



# NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

## The Department of the Air Force Publishes The Final Environmental Impact Statement 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 has prepared a Final 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 Final EIS evaluates the potential environmental consequences resulting from three action alternatives and the No Action Alternative.

DAF has identified Alternative 3 (i.e., addressing recapitalization at Columbus AFB with up to 77 T-7A aircraft and performing T-7A operations at a level that is approximately 25 percent greater than Alternative 1) as its preferred alternative in the Final EIS. Alternative 3 is preferred because it provides sufficient operational capacity for foreseeable pilot production needs and provides operational flexibility for future capacity needs. DAF identified Alternative 1 (i.e., addressing recapitalization at Columbus AFB with up to 61 T-7A aircraft and performing sufficient operations for sustaining pilot training while simultaneously phasing out the T-38C aircraft) as its preferred alternative in the Draft EIS, but DAF switched its preferred alternative to Alternative 3 because of anticipated changes in the pilot training curriculums and syllabuses. If Alternative 3 is selected for implementation, the Secretary of the Air Force would issue another strategic basing decision memorandum for record to authorize the additional T-7A aircraft.

### Where to Obtain the Final EIS

The Final EIS is available for download at <https://columbus.t-7anepadocuments.com/>. Hardcopies may be requested by using the project website or contacting Ms. Chinling Chen at the email address or mailing address below. A hardcopy is available for reading at the Columbus-Lowndes Public Library, 314 7th Street North, Columbus, Mississippi 39701-4680.

### 30-Day Waiting Period and Record of Decision

The Notice of Availability for the Final EIS will be published in the *Federal Register* on May 3, 2024. The 30-day post-filing waiting period will end on June 3, 2024. After the close of the waiting period, DAF will sign a Record of Decision to select an alternative for implementation and explain the reasons for that selection.

Additional information on the Final EIS is available at <https://columbus.t-7anepadocuments.com/> or by contacting Ms. Chen. Email inquiries can be sent to [chinling.chen@us.af.mil](mailto:chinling.chen@us.af.mil). Postal mail inquiries can be addressed to:

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