



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS AIR COMBAT COMMAND
LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, VIRGINIA

JUN 12 2008

Mr. Richard Bird
Chairman, Economic Committee
PO Box D
Fort Yates ND 58538

Dear Mr. Bird,

The United States Air Force (Air Force) is in the process of preparing an EIS to assess the potential environmental consequences of a proposal to expand and enhance the existing Powder River Complex (PRC) near Ellsworth Air Force Base (AFB) SD. The proposal would create the Powder River Training Complex (PRTC). The PRTC would more effectively use limited resources and finite flying hours by providing locally the realistic training needed by B-1 and B-52 aircrews flying from Ellsworth AFB SD and Minot AFB ND, respectively. This airspace proposal addresses the training and other limitations affecting the existing PRC training assets as they are currently configured.

The proposed action would restructure and reconfigure the existing Powder River Military Operations Areas (MOAs) and associated Air Traffic Control Assigned Airspaces (ATCAAs). The PRTC proposal would establish two air refueling routes, create additional low altitude MOA (500 feet Above Ground Level [AGL] up to, but not including, 18,000 feet above Mean Sea Level [MSL]) and high-altitude ATCAA (18,000-60,000 MSL) combinations in portions of South Dakota, North Dakota, Wyoming and Montana. The proposal would support additional ground-based assets to simulate threats and an increase in aircraft training flights, permit the use of training chaff and flares, and authorize supersonic flight above 10,000 AGL. Three action alternatives and a no-action alternative have currently been identified for analyses and are discussed in the attached meeting brochure (Atch 1).

As part of this Environmental Impact Analysis Process, and in continuance of Government-to-Government consultation initiated by Colonel Scott Vander Hamm, 28 BW/CC, Ellsworth AFB SD, we request your assistance in gathering information concerning previous archaeological and historic studies for the areas under the affected region. We would appreciate any assistance you could provide in identifying and retrieving this important information, as well as concerns you may have about the potential effects of the proposal on significant cultural resources. All or portions of the following locations have the potential of being affected by the proposal's overhead training airspace due to one or more of the alternatives: **Montana**—Crow and Northern Cheyenne Reservations and the counties of Big Horn, Carter, Custer, Fallon, Powder River, Rosebud, Treasure, and Yellowstone; **North Dakota**—Standing Rock Reservation and Adams, Billings, Bowman, Golden Valley, Grant, Hettinger, Morton, Sioux, Slope, and Stark counties; **South Dakota**—Standing Rock and Cheyenne River Reservations, and Butte, Corson, Harding, Lawrence, Meade, Pennington, Perkins, Ziebach counties; and **Wyoming**: Campbell, Crook, Sheridan, and Weston counties.

Global Power For America

The Air Force is committed to community outreach and we appreciate the opportunity to hold a community meeting at the Bear Soldier District Gym in McLaughlin, SD on Friday, July 11, 2008 from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. and at the Community Center in Fort Yates on Friday, July 11, 2008 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Open communication of issues is a critical element of the EIS process, and we would appreciate your assistance in posting the attached meeting flyers (Atch 2) around the community and encouraging public participation. The Air Force intends to coordinate public involvement for the purpose of Section 106 review under the NHPA with public involvement in the EIS prepared under the Environmental Impact Analysis Process. Meetings with public, agency, and Native American stakeholders during this scoping process will help identify the full range of reasonable alternatives, potential impacts, and key issues to be considered in the environmental impact analysis process.

To ensure the Air Force has sufficient time to consider your input in the preparation of the Draft EIS, please provide information and/or comments to Ms. Linda DeVine, HQ ACC/A7PP, 129 Andrews Street, Room 317, Langley AFB VA 23665-2769 not later than August 4, 2008. If you have any specific questions about this request, please feel free to contact Ms. Linda DeVine at (757) 764-9434, or by electronic-mail at acc.prtc@langley.af.mil. You may also obtain information including the two attachments to this letter, from our website at www.acplanning.org. Thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,


BRUCE W. MACDONALD, P.E.
Acting Chief, Programs Division

Attachment:

1. Scoping Meeting Brochure
2. Flyer