DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FROM THE ADDITION OF TWO P-3 AIRCRAFT TO THE U.S CUSTOMS SERVICE'S AIR AND MARINE INTERDICTION DIVISION AT NAVAL AIR STATION CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS

Pursuant to Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act, the Department of the Navy gives notice that an Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required for the addition of two P-3 aircraft to the U.S. Customs Service's (USCS) Air and Marine Interdiction Division at Naval Air Station (NAS) Corpus Christi, Texas.

The proposed action is to add two P-3 Orion aircraft to the USCS Air and Marine Interdiction Division at NAS Corpus Christi, Texas. The additional two aircraft will increase to ten the number of aircraft used by USCS at NAS Corpus Christi to accomplish their mission of drug interdiction and homeland defense. Additional parking apron will be constructed for the aircraft. Twenty-two new support personnel will join the USCS staff.

Alternatives considered in the EA include the proposed action and the No Action alternative. The proposed action is required to comply with House Bill H.R. 4300, the Western Hemisphere Drug Elimination Act, passed by Congress in 1998. For that reason, alternatives other than the proposed action and No Action were not considered. The EA fully evaluated the potential environmental impacts that could result from the addition of the P-3 aircraft.

The No Action alternative would have continued operation of the USCS using the existing eight P-3 aircraft. The No-Action alternative would continue to limit USCS operations to current levels.

NAS Corpus Christi is located within Nueces County, which is in *attainment* for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards criteria pollutants. Because the area is in attainment, the proposed action is exempt from the General Conformity Rule. Maintenance of the two new USCS P-3 aircraft is expected to increase USCS stationary source VOC emissions to 0.0254 tons (0.0230 metric tons) per year to 0.0264 tons (0.0240 metric tons) per year. These emissions will have no significant impact on the area's air quality.

The proposed action will have minimal impact on noise levels at NAS Corpus Christi. The two additional aircraft will add approximately 730 flight operations per year; total operations at NAS Corpus Christi will increase to an approximate maximum of 181,598 per year, an increase of approximately 0.4 percent.

The existing on-base and off-base utility systems (water, sanitary sewer, telephone, and electric) have adequate capacity to accommodate the proposed activities and personnel.

No significant hazardous materials/waste management impacts will occur from the proposed action. No impacts to either water resources or geology/soils resources will occur. No terrestrial plant or animal species listed as threatened or endangered by either federal or state agencies occur at NAS Corpus Christi, therefore none would be affected by the proposed action. The proposed action will have no affect on historic or archeological resources. There will not be any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects from the action on minority or low-income populations.

Based on the information gathered during preparation of the EA, the Navy and the U.S. Customs Service finds that adding two P-3 aircraft to the USCS Air and Marine Interdiction Division at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas, will not significantly impact the environment.

The EA addressing this action may be obtained from: Commander, Southern Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, P. O. Box 190010, North Charleston, SC 29419-9010 (Attn: Mr.Will Sloger, Code ES12), telephone 843/820-5797. A limited number of copies of the EA are available to fill single copy requests.

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Dated J.W. TOWNES, III
Vice Chief of Naval Education and Training