



NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY: DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

The Department of the Air Force invites you to review the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and attend a Virtual or In-Person Public Hearing for the Proposed T-7A Recapitalization at Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas

PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED. Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, the Department of the Air Force (Air Force), has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for public review that analyzes the potential environmental consequences associated with the proposal to recapitalize the T-38C Talon flight training program at Laughlin Air Force Base (AFB) with T-7A Red Hawk aircraft. Recapitalization would entail introduction of T-7A aircraft and flight operations at Laughlin AFB and associated special use airspace to replace all T-38C aircraft assigned to the installation; changes to the number of personnel and dependents in the Laughlin AFB region; and construction and upgrade of operations, support, and maintenance facilities.

The Air Force's Proposed Action is to replace all currently operating T-38C aircraft at Laughlin AFB with 63 or 79 T-7A aircraft. Varying numbers of aircraft and levels of aircraft operations are reasonable alternatives. Along with the No Action Alternative, three action alternatives are evaluated in the Draft EIS.

OBTAIN AND REVIEW THE DRAFT EIS. The Draft EIS is available for download at <https://laughlin.T-7ANEPADocuments.com>. A hardcopy of the Draft EIS may be requested using the project website, calling (830) 298-5262, or by sending your request to the email or postal mail addresses below. A hard copy is available for viewing at the **Val Verde County Library**: 300 Spring Street, Del Rio, Texas 78840-5150.

VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON PUBLIC HEARINGS - PLEASE ATTEND. The Air Force requests comments from interested local, state, and federal agencies; federally recognized tribes; and interested members of the public. The Air Force is holding both in-person and virtual public hearings to provide the public with the opportunity to learn more about the proposal and provide input. The in-person public hearing will be held on December 5, 2023, at the Ramada Ballroom in Del Rio, Texas, and will open at 5:00 p.m. with an "open house" format to allow attendees to sign-in, view poster boards, and get seated. The virtual public hearing will be held on December 11, 2023 and will open at 5:15 p.m. to allow attendees time to register and be entered into the virtual meeting room. A link to the on-line virtual public hearing has been provided on the project website (<https://laughlin.T-7ANEPADocuments.com>) allowing interested parties to register to attend the virtual public hearing. Individuals without internet access may call 408-418-9388 and use meeting number 2492 634 5953 and passcode 782 542 43 to attend. The virtual and in-person public hearings will be called to order at 5:30 p.m. Central Time and begin with the Air Force giving a brief presentation about the proposal. Formal public testimony will begin at approximately 6:00 p.m. Both the virtual and in-person public hearings will close at 8:00 p.m. The hearings may adjourn before 8:00 p.m. upon or after verification that all participants who desire to speak have been heard and there are no more registered speakers. All members of the public are invited and encouraged to attend. **Verbal comments will be accepted at both hearings, and written comments will also be accepted at the in-person hearing. Your input is valuable and assists the Air Force in making more informed decisions.**

The public hearing materials and information regarding the impact assessment are accessible via the project website provided above. A Spanish language translator will be present for both public hearings. If you need to request accommodation to access the printed or audio portion of the presentation or need additional accommodation to make a telephone comment (per the Americans with Disabilities Act), please submit your request at the project website or call (830) 298-5262 no later than 1 week prior to the applicable hearing date.

PUBLIC COMMENT. Comments on the Draft EIS can be submitted verbally at both public hearings. Written comments on the Draft EIS can be submitted at the in-person public hearing, electronically at <https://laughlin.T-7ANEPADocuments.com>, by email to chinling.chen@us.af.mil, or via postal mail at the address below. For further information, please contact:

Ms. Chinling Chen, AFCEC/CZN
Attn: Laughlin AFB T-7A Recapitalization EIS
Headquarters Air Education and Training Command Public Affairs
100 H. East Street., Suite 4; Randolph AFB, TX 78150.

We will accept comments at any time during the environmental process. Written and verbal comments will be given equal weight; however, to ensure the Air Force has sufficient time to consider public input in preparation of the Final EIS, please submit comments by January 8, 2024.