

**DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT/FINDING OF NO PRACTICABLE
ALTERNATIVE**

For

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE LAND
LEASING PROJECT TO SITE, CONSTRUCT, AND OPERATE A TAMPA ELECTRIC
COMPANY-OWNED DISTRIBUTED GENERATION FACILITY**

Pursuant to provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321–4270d, implementing Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations, 40 CFR §§ 1500–1508, and 32 CFR Part 989, Environmental Impact Analysis Process, the United States Air Force (Air Force) assessed the potential environmental consequences associated with a land leasing project to site, construct, and operate a Tampa Electric Company-owned distributed generation facility at MacDill AFB, Florida. The Environmental Assessment (EA) is hereby incorporated by reference into this finding.

Proposed Action: MacDill Air Force Base (AFB), Florida, and Headquarters Air Mobility Command propose to enter into an energy assurance lease (EAL) with Tampa Electric Company (TEC) to develop 4.5 acres of underutilized, non-excess real property on the installation for the purpose of siting, constructing, and operating a distributed generation facility and battery storage. The distributed power generation facility would include four natural gas reciprocating internal combustion engines capable of producing 75 megawatts (MW) and a battery energy storage system capable of 20 MW output at MacDill AFB, Florida. The TEC distributed generation facility would primarily augment the existing power grid for South Tampa but would switch to serve as a backup power source for MacDill AFB during emergency situations. The Proposed Action would also include the construction of approximately one mile of offsite natural gas lateral pipeline from an existing gas yard to supply the generators, as well as, an underground electrical transmission connection to connect the distributed generation facility with the existing Interbay substation.

Alternatives: The Air Force identified five alternative site locations for the distributed generation facility and battery storage on the base property. The Air Force evaluated the potential environmental consequences of these alternative locations in the Draft EA; however, of those considered, three alternative locations did not meet the identified screening criteria and were eliminated from further analysis. The Air Force also initially identified four alternative lateral pipeline routes for the natural gas supply for the facility. Under the no-action alternative, the proposed enhanced use lease of the underutilized non-excess properties would not be implemented, and the parcel would not be developed. USAF would fail to maximize the value of its real property assets, and the demand for energy resilience would not be addressed.

Environmental Consequences: The analysis of environmental effects focused on the following environmental resources: air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, noise, transportation, wastes, hazardous materials and stored fuel, water resources, floodplains, safety and occupational health, socioeconomics, geology and soils, and environmental justice. A cumulative effects assessment was also conducted. Details of the environmental consequences can be found in the attached EA. The analysis in the EA for each of the environmental resource areas listed above identified negligible to moderate adverse impacts under the Proposed Action. Potential environmental effects are not expected to be significant.

Florida Coastal Zone Management Act: In accordance with the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) and the Florida CZMA, this Federal action must be consistent “to the maximum extent practicable” with the Florida Coastal Management Program (FCMP). Appendix X to the EA contains the Air Force’s Consistency Statement and finds that the conceptual proposed action and alternative actions presented in the EA are consistent with the FCMP. In accordance with Florida statutes, the Air Force submitted a copy of the attached EA to the State of Florida to perform a coastal zone consistency evaluation. The State of Florida determined that the proposed action is consistent with the FCMP.

Public Review: An Early Public Notice was published in the Tampa Bay Times on 28 October 2020 announcing commencement of the EA detailing that the action would take place in a floodplain/wetland and seeking advanced public comment. No comments were received. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)/Finding of No Practicable Alternative (FONPA) summarizes the alternatives considered and explains why the project was designed and sited as proposed. The Tampa Bay Times published a Notice of Availability for the Draft EA on February XX, 2021, and the Air Force placed a copy of the Draft EA and Draft FONSI/FONPA in the John F. Germany Public Library for review and public comment from January XX to February XX, 2021, and on the MacDill AFB public website, <http://www.macdill.af.mil>.

Finding of No Practicable Alternative: Pursuant to Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, and considering all supporting information, the Air Force finds that there is no practicable alternative to the Proposed Action being located in floodplains, as discussed in the attached EA. Two features associated with implementation of the Proposed Action, the natural gas supply pipeline and the electric transmission connection, fall within the 100-year coastal floodplain. Similarly, the existing off-base natural gas yard is in the 100-year floodplain. Based on the extent of the 100-year floodplain and the length and required route for the gas pipeline and electric transmission line, there is no practicable alternative to construction within the floodplain. The attached EA identifies all practicable measures to minimize impacts to floodplains.

Finding of No Significant Impact: Based on the information and analysis presented in the EA and based on review of the public and agency comments submitted during the 30-day public comment period, I conclude that the Proposed Action would not have a significant impact on the natural or human environment either by itself or considering cumulative impacts. The requirements of the NEPA, the President’s CEQ, and 32 CFR Part 989 have been fulfilled, and an Environmental Impact Statement is not required and will not be prepared.

RANDY L. BOSWELL
Colonel, USAF

DATE

Attachment: *Environmental Assessment* for MacDill Air Force Base Land Leasing Project to Site, Construct, and Operate a Tampa Electric Company-Owned Distributed Generation Facility