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August 15, 2012

Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southeast  
NAS Key West Air Operations EIS Project Manager  
P.O. Box 30, Building 903  
NAS Jacksonville, FL 32212

**Subject: Comments by Monroe County, Florida on the NAS Key West Airfield Operations Draft EIS**

Dear EIS Project Manager:

This letter represents Monroe County's response to the U.S. Navy's NAS Key West Airfield Operations Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) dated June 2012. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on activities proposed by the Navy that could affect our citizens, economy and environment.

Our elected officials and citizens support our military and recognize the importance of the training missions the military must undertake. In fact, we have just recently adopted Military Compatibility goals, objections and policies including a Military Installation Area of Impact policy that provides for a fair and effective approach on how the Naval Air Station Key West (NASKW) and Monroe County will coordinate on growth and operational issues. This policy reflects years of effort and negotiation between NASKW, the County, and the State of Florida. This Comprehensive Plan amendment also included a policy discouraging an increase in operations that would negatively impact the surrounding community. Policy 108.1.6 of our 2010 Comprehensive Plan reads:

"The Navy is undertaking an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate alternatives for future airfield operations at Naval Air Station Key West. Monroe County shall work closely with the Navy throughout the process of the EIS and shall discourage the Navy from increasing its operations at NASKW that negatively impact the surrounding community."

It is within that context of the above amendment that we strive to work with the Navy to ensure important national defense objectives are met and that the interests and well being of our residents, visitors and natural environment are protected. It is the County's belief that both of these important objectives can be met with proper analysis, planning and a willingness by the Navy to acknowledge fully the impacts of its operations.

We have reviewed the DEIS and are very concerned about the potential impacts of Alternatives 1, 2, or 3 on our citizens. The DEIS does not provide detail for us to sufficiently assess the impacts and we are concerned that the baseline condition (No Action Alternative) does not accurately reflect current conditions. Without an accurate baseline condition, the analysis of the proposed alternative is flawed.

In particular, we believe that there are substantial flaws in the noise analyses. As such Monroe County does not agree with the DEIS conclusion that increases in noise are not significant. We believe the noise increases are significant, and that, if an action alternative is selected, the Navy should implement mitigation to offset the projected impacts.

In light of our concerns, Monroe County cannot support any of the action alternatives at this time. Therefore, we respectfully request that the Navy withdraw the DEIS and address fully the deficiencies and questions identified below. Once these deficiencies and questions are addressed the Navy should republish the DEIS for public review and comment.

#### **Specific Questions and Comments:**

- 1. Revise the Baseline (No Action Alternative) to Exclude the FA-18E/F Super Hornet and Evaluate the Super Hornet as a Next Generation Aircraft in the Alternatives.** Section 1.3.1 (page 1-4) states that the Environmental Assessment (EA) for Fleet Support and Infrastructure Improvements at NASKW (DoN 2003a) addressed the Navy's transition from the F-14 Tomcat aircraft to the FA-18E/F Super Hornet. Despite this claim, there has been no adequate NEPA evaluation done of the impacts associated with the introduction of F/A-18E/F Super Hornet to NASKW. The Navy has claimed that the 2003 EA for Fleet Support and Infrastructure Improvements and the April 14, 2003 Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) satisfies their obligations to evaluate the introduction of the Super Hornet to NASKW, despite the fact that there is no mention of the Super Hornet in any of the documents leading up to the Final EA, and no mention of the aircraft in the Proposed Actions, nor the Alternatives, nor in the FONSI. Among the 400+ pages of NEPA documentation surrounding that EA, the Super Hornet is mentioned in only three pages. The official statement from the Navy regarding this matter was made by Honorable B.J. Penn, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Installations and Environment, who stated in a December, 2007 letter ". . . *the Navy complied with NEPA for transient aircraft operations at NAS Key West by completing the [2003] Environmental Assessment (EA) for Fleet Support and Infrastructure Improvements. That EA, and its incorporated references, analyzed impacts to the human environment, including noise and flight paths resulting from all transient aircraft operations, including the F/A-18E/F. As a result of that analysis, the Navy reached a Finding of No Significant Impact which addressed off-base noise exposure from aircraft operating at NAS Key West.*" There is one "reference" in the EA that discusses the Super Hornet. The creation date of that document was *after* the date of the FONSI.

