



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
COMMANDING OFFICER  
NAVAL AIR STATION  
700 AVENGER AVENUE  
LEMOORE, CALIFORNIA 93246-5001

IN REPLY REFER TO:

5090  
Ser N00/0028  
January 28, 2011

Mr. Jeff Briltz  
City Manager of Lemoore  
119 Fox Street  
Lemoore, CA 93245

Dear Mr. Briltz:

The U.S. Department of the Navy (Navy) provides notice that it is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed homebasing of the U.S. Navy F-35C Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) on the West Coast. The EIS will evaluate the potential environmental consequences of providing facilities and functions on the West Coast of the United States to support homebasing F-35Cs as a replacement for the aging FA-18C Hornet aircraft in the Pacific Fleet.

The Navy is holding two public scoping meetings at the times and places listed in the enclosed Notice of Intent EIS release information. Representatives of the Navy will be available at the meeting to answer questions and receive oral and/or written comments on environmental concerns that should be addressed in the EIS. We invite your participation.

Additional information is provided in the enclosed release information and at the project website: [www.navyf35cwestcoasteis.com](http://www.navyf35cwestcoasteis.com). Public comments can be submitted by attending one of the public scoping meetings and providing oral and/or written comments, by submitting comments electronically through the project website, or by mailing comments to: U.S. Navy F-35C West Coast Homebasing EIS Project Manager; Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest; ATTN: Code EV21.AK; 1220 Pacific Highway, Building 1; San Diego, CA 92132. Comments must be postmarked by March 14, 2011.

Thank you for your interest in this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James R. Knapp".

JAMES R. KNAPP  
Captain, U.S. Navy  
Commanding Officer

Enclosure: Notice of Intent EIS Release Information

Copy to: Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet (N01CE)

**U.S. NAVY F-35C WEST COAST HOMEBASING  
NOTICE OF INTENT TO PREPARE AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
RELEASE INFORMATION**

**Introduction**

The Department of the Navy (Navy) provides notice that it intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and conduct public scoping meetings for the proposed homebasing of the U.S. Navy F-35C Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) on the West Coast. The EIS will evaluate the potential environmental consequences associated with providing facilities and functions to homebase F-35C JSF aircraft as a one-for-one replacement of the FA-18C Hornet aircraft on the West Coast of the United States. The intent of this notice is to inform the public about this proposal and invite participation during the public scoping period. The EIS will be prepared pursuant to the regulatory requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969; the Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508); and Navy procedures for implementing NEPA (32 CFR 775).

**Project Description**

The proposed action is to provide West Coast facilities and functions to support homebasing F-35Cs as a replacement for aging FA-18C Hornet aircraft in the Pacific Fleet. Under the proposed action, a total of seven active-duty FA-18C Hornet aircraft squadrons and one fleet replacement squadron (FRS) will progressively transition to the more advanced F-35C as the aging F/A-18 aircraft are replaced in the Pacific Fleet. Upon completion, the proposed action would homebase a total of 100 F-35C aircraft (seven squadrons of 10 aircraft each, plus up to 30 aircraft in the FRS), replacing a total of 109 FA-18C aircraft. The more advanced F-35C would replace FA-18C Hornet aircraft beginning in 2015 with the transition to be complete by 2025.

During the initial planning process to identify suitable homebase locations for the F-35C, the Navy evaluated 134 Department of Defense installations against the operational and facilities requirements necessary to support the homebasing of the F-35C. Taking into account these requirements, and the purpose and need of the proposed action, the preliminary screening process identified two potential West Coast homebasing locations: Naval Air Station (NAS) Lemoore, located in Kings County, California and Naval Air Facility (NAF) El Centro, located in Imperial County, California. In order to maximize efficiency of support facilities, simulation devices, and on-site support personnel, the Navy intends to base all its West Coast F-35C aircraft at one location. Accordingly, initial action alternatives to be considered are basing seven F-35C fleet squadrons and one F-35C FRS at either NAS Lemoore or NAF El Centro. Additionally, the U.S. Navy F-35C West Coast Homebasing EIS will evaluate a No Action Alternative at each of the potential homebase locations to provide a baseline for comparison and analysis of the environmental consequences associated with the basing alternatives.

The purpose of the proposed action is to replace aging Pacific Fleet FA-18C Hornet aircraft with the F-35C while meeting the aircrews' associated training and readiness requirements. The proposed action is needed to support the Navy's Maritime Strategy by maintaining strike-fighter capability in the Pacific Fleet with the more advanced F-35C.

Enclosure

## Public Involvement

The Navy is initiating a 45-day public scoping period for the U.S. Navy F-35C West Coast Homebasing EIS that begins with publication of the Notice of Intent in the Federal Register on January 28, 2011, and ends on March 14, 2011. The scoping period will provide the public with an opportunity to submit oral and/or written comments on environmental concerns that should be addressed in the EIS. Two public scoping meetings will be held in an open house format from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on the dates indicated below at the following locations:

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Tuesday, February 15, 2011  | Southwest High School, 2001 Ocotillo Drive, El Centro, CA 92243 (located in Imperial County, California). |
| Thursday, February 17, 2011 | Lemoore Senior Center, 789 S Lemoore Ave., Lemoore, CA (located in Kings County, California).             |

Representatives of the Navy will be available at the meetings to answer questions and receive oral and/or written comments. There are four ways to submit comments:

- 1) Attend one of the public scoping meetings and provide written comments.
- 2) Attend one of the public scoping meetings and talk to the stenographer who can record your comments.
- 3) Submit comments electronically through the project website at: <http://www.navyf35cwestcoasteis.com>.
- 4) Mail comments to: U.S. Navy F-35C EIS Project Manager; Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest; ATTN: Code EV21.AK; 1220 Pacific Highway, Bldg. 1; San Diego, CA 92132

**To ensure your comments are considered during the preparation of the EIS, comments must be postmarked (if mailed) or received no later than March 14, 2011.**

Enclosure