

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR
INTEGRATED FIXED TOWERS IN THE
U.S. BORDER PATROL'S DOUGLAS STATION
AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY
TUCSON SECTOR, ARIZONA
U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

NAME OF PROPOSED ACTION

Integrated Fixed Towers (IFT) in the U.S. Border Patrol's (USBP) Douglas Station Area of Responsibility (AOR), Tucson Sector, Arizona

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) proposes to implement an IFT system in the USBP's Douglas Station AOR. This system provides long-range, persistent surveillance, enabling USBP personnel to detect, track, identify and classify illegal entries through a series of integrated sensors and tower-based surveillance equipment.

The Proposed Action includes the lease of tower sites and the construction, operation and maintenance of 10 IFTs at preferred sites and the retrofit of two existing towers to provide long-term/permanent surveillance in USBP's Douglas Station AOR. The IFT system transfers situational awareness data to the command and control facility at the USBP Douglas Station that integrates and displays data from all IFTs deployed within the USBP's Douglas Station AOR. Each IFT consists of a tower equipped with a suite of sensors and/or communications equipment. Tower retrofits include installing or replacing sensor suites and/or communications equipment on existing towers. The Proposed Action also includes the construction of 10 access roads, totaling 0.22 mile and improvement of eight approach roads, totaling 4.9 miles, as well as the future maintenance of these roads.

Alternative 1: Alternative 1 consists of the construction, operation and maintenance of three towers at preferred sites and nine towers at alternate sites, as well as the retrofit of two existing towers. The new and existing towers are proposed with the same suite of sensor and communications equipment as described in the Proposed Action. Alternative 1 also includes the construction of 11 access roads, totaling 0.42 mile, improvement of eight approach roads, totaling 4.3 miles, as well as the future maintenance of these roads.

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed IFTs would not be constructed and current border surveillance practices and procedures would continue. USBP's ability to detect and interdict CBVs would not be enhanced; thus, operational effectiveness would not be improved in the project area. The No Action Alternative does not meet the purpose and need for this project.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Consultation and coordination with Federal, state and local agencies and Federally recognized tribes began with site selection activities in April 2011, and coordination letters were delivered October 13, 2011. The draft EA was available for public review for 30 days after the Notice of Availability was published in the *Douglas Dispatch* and the *Arizona Daily Star* on July 11, 2012. The draft EA was available electronically at http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/border_security/otia/sbi_news/sbi_enviro_docs/nepa and at the Douglas Public Library, 560 Tenth Street, Douglas, Arizona and Joel D. Valdez Main Library, 101 N. Stone Avenue, Tucson, Arizona from July 11, 2012 to August 10, 2012. One comment letter was received during the 30-day public comment period. The White Mountain Apache Tribe determined that the Douglas Station IFT project “will not have an adverse effect” on the Tribe’s historic properties or traditional cultural resources. However, the Tribe recommended that all ground-disturbing activities be monitored if there are reasons to believe that there are human remains and/or funerary objects present. This measure is included as a best management practice (BMP) and is listed in Section 5.5 of the final EA.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES:

BMPs to reduce or minimize potential impacts on a particular resource are described in Section 5.0 of the final EA and are incorporated by reference to this Finding of No Significant Impact.

Physical Environment: The Proposed Action would have a permanent, direct impact on approximately 7.5 acres of land and approximately 31.4 acres would be temporarily disturbed. Standard erosion control and soil stabilization BMPs will be implemented during and following construction.

The Proposed Action would have a negligible impact on air quality and noise levels. Temporary and minor increases in air emissions, fugitive dust and noise levels are anticipated during the construction of the towers and road construction, improvements and maintenance. However, air emissions associated with the construction of the towers and associated roads and operation of the towers do not exceed Federal and state criteria. Surface water quality could be temporarily impacted during construction as a result of increased erosion and sedimentation; however, these impacts would be minor. The Proposed Action would have a negligible impact on the hydrology and hydraulics of the region, floodplains, and waters of the U.S. The withdrawal of water for construction purposes could have a temporary, minor impact on groundwater resources.

Natural Environment: Construction activities for the proposed IFTs and roads would not adversely impact wildlife nor would the loss of 7.5 acres of habitat adversely affect the population viability of any plant species in the region. Temporary, minor increases in noise levels would be expected during the construction of towers and roads, as well as road improvements and road maintenance. Permanent noise level increases associated with tower operations would be negligible. There is a possibility that the proposed IFTs could pose hazards to migratory birds and cause bird mortality; however, since the towers would not use guy wires, the potential for adverse impacts is greatly reduced.

