

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310**

MEMORANDUM FOR CORRESPONDENTS

The Department of the Army will publish in the *Federal Register* a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to assess the potential impact of the construction and operation two range projects within U.S. Army training lands in Alaska.

The purpose of the proposed projects is to provide year-round, fully automated, multi-purpose, and realistic training facilities. These facilities are needed to support training of U.S. Army Alaska (USARAK) and other soldiers in both an urban and rural environment using state-of-the-art automated facilities. Current unit readiness and availability for deployment to respond to National Command Authority mission directives would be enhanced by these training facilities.

The Battle Area Complex (BAX) would support company combat team live fire operations on a fully automated collective live fire range, and would support the Joint Combined Arms Team in training, as they will fight on today's battlefield. The Combined Arms Collective Training Facility (CACTF) would support multi-echelon battalion combat team training in an urban environment. The proposed projects are mission-essential for units assigned to USARAK and other Department of Defense forces and would support proposed implementation of a Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) within USARAK.

USARAK is proposing to construct and operate two range facilities within the U.S. Army training lands in Alaska. The proposed federal action to be discussed in this EIS is the impact of construction and use of a BAX and CACTF. The EIS will analyze the proposed action's impacts upon Alaska's natural and man-made environments.

Proposed Alternatives to be considered would include:

- 1) No Action (maintain existing range infrastructure).
- 2) Constructing the range projects within Black Rapids Training Area
- 3) Construction within Donnelly Drop Zone
- 4) Construction within Eddy Drop Zone
- 5) Construction within Fort Richardson
- 6) Construction within Gerstle River Training Area
- 7) Construction within North Texas Range
- 8) Construction within Tanana Flats Training Area
- 9) Construction within West Donnelly Training Area
- 10) Construction within Yukon Training Area

USARAK will prepare an EIS to assess the impacts of the proposed action and alternatives.

SCOPING PROCESS: Tribes, Federal, state, and local agencies and the public are invited to participate in the scoping process for the preparation of this EIS. The scoping process will help identify possible alternatives, potential environmental impacts, and key issues of concern to be analyzed in the EIS.

Scoping meetings will be held in Fairbanks and Delta Junction, Alaska. Notification of the times and locations for the scoping meetings will be published in local newspapers. Written comments identifying potential impacts to be analyzed in the EIS will be accepted within 30 days of publication of the NOI in the *Federal Register*. Written comments may be forwarded to Mr. Kevin Gardner, Directorate of Public Works, 730 Quartermaster Road, Attn: APVR-RPW-GS (GARDNER), Fort Richardson, AK 99505-6500; fax: (907) 384-3047.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT: Major Dan Hunter, Public Affairs Office, 600 Richardson Drive #5600, Attn: APVR-RPV-O (HUNTER), Fort Richardson, AK 99505-5600; telephone: (907) 384-3306, fax: (907) 384-2060; or at Fort Wainwright, AK; telephone: (907) 353-6701.