In the Navy's 2003 Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Introduction of the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet Aircraft to the East Coast of the United States, the impacts resulting from F/A-18E/F Super Hornet operations at NASKW were not discussed. The Navy has failed to fulfill its NEPA obligations by virtue of not having completed a thorough analysis of the impacts of the Super Hornet. This is very important, since according to the DEIS (Draft Aircraft Noise Study for NAS Key West - WR-12-13; June, 2012, page 61, Table 7-1), the Super Hornet is approximately twice as loud as the F-35 in the Non-Break Arrival, Touch and Go, FCLP and GCA Box patterns. Since it has not been adequately evaluated in an EA or EIS, the impacts of the Super Hornet should be removed from the existing baseline / No Action Alternative, and added as an introduced next generation aircraft in Alternatives 1, 2, and 3. The noise analysis should be revised to show all effects of introducing the Super Hornet, including but not limited to: increases in acreages in noise zones (Table 4.1-1), increases in population and housing units in noise zones (Table 4.1-2), increases in average noise levels at representative receptors (Table 4.1-3), increases in indoor speech interference (Table 4.1-5), and increases in sleep disturbance (Table 4.1-6).

2. **Provide a Statement that Annual Operations will not be Exceeded, or Provide Noise Analyses for Maximum, Not Average, Years.** As depicted on page 2-8 of the DEIS, the noise study used a ten year period (2000-2009) to establish average annual airfield operations of 47,500. Some years within that 10-year period were substantially above the average; for example, year 2003 had 72,777 operations which is approximately 53% above the average. The baseline of 47,500 average annual airfield operations is used on Table 2.3-1 and throughout the DEIS as the baseline for the No Action Alternative. Table 2.3-1 identifies Alternative 1 as 47,500, Alternative 2 as 52,000 (+10%), and Alternative 3 as 57,000 (+20%) annual airfield operations, and these numbers are used as the basis of the noise analyses. At the July 31, 2012 Joint Workshop between the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners, City of Key West, and the Navy, the Navy stated that the Alternative 2 number of 52,000 operations is a maximum number (ceiling) that is not likely to be reached, and that the Alternative 3 number of 57,000 operations is a maximum number (ceiling) that is not likely to be reached. This was verified by Navy staff at the August 1, 2012 Public Meeting in Key West.

If the annual operations of 47,500, 52,000, or 57,000 will not be exceeded as indicated above, provide a statement in the EIS that these are maximum numbers that will not be exceeded without a re-evaluation of the EIS. If higher-than-average years are anticipated, the EIS should address potential impacts and mitigation with the higher-than-average years; modeling should be done for the highest operational year of the ten-year period (2003), and for the highest operational year projected under Alternatives 2 and 3.

3. **Justify the Baseline of 500 Annual Field Carrier Landing Practices (FCLPs).** Table ES-1 footnote states that the existing condition / No Action Alternative assumes up to 500 annual tactical aircraft FCLP operations, but there is no justification in the DEIS for this number. At the August 2, 2012 Public Meeting, Navy staff indicated that there has been a wide range of annual FCLPs in recent years. The DEIS should provide a chart of the number of the past FCLP operations (similar to Table 2.3-2 on page 2-8) and include an explanation of the basis for using 500 as the baseline. If 500 is not a reasonable baseline, provide a noise analysis for each alternative using an appropriate baseline. The baseline should not include the Super Hornet (per comment #1).
4. **Provide Documentation of Past Night Operations.** Section 4.1.2 (page 4-2) states that for the baseline existing condition and Alternative 1, acoustic night operations (10 pm to 7 am) were conservatively estimated to be at 2.6% of annual operations. The DEIS should provide actual numbers of night operations for the years 2000 to present (similar to Table 2.3-2) for FCLP and non-FCLP operations.
5. **Provide Validation of the Noise Modeling.** The DEIS provides DNL noise levels as calculated from the model, but does not provide actual field-measured DNL values of ambient conditions. It is not clear in the DEIS whether the model is accurate or how it was verified. Explain the expected level of accuracy of NOISEMAP. The DEIS should explain the validation process of the noise study, and identify whether the modeling results were independently verified. Include an assessment of calculated noise levels against actual field-measured DNL values.
6. **Provide a Noise Analysis for Rotary Wing Aircraft.** Table ES-2 indicates rotary wing aircraft could increase from 1831 operations/yr to 2030 operations/yr under Alternative 3. In the Aircraft Noise Study for NASKW (Wyle, 2012), page 17 states rotary wing aircraft were not modeled. The DEIS should provide a noise assessment that includes rotary wing aircraft under each alternative.
7. **Verify Best Available SEL Noise Data for the F-35.** Table 4.1-4 (page 4-12) provides SEL noise values for the F-35C. Footnote 4 states it is based on F-35A noise data measured at Edwards Air Force Base on October 22, 2008 and states that this is best available data on SEL for the F-35. Given that these data are nearly four years old and there has been much controversy since then on the actual noise levels of the F-35, provide documentation that this remains the best available data, or provide and analyze new data. Also, the DEIS should provide documentation that these noise levels are appropriate for all F-35 variants (A, B, and C).
8. **Provide SEL Values for All Aircraft.** Table 4.1-4 (page 4-12) provides SEL values for some legacy and some next generation aircraft, but not all of them. Add SEL values for all aircraft shown on Table ES-2 (page ES-6) and for the range of flight conditions in Table 7-1 (page 61) of Draft WR 12-13: NAS Key West Noise Study.
9. **Add SEL at Receptor Locations.** Add tables of SEL values for each representative receptor for each type of legacy and next-generation aircraft.

