



# COMMANDER, NAVY REGION NORTHWEST

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **NAVY RELEASES SUPPLEMENT TO THE GULF OF ALASKA NAVY TRAINING ACTIVITIES DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL EIS/OEIS FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT**

**SILVERDALE, Wash** — The U.S. Navy has prepared a Supplement to the December 2020 Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Navy Training Activities Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS/OEIS).

The Supplement is now available for public review and comment through May 2, 2022.

Since the release of the GOA Draft SEIS/OEIS in December 2020 and completion of Exercise Northern Edge 2021, the Navy recognized that the size and shape of the existing training area in the Gulf of Alaska, known as the Temporary Maritime Activities Area (TMAA), no longer provides sufficient space for the realistic maneuvering of vessels and aircraft during training exercises.

The Supplement proposes to include more space available for maneuvering vessels and aircraft in the GOA and the addition of a new mitigation area within the continental shelf and slope area of the TMAA.

The Supplement updates the analysis in the 2020 Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS and will be used to develop a Final EIS/OEIS.

In the 2020 Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS, the Navy is proposing to continue periodic military training activities within the GOA. The Navy is preparing the Supplemental EIS/OEIS to support the renewal of the federal regulatory permits and authorizations required for these activities under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act, which expire in April 2022.

### **Key Updates Made in the 2022 Supplement to the 2020 Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS:**

In the Supplement, the Navy analyzed the potential impacts associated with activities in the expanded Study Area. Although the Study Area has expanded, the conclusions regarding potential impacts have not significantly changed from the 2020 Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS.

Proposed changes to the Study Area include the addition of airspace and sea space to the west and south of the TMAA. This additional area is referred to as the Western Maneuver Area (WMA) and it is approximately 185,806 square nautical miles. The TMAA, which is approximately 42,146 square nautical miles, would remain unchanged and all activities involving active sonar and explosives would still occur in this area only.

The Navy is not proposing new or increased number of training activities in the WMA, only an expansion of the area the Navy may use for vessel and aircraft maneuvering purposes during exercises. The number of vessels, aircraft, underway steaming hours, events, and flight times remain

the same. The use of sonar or explosives would not occur in the WMA.

The additional space gained in the proposed WMA would enable Navy personnel and units to practice more realistic, complex training scenarios in a safer, more efficient manner that would better prepare them to respond to real-world incidents.

Additionally, in direct response to agency, tribal, and public comments, the Navy is also proposing to implement a new mitigation area within the continental shelf and slope area of the TMAA. This new mitigation area would be approximately 14,600 square nautical miles.

The Navy would expand its mitigation measures for explosives detonated at or near the surface and prohibit the use of explosives during training, up to 10,000 feet altitude, in areas of less than 4,000 meter depth to protect marine species and biologically important habitat. The Navy anticipates the implementation of the proposed mitigation area would reduce impacts on marine mammals, fish species including salmon, and marine birds.

**Availability of the Supplement and public comment period:**

The Supplement is now available for public review and comment through May 2, 2022. Visit the project website at **www.GOAEIS.com** to download the Supplement, view project information, and submit substantive comments online. Comments may also be submitted by mail to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Northwest  
Attention: GOA Supplemental EIS/OEIS Project Manager  
1101 Tautog Circle, Suite 203  
Silverdale, WA 98315-1101

Comments must be postmarked or received online **by 11:59 p.m. PDT May 2, 2022**, for consideration in the Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS.

All comments received during the public review and comment period will be considered and acknowledged or responded to in the Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS. Previously submitted comments for the 2020 Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS do not need to be resubmitted.

No decision will be made to implement any alternative in the GOA Study Area until the National Environmental Policy Act process is complete and a Record of Decision is signed by the Navy.

Media seeking further information should contact Ms. Julianne Stanford with the Navy Region Northwest Public Affairs Office at [julianne.stanford@navy.mil](mailto:julianne.stanford@navy.mil) or 360-867-8525.

**Please help inform your community by sharing the information in this news release.**

**Proposed Changes to the Study Area and New Continental Shelf and Slope Mitigation Area for the Supplement to the 2020 Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS**

