

Notice of Availability
Draft Environmental Assessment for
Land Acquisition and Transfer, and Construction and Operation of New Driving Track and Solar
Array at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers,
Artesia, Eddy County, New Mexico

Description: Interested parties are hereby notified that the United States (US) Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC) has prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Proposed Action described below.

Statutory Authority: This notice is being issued to all interested parties in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 1500-1508), and DHS Directive 023-01, Rev. 01 (Implementation of NEPA).

Proposed Action: FLETC proposes to exchange a 160-acre parcel of land for an equivalent sized parcel with a private entity near FLETC's facilities in Artesia, Eddy County, New Mexico. FLETC intends to construct, operate, and maintain a new driving track to replace an existing driving track at FLETC's Main Campus in Artesia. A 60-acre portion of the existing driving track on Main Campus would be repurposed to install a solar photovoltaic (PV) array. Collectively, the land swap; construction, operation, and maintenance of a new driving track; and installation, operation, and maintenance of a PV array comprise the Proposed Action.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to conduct a land acquisition and transfer (i.e., land swap) with a private entity where FLETC would transfer a 160-acre tract of land in exchange for a 160-acre tract adjacent to existing driving tracks at the FLETC Artesia Special Training Complex (STC). The tract received by FLETC would be used to construct, operate, and maintain a new, up-to-date emergency driving track. The proposed driving track would consolidate all driving tracks at the STC location and ensure FLETC maintains its ability to provide required training. It would also allow the existing, outdated emergency driving track at the Main Campus to be repurposed for installation of the ground-mounted PV array. The Proposed Action is needed because the existing driving track at the Main Campus is in disrepair and does not provide sufficient training capacity for law enforcement students. Installation of the PV array is needed to allow FLETC to decrease energy costs and its reliance upon traditional, fossil fuel-based energy sources to work toward meeting federal directives on renewable energy.

The Draft EA evaluates the potential environmental, cultural, socioeconomic, and physical impacts of one action alternative and the No Action Alternative. The Preferred Alternative would implement the Proposed Action as described. The Draft EA concludes there would be no significant adverse impacts to the environment or quality of life as a result of implementing the Proposed Action, provided best management practices specified in the EA are implemented.

Public Review: FLETC is soliciting public input or comments on the Draft EA, which will be available for a 30-day public comment period from May 30, 2024 through June 29, 2024. The Draft EA can be accessed online at: www.dhs.gov/nepa.

Comments: Comments on the Draft EA or inquiries regarding the document should be submitted during the 30-day comment period by emailing james.a.brown@fletc.dhs.gov.