



**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 Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi

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 Columbus Air Force Base (AFB) with T-7A Red Hawk aircraft. Recapitalization would entail introduction of T-7A aircraft and flight operations at Columbus AFB and associated special use airspace to replace all T-38C aircraft assigned to the installation; introduction of nighttime (between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.) T-7A flight operations; changes to the number of personnel and dependents in the Columbus 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 Columbus AFB with 61 or 77 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://columbus.T-7ANEPADocuments.com>. A hardcopy of the Draft EIS may be requested using the project website, calling (210) 395-0979, or by sending your request to the email or postal mail addresses below. A hardcopy is available for viewing at the following library:

- **Columbus-Lowndes Public Library:** 314 7th Street North, Columbus, Mississippi 39701-4680

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 virtual and in-person public hearings to provide the public with the opportunity to learn more about the proposal and provide input. The virtual public hearing will be held on October 30, 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://columbus.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 2485 513 9142 and passcode 833 763 78 to attend. The in-person public hearing will be held on October 25, 2023, at the Lion Hills Golf Center, 2331 Military Road in Columbus, Mississippi, 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 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 (<https://columbus.T-7ANEPADocuments.com>). 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 (210) 395-0979 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://columbus.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: Columbus 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 November 20, 2023.