in which foreign partners and allies participate
- Rehearsal area for Western Pacific contingencies

1.6 The Environmental Planning Process

NEPA and Executive Order 12114 requires federal agencies to examine the environmental impacts of their proposed actions within the United States and its territories. An EIS is a detailed public document that assesses the potential effects that a major federal action might have on the human environment. The Navy undertakes environmental planning for major Navy actions in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and Executive Orders.

Pursuant to 40 CFR section 1502.9(c), a supplemental EIS is prepared when the agency makes substantial changes in the proposed action that are relevant to environmental concerns (40 CFR section 1502.9(c)(1)(i)); or there are significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its impacts (40 CFR section 1502.9(c)(1)(ii)). An agency may also supplement a final EIS when the agency determines that the purpose of NEPA will be furthered by doing so (40 CFR section 1502(c)(2)).

Pursuant to Council on Environmental Quality Regulations, the Navy has prepared this supplement to the 2015 MITT Final EIS/OEIS to consider future activities conducted at sea and on FDM, and updated training and testing requirements; incorporate new information from an updated acoustic effects model and updated marine mammal density data; and incorporate evolving and emergent best available science. It will also support any reissuance of federal regulatory permits and authorizations under the MMPA and the ESA using the best available science and analytical methods to assess potential environmental impacts.

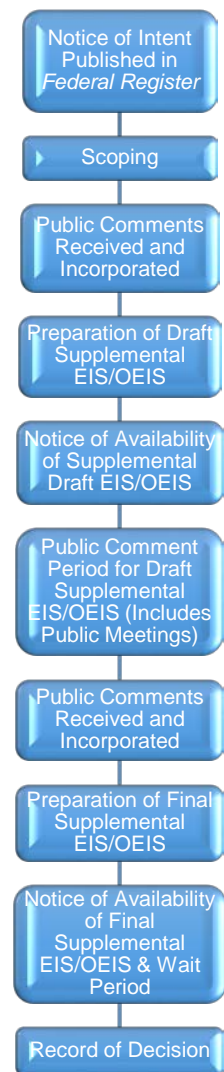


Figure 1.5-1: National Environmental Policy Act Process Conducted for this SEIS/OEIS

1.6.1 National Environmental Policy Act Requirements

When developing a supplement to an existing EIS/OEIS, the first step in the NEPA process (Figure 1.5-1) is to prepare a Notice of Intent. The Notice of Intent is published in the Federal Register and in local newspapers, and provides an overview of the proposed action and the scope of this SEIS/OEIS (see Appendix B, Federal Register Notices). The Notice of Intent is also the first step in engaging the public, initiating the scoping process.

Scoping is an early and open process for developing the “scope” of issues to be addressed in an EIS and for identifying significant issues related to a proposed action. In accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing the requirements of NEPA, scoping is not required for a supplement to a draft or final EIS; however, in an effort to maximize public participation and ensure the public’s input was considered, the Navy chose to conduct a scoping period for this SEIS/OEIS.

After the scoping process, a Draft SEIS/OEIS is prepared to assess potential impacts of the proposed action and alternatives on the environment. When completed, a Notice of Availability is published in the Federal Register and notices are placed in local or regional newspapers announcing the availability of the Draft SEIS/OEIS. The Draft SEIS/OEIS is circulated for public review and comment. Public meetings may also be scheduled to further inform the public and solicit their comments.

The Final SEIS/OEIS addresses all public comments received on the Draft SEIS/OEIS. Responses to public comments may include factual corrections, supplements or modifications to analysis, and inclusion of new information. Additionally, responses may explain why the comments do not warrant further agency response.

Finally, the decision-maker will issue a Record of Decision no earlier than 30 days after the Final SEIS/OEIS is made available to the public.

For a description of how the Navy complies with each of these requirements during the development of this SEIS/OEIS, please see Chapter 8 (Public Involvement and Distribution).