10. **Justify Speech Interference and Sleep Disturbance Assumptions.** Tables 4.1-5 (page 4-12) and 4.1-6 (page 4-14) identify speech interference and sleep disturbance under each alternative. Are these numbers based on an assumption that pilots are always on the standard flightpaths, or is there an assumption that pilots deviate sometimes (e.g., for other air traffic, weather, mishaps, pilot error, etc) which may take them closer to residential areas and which may increase speech interference and sleep disturbance? If the latter, the DEIS should provide and justify the assumptions. If the former, the DEIS should provide a noise analysis that accounts for the occasional deviations in standard flightpaths. Since the majority of flight operations are flown by pilots in training whose aircraft are not based at NASKW, the assumption of strict course rule compliance does not seem justified. Provide for a reasonable amount of course deviations in the noise analysis.
11. **Evaluate and Implement New Noise Reduction Optimization Software.** New tools are continually being developed to improve the military's capabilities to assess and to potentially reduce operational noise. One example is the Advanced Acoustic Model (AAM), which has the potential to more accurately depict non-linear propagation of noise from aircraft such as the F-35. Another example is the Trajectory Optimization and Noise Evaluator (TONE) software package (currently being developed by AVID, LLC), which has the potential to optimize operational flight procedures to reduce community noise exposure. NASKW should evaluate such optimization tools for the DEIS and provide an annual status to the County that identifies the optimization tools evaluated, identifies positive steps taken to implement new optimization tools, and quantifies any resulting noise reduction.
12. **Describe the Timing of Increases at NASKW:** NASKW should describe when the increase in takeoffs and landings would occur, including the time of day that the increased flights would occur (morning, day, evening, night), the days of the week that the increased flights would occur (weekdays, weekends), and the seasons that the increased flights would occur. Section 2.4.4 (page 2-18) states that operational requirements may necessitate operations outside of normal hours of operation. The DEIS should clarify under what circumstances and during which hours would operations be necessary between 10 pm and 7 am.
13. **Provide Mitigation for Affected Residents.** The County understands and appreciates the important mission of NASKW. It is also important that County residents are treated fairly as it relates to impacts from NASKW operations, in particular, when NASKW operational changes negatively affect their lives and property values. According to Table 4.1-2 (page 4-7) under Alternatives 1, 2, and 3, the number of off-station people exposed to noise levels 65 DNL and greater would increase by 13, 366, and 533 people respectively, and the number of housing units within the 65 DNL and greater noise zone would increase by 14, 184, and 271 housing units, respectively. According to Tables 4.1-5 (page 4-12) and 4.1-6 (page 4-14), indoor speech interference and sleep disturbance will also increase under Alternatives 2 and 3.



Even without the Super Hornet treated as a new aircraft (see comment #1), the Navy's proposed action will result in a discernible and significant increase in noise and associated impacts to Monroe citizens. The Navy should treat these affected residents fairly by mitigating for the projected impacts. In this regard, the Navy should provide mitigation options for affected residents in the DEIS. This should include, but is not limited to, sound insulation, proposed changes to the Course Rules, and purchasing property from willing sellers. Further, the DEIS should include a discussion of the anticipated costs of each option. Mitigation should be evaluated in the DEIS for all potential impacts, including impacts related to the introduction of the Super Hornet (see comment #1).