CBP has determined that the Proposed Action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, jaguar (*Panthera onca*), ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*), lesser long-nosed bat (*Leptonycteris yerbabuena*), Chiricahua leopard frog (*Lithobates chiricahuensis*), Huachuca water umbel (*Lilaeopsis schaffneriana* spp. *recurva*), beautiful shiner (*Cyprinella formosa*), Yaqui catfish (*Ictalurus pricei*), Yaqui chub (*Gila purpurea*) or Yaqui topminnow (*Poeciliopsis occidentalis sonoriensis*). Similarly, CBP has determined that the Proposed Action would not adversely affect designated Critical Habitat for the beautiful shiner, Yaqui catfish and Yaqui chub and would not likely adversely modify proposed Critical Habitat for the jaguar. Endangered Species Act, Section 7 informal consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was completed for this project. Concurrence on all determinations was received from USFWS on November 7, 2012.

Biological monitors will be present during all construction activities with the potential to disturb Federally listed species or damage their habitats. At least one biological monitor will be present at each area of activity where there is potential for Federally listed species to be affected. To ensure that downstream, sensitive habitats are not affected, post-construction monitoring will be conducted annually for a period of 3 years at proposed tower sites TCA-DGL-0374 and TCA-DGL-0428. A small swale, which provides potential Chiricahua leopard frog habitat, located approximately 180 feet southeast of TCA-DGL-0374 will be avoided during tower construction. Biological monitors will be present during tower construction and during improvements to the approach road to TCA-DGL-0374.

Cultural Resources: There would be no effects on any National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligible architectural or aboveground resources, NRHP-eligible archaeological resources, Traditional Cultural Properties, or sacred sites, as none are located within the area of potential effect of the project.

An archaeological site recommended as NRHP-eligible is located adjacent to the approach road to a tower site. Vehicle access to this tower would be restricted to the current road footprint in the vicinity of the known archaeological site to avoid impacts on this resource. The site would be protected during construction. If historic properties are discovered or unanticipated adverse effects on historic properties located within an individual activity or project's area of potential effect occur after the construction has commenced, CBP will implement the following procedures in accordance with 36 Code of Federal Regulations 800.13. CBP will immediately cease all operations for the portion of the activity with the potential to adversely affect a historic property and secure the impacted area. CBP Office of Technology Innovation and Acquisition shall notify CBP Environmental and Energy Division of the discovery within 24 hours. CBP Environmental and Energy Division shall notify the appropriate State Historic Preservation Office/Tribal Historic Preservation Office, Indian Tribe(s), and any other consulting parties in writing of the discovery within two business days.

Human Environment: The Proposed Action would have a long-term, negligible impact on utilities and the radio frequency environment.

During construction, the Proposed Action would have a temporary minor impact on roadways and traffic within the project area. Impacts associated with tower maintenance would be long-

term and negligible. Construction expenditures would have a short-term beneficial effect on the local economy. No direct impacts on minority or low-income populations or children would occur.

Depending on the location of an observer, most towers would be visible from 3 to 5 miles away. Some towers could be visible up to 15 miles depending on the location and elevation of an observer; therefore, some towers would have a long-term, moderate impact on the aesthetic qualities of the region. There would be no exposure of the environment or public to any hazardous materials.

FINDING: On the basis of the findings of the EA, which is incorporated by reference, and has been conducted in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, the Council on Environmental Quality regulations, and Department of Homeland Security Management Directive, 023-01 and after careful review of the potential environmental impacts of implementing the proposal, we find there would be no significant impact on the quality of the human or natural environment, either individually or cumulatively; therefore, there is no requirement to develop an Environmental Impact Statement. Further, we commit to implement BMPs and environmental design measures identified in the EA and supporting documents.



Ms. Sonia N. Padilla
Executive Director Program Management Office
Office of Technology Innovation and Acquisition
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

7 December 2012

Date



Mr. David Hoffman
Chief, Strategic Planning, Policy, and Analysis Division
Headquarters, U.S. Border Patrol
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

12-19-12

Date



Mr. Karl H. Calvo
Executive Director
Facilities Management and Engineering
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

1/2/2013

Date