1.6.2 Executive Order 12114

Executive Order 12114 of 1979, *Environmental Impacts Abroad of Major Federal Actions*, furthers the purpose of NEPA by directing federal agencies to provide for informed environmental decision-making for major federal actions outside the United States and its territories. Presidential Proclamation 5928, issued December 27, 1988, extended the exercise of U.S. sovereignty and jurisdiction under international law to 12 nautical miles (NM) from the shoreline; however, the proclamation expressly provides that it does not extend or otherwise alter existing federal law or any associated jurisdiction, rights, legal interests, or obligations. Thus, as a matter of policy, the Navy analyzes environmental effects and actions within 12 NM under NEPA (an EIS) and those effects occurring beyond 12 NM under the provisions of Executive Order 12114 (an OEIS).

1.6.3 Other Environmental Requirements Considered

The Navy must comply with all applicable federal environmental laws, regulations, and executive orders as discussed in the 2015 MITT Final EIS/OEIS. Further information can be found in Chapter 6 (Additional Regulatory Considerations). Since the publication of the 2015 MITT Final EIS/OEIS, Executive Order 13840, *Ocean Policy to Advance the Economic, Security, and Environmental Interests of the United States*

revoked and replaced Executive Order 13547, *Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes*.

1.6.3.1.1 Executive Order 13840, *Ocean Policy to Advance the Economic, Security, and Environmental Interests of the United States*

On June 19, 2018, President Trump signed Executive Order 13840. The Executive Order is intended to advance the economic, security, and environmental interests of the United States through improved public access to marine data and information; efficient federal agency coordination on ocean-related matters; and engagement with marine industries, the science and technology community, and other ocean stakeholders, including Regional Ocean Partnerships. The Executive Order continues to require federal agencies to coordinate activities regarding ocean-related matters for effective management of the ocean as well as promote lawful use of the ocean by agencies, including the Armed Forces. The Navy continues to engage with regional and state ocean planning entities. This Executive Order revokes and replaces Executive Order 13547, *Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes*.

1.7 Scope and Content

In this SEIS/OEIS, the Navy reanalyzed at-sea and FDM military readiness activities that could potentially impact the human environment and natural resources. Since the completion of the 2015 MITT Final EIS/OEIS, new information has become available and is incorporated in this analysis, in addition to proposed changes in training and testing requirements. The range of alternatives in this SEIS/OEIS includes the No Action Alternative and two action alternatives. In this SEIS/OEIS, the Navy analyzed direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts that may result from the Proposed Action. The Navy is the lead agency for the Proposed Action and is responsible for the scope and content of this SEIS/OEIS. The document is being prepared in coordination with the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Coast Guard, as their at-sea and FDM training activities are included in the Proposed Action.

The National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's NMFS is serving as a cooperating agency because the scope of the Proposed Action and alternatives involves activities that have the potential to impact protected resources under their jurisdiction by law and special expertise, including marine mammals, threatened and endangered species, and Essential Fish Habitat. The National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's authorities and special expertise is based on their statutory responsibilities under the MMPA of 1972, as amended 16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.), the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. In addition, NMFS, in accordance with 40 CFR 1506.3 and 1505.2, may adopt this SEIS/OEIS and issue a separate Record of Decision associated with its decision to grant or deny the Navy's request for an incidental take authorization pursuant to Section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA.

1.8 Organization of this Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement

This SEIS/OEIS is organized as follows:

- Chapter 1 (Purpose and Need) describes the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action.
- Chapter 2 (Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives) describes the Proposed Action and proposed changes to the 2015 MITT Final EIS/OEIS implemented actions projected to take place starting in 2020, and alternatives to be carried forward for analysis.
- Chapter 3 (Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences) describes the existing conditions of the affected environment and potential environmental consequences on those

resources requiring additional discussion or analysis beyond what was analyzed in the 2015 MITT Final EIS/OEIS.

- Chapter 4 (Cumulative Impacts) describes the analysis of cumulative impacts, which are the impacts of the Proposed Action when added to past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.
- Chapter 5 (Mitigation) describes the measures the Navy evaluated that could mitigate impacts to the environment.
- Chapter 6 (Additional Regulatory Considerations) describes considerations required by NEPA and describes how the Navy complies with other federal, state, and local plans, policies, and regulations.
- Chapter 7 (List of Preparers) includes a list of preparers of this SEIS/OEIS.
- Chapter 8 (Public Involvement and Distribution) describes the public participation process.
- References are provided at the end of each section.
- Appendices provide technical information that support the SEIS/OEIS analyses and its conclusions.

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