14. **Clarify the Navy's Authority to Implement Mitigation.** The DEIS states on page 7-1 that "no mitigation measures are proposed in the DEIS". At the July 31, 2012 Joint Workshop between the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners, City of Key West, and the Navy, Navy staff stated the Navy does not have the authority to insulate homes or the authority to purchase property. The DEIS should provide references to all Navy regulations, policy, and guidance related to Navy mitigation, including but not limited to noise mitigation. Also, the DEIS should summarize the Navy's authorities and regulatory obligations for mitigation, including but not limited to noise mitigation. These references should be included in the DEIS.
15. **Identify Past Mitigation at Other Installations.** Has the Navy ever, at any installation, undertaken mitigation to compensate for impacts resulting from Navy operations, including but not limited to noise impacts? If so, the DEIS should provide details. Have other branches of the military (e.g., Air Force) ever provided such mitigation? Include Course Rule changes such as those used at NALF Fentress and alternative runway use.
16. **Implementation of Guidelines for Sound Insulation.** In April 2005, the Navy issued "Guidelines for Sound Insulation of Residences Exposed to Aircraft Operations". Has this guidance been adopted by the Navy? Has the Navy implemented this guidance at any installation?
17. **Explain Relevance of Changes to Environmental Readiness Program Manual.** The DEIS should discuss the difference between the October 2007 guidance in OPNAVINST 5090.1C (Environmental Readiness Program Manual) and the revised July 2011 guidance, and how these changes apply to this EIS. In particular, Chapter 5 was replaced completely. The discussion of mitigation seems to have been substantially changed in 2011.

18. **Correct the Errors in the Report.** There are numerous errors in the report; the numbers reported on one page do not match those on another page. For example, on page ES-9 (Section ES.4.1) it states under Alternative 1 the estimated number of off-Station people exposed to noise levels 65 DNL and greater would increase by 13 people. This matches Table 4.1-2, but Section 4.1.2.1 (page 4-3) states that an estimated 14 people would be within the 65 DNL and greater noise zone. Not only should 14 be 13, but the sentence needs to be clarified that these are *additional* people. In the same sentence in Section 4.1.2.1, the number of housing units is also wrong according to Table 4.1-2: it should be 14, not 15, *additional* housing units. Similarly, in Section 4.1.2.1 second paragraph, the acreages do not precisely match Table 4.1-1. Section 4.1.3.1 has at least three similar errors, and Section 4.1.4.1 has at least four similar errors. Table 2.8-3 has similar problems. Page 1-3 states that NASKW supports approximately 50,000 operations per year, whereas the rest of the document uses 47,500. These are just some examples; there are many others throughout the DEIS. Some of these discrepancies are minor and may be due to rounding, but the DEIS is very hard to read with so many discrepancies. Please review the entire DEIS and fix the discrepancies.
19. **Provide a Summary of Noise Complaints.** For this DEIS, an important metric is the amount of annoyance that the public has with NASKW noise. Given that the Navy has a noise hotline and follows up on noise complaints (Section 2.4.4), there are data to assess this metric. The DEIS should provide noise complaints for the period 2000 to present, including the Navy's assessment of, and response to, each complaint. This should be included in an appendix to the DEIS.
20. **Compare NASKW Operations to AFTT Events.** The Navy is currently working on the Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing EIS/OEIS (Draft dated May 2012) (page 5-7). The AFTT Draft EIS/OEIS cites baseline and proposed numbers of aircraft events in the Key West Range Complex. The AFTT EIS/OEIS describes the numbers in terms of aircraft "events" (which may include multiple takeoffs and landings) whereas the NASKW Airfield Operations DEIS describes the numbers in terms of "operations" (single takeoffs or landings). Because the unit of measurement is different between the two documents, it is difficult to compare the documents. The County prefers the numbers in terms of "operations". NASKW should provide the AFTT Key West Range Complex numbers for all AFTT alternatives in terms of operations.
21. **Explain how this DEIS Relates to the AFTT EIS/OEIS.** The Navy is currently working on the Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing EIS/OEIS (Draft dated May 2012) (page 5-7). At the July 31, 2012 Joint Workshop, Navy staff indicated that the NASKW Airfield Operations EIS will take precedent over the AFTT EIS/OEIS. The DEIS should explain how the two documents relate to each other. For each alternative in each document, explain how, if it were selected, it would affect the selected alternative in the other document. For example, if the NASKW Airfield Operations EIS selects Alternative 2 but the AFTT EIS/OEIS selects No Action, what would be the result at NASKW? Similarly, if NASKW Airfield Operations EIS selects Alternative 1 but the AFTT EIS/OEIS selects Alternative 2, what would be the result at NASKW? This should be added to Cumulative Impacts (Chapter 5) in the DEIS.
22. **Confirm no STOVL.** Section 2.5.1.3 (page 2-21) states that short takeoff / vertical landing (STOVL) training operations would not occur at NASKW. Confirm this statement in the DEIS.

- 23. Evaluate the Alternative to Shift Training to Another Location.** Section 2.6.2 (page 2-25) identifies an alternative that was considered but eliminated from further analysis: shift Navy aviation detachment training to an alternate location. Under this alternative, detachment training currently based out of NASKW would instead be conducted at another airfield. The first reason cited to eliminate the alternative is "aircraft detaching from an alternate location would have to travel greater distances to and from the Key West Range Complex". This alternative should not have evaluated continued use of the Key West Range Complex, but rather a range complex that is closer to the alternate location. The alternative should transfer both the airfield activity *and* the associated training to another location. The other reasons for eliminating the alternative are unsubstantiated. For example, the text cites such an alternative could potentially require the construction of additional support facilities. Is this actually the case? What would be the cost of these facilities? Where is this analysis in the DEIS? Justify these unsubstantiated reasons for eliminating this alternative in the DEIS. The DEIS should redefine and re-evaluate this alternative.
- 24. Identify Runway Length Criteria.** Section 7.4 (page 7-7) states that Runway 07/25 meets required airfield safety and planning criteria, but the length of 03/21 and 13/31 does not meet the primary runway length criteria for the majority of aircraft at NASKW. For which types of aircraft do these runways not meet the primary runway length criteria? Also identify the length and width criteria for each type of aircraft at NASKW in the DEIS.
- 25. Shift Operations to Runway 13/31 Without Lengthening.** Section 7.4.2 (page 7-8) acknowledges that wind conditions for Runway 13/31 are not unfavorable and that shifting utilization from 07/25 to 13/31 would potentially lessen community noise, but this alternative is rejected due to several challenges with lengthening 13/31. Given that 13/31 is approximately seven times the length of an aircraft carrier, it seems that some operations could be shifted to 13/31 without lengthening the runway. NASKW should provide a thorough analysis of this alternative.
- 26. Evaluate Lengthening Runway 13/31.** Section 7.4.2.1 (page 7-8) cites five reasons why Runway 13/31 cannot be lengthened to 10,000 feet. None of the reasons prevent the runway from being lengthened: (1) impacts to species and habitat can be mitigated for, even providing an overall positive environmental effect, (2) it is possible to consult with FKNMS, (3) the electrical transmission line could be relocated, (4) the on-Station infrastructure could be modified, and (5) the previous ESA Section 7 consultations could be re-examined. This alternative remains viable. Provide a thorough analysis of this alternative in the DEIS.
- 27. Provide Agency Coordination for Runway Extensions.** The DEIS chapter 7 indicates that the Navy has considered extending the length of the secondary runways and shifting some flights from 07/25 to the secondary runways. Has the Navy discussed runway extension options with the environmental agencies including but not limited to USFWS, USACE, FFWCC, and NMFS? If so, provide a summary of each agency's comments in the DEIS.
- 28. Minimize FLCP Operations at Night.** Section 4.1.3 (page 4-15) indicates that an estimated 12% of FLCP operations (under Alternatives 2 and 3) would be conducted during acoustic night (10 pm to 7 am). The Navy should provide an approach that will avoid or minimize FLCPs at night. Also, the DEIS should confirm that the Navy will re-evaluate the EIS if more than 12% of FLCPs occur at night.



- 29. Shift Location of Engine Maintenance Run-up Events:** Table 2.8-2 (page 2-29) indicates the number of annual engine maintenance run-up events would increase. For example, run-up events under Alternative 3 could increase 29.1% for FA-18E/F, 10.9% for F-5N, and 37.2% for F-35C (compared to Alternative 1). Section 2.4.6 (page 2-19) states that in order to reduce community noise exposure, the maintenance run-up location more interior to the Station (H1 near the terminus of Runway 03) is currently used for the majority (approximately 80 percent) of maintenance engine run-ups and Section 2.5.2.6 (page 2-23) states that the maintenance run-up location at the terminus of Runway 03 would continue to be used for approximately 80 percent of all run-ups to reduce community noise impacts. To offset the potential increase in the number of engine maintenance run-up events, please evaluate whether 100% of the run-ups can be done at the H1 location more interior to the Station (near the terminus of Runway 03), and provide the associated avoidance and minimization analysis to justify any run-up events at the H2 location near the terminus of Runway 31. Also, the DEIS should consider the installation of a "hush house" noise suppression facility that could minimize noise impacts and possibly enable 24/7 engine testing.
- 30. Expand Socioeconomics, Environmental Justice, and Protection of Children.** The DEIS purports to comply with Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations," which requires the agency to "identify and avoid disproportionate impacts on minority populations." However, the DEIS merely purports to identify those populations, but does not describe how disproportionate impacts will be avoided. Similarly, the DEIS does not demonstrate compliance with Executive Order 13045, "Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks," which requires the agency to "identify, assess, and address disproportionate environmental health and safety risks" to these populations. Rather, despite acknowledging these potential risks, the DEIS merely notes that they have been subject to limited investigation. This analysis should be expanded in the DEIS.
- 31. Update to Include Military Compatibility Overlay.** Section 5.3.1, Monroe County Comprehensive Plan paragraph, states "The Comprehensive Plan does not address compatible land use adjacent to the NAS Key West airfield". This is an incorrect statement since the County has adopted Military Compatibility Goals, Objectives and Policies as well as a Future Land Use Map (FLUM) Overlay that promotes land use compatibility between NAS Key West and the surrounding land uses. This is acknowledged in Section 5.4.5.3 (paragraph 3 on page 5-34), which states that Monroe County has drafted a Proposed Military Compatibility Amendment and that the program would be generally consistent with the OPNAVISNT 11010.36C (Appendix G). This internal inconsistency needs to be resolved in the DEIS.

Note: Monroe County transmitted these amendments to the State in December 2011. The Military Installation Area of Impact FLUM Overlay and associated text amendments were then adopted on May 22, 2012, by Ordinance Numbers 012-2012 and 013-2012, and the State Land Planning Agency (or the Department of Economic Opportunity) has issued a Notice of Intent finding the comprehensive plan amendment "In Compliance."

- 32. Correct the Names of Key Statutory Planning Guidance.** In Section 3.4.7 (page 3-42), the last sentence of the first paragraph should read: Key statutory guidance for the planning activities in Florida is included in the Environmental Land and Water Management Act of 1972, the Local Government Comprehensive Planning Act of 1975, the Local Government Comprehensive and Land Development Act of 1985, and the Community Planning Act of 2011.
- 33. Clarify the Transmission Line is Within APZ 1.** In Section 3.6.1 (page 3-51), it should be noted that the Keys Energy Services transmission line is located within APZ 1 and is not identified or addressed as a land use or operation conflict. Table G-2, footnote 5 on page G-9 states that no major aboveground transmission lines are allowed in APZ 1.
- 34. Change DCA to DEO.** Page 5-12, paragraph 1, External Regulatory Compliance: In Section 5.3.2, External Regulatory Compliance bullet (page 5-12), Florida DCA should be changed to read Florida DEO (Department of Economic Opportunity).
- 35. Correct the Statements about Safe Harbor Redevelopment:** In Section 5.3.2, Safe Harbor Redevelopment bullet (page 5-14), the statement "On February 12, 2012, the Monroe County Commission agreed to land use regulation changes that would allow the development of Safe Harbor" is incorrect. On February 13, 2012, the Monroe County Commission agreed to continue the review of a proposed Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map amendment submitted by a private applicant for three (3) parcels on Stock Island from Industrial (I) to Mixed Use/Commercial (MC). These proposed changes were; therefore, not forwarded to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity as stated.

- 36. Revise the Conclusion that there is No Significant Cumulative Noise Impacts with KWIA and NASKW.** Section 5.4.2.3 second paragraph (page 5-20) states that the total number of housing units and population within the KWIA 65 dB DNL contour and greater would increase by 16.5% resulting in an approximate increase of 157 additional total housing units and 353 people exposed to noise 65 dB DNL or greater. The next paragraph concludes the additive effect would be minimal and there would not be significant cumulative noise impacts. This conclusion is not substantiated by the data presented and needs to be revised in the DEIS. Monroe County believes this is a significant impact. Similarly, in Section 5.4.5.3 (fourth paragraph on page 5-34), it states: "The proposed Safe Harbor marina is not currently located in the 65 DNL and greater noise contour for NASKW airfield operations, nor would it be under Alternatives 1, 2, or 3; however, when the existing NASKW noise contours are combined with the projected KWIA 2013 noise contours, portions of the Safe Harbor shoreline fall within the 65-70 dB DNL noise contour." This appears to contradict the conclusion of no significant cumulative noise impact. Also, on page 5-35, the second paragraph states: "The cumulative noise exposure from KWIA and NASKW operations (i.e., where the noise exposure is greater than 65 dB DNL) under Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 would occur over water and, therefore, would not impact land use." This is a false statement, since the DEIS presents data that confirms measurable increases in land use impact. Section 7.3.1.1 Unavoidable Adverse Impacts (page 7-2), states that Alternative 1 would result in an increase of 12 additional acres of land, 13 additional people and 14 additional housing units within the 65 dB DNL or greater noise contour; Alternative 2 would result in an increase of 93 additional acres of land, 366 additional people and 184 additional housing units within the 65 dB DNL or greater noise contour; Alternative 3 would result in an increase of 155 additional acres of land, 533 additional people and 271 additional housing units within the 65 dB DNL or greater noise contour. Even without the Super Hornet treated as a new aircraft (see comment #1), the County believes that there are significant impacts that warrant avoidance and mitigation.
- 37. Assess Impact on Hurricane Evacuation Time:** Monroe County citizens are under a State mandate to evacuate the Florida Keys within 24 hours in the event of an approaching hurricane. Our ability to do so requires Monroe County and its municipalities to limit growth and development each year. The State's traffic models include the evacuation of military personnel. Therefore, to the extent Alternatives 1, 2, or 3 of the DEIS would increase personnel in the Keys, the ability to evacuate our citizens and military personnel in a safe and timely manner will be affected. The DEIS does not indicate the anticipated increase in evacuation time due to local military personnel associated with Alternatives 1, 2, or 3. The Navy should assess the impact of the alternatives on this critical public safety issue.
- 38. Identify Designated Critical Habitat.** The DEIS on page ES-15 states "designated critical habitat for federally listed species does not occur within the area of potential biological resource effect; therefore, the implementation of Alternatives 1, 2, or 3 would have no effect on critical habitat." But the DEIS identifies critical habitat for federally listed species on Figure 3.11-2, page 3-75. This figure identifies LKMR habitat and potential sea turtle nesting habitat within the NASKW boundary and within areas that are predicted to experience higher noise levels. It would therefore appear that the statement in the DEIS may not be entirely true. The DEIS also does not identify threatened or endangered species habitat for areas that are predicted to experience higher noise levels under each alternative.

- 39. Re-Evaluate Whether Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH) Increase is Discernable.** Section 4.3.3.3 (page 4-33) and Section 4.3.4.3 (page 4-33) states that it is anticipated there would be an increased risk for BASH potential under Alternatives 2 and 3. Given that flight operations could increase by 10% (Alternative 2) or 20% (Alternative 3), it would not be unreasonable to assume bird strikes would increase by 10% or 20%. But Section 4.11.3.3 (page 4-74) and Section 4.11.4.3 (page 4-75) states no discernible increase in aircraft-bird strikes is expected. Table 6.1-1 (page 6-3) has a similar statement. The County believes a 10% or 20% increase is discernible and these statements should be revised in the DEIS.
- 40. Improve the NASKW BASH Program.** Section 3.3.3 (page 3-27) refers to the NASKW BASH program. The DEIS should explain what adjustments the Navy will make to the NASKW BASH program and/or the Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan (INRMP) to offset the anticipated increase in bird strikes.
- 41. Provide Supporting Documents.** Several of the documents referred to in the DEIS were not readily available during much or all of the public comment period. This included the INRMP (NAVFAC 2007b), NASKW Master Plan (NAVFAC 2011), Air Activity Reports (DoN 2007a et al.), and the Environmental Assessment for Fleet Support and Infrastructure Improvements at NAS Key West (DoN 2003). The Navy should make these and other key support documents available.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the DEIS, and, as noted in our Comprehensive Plan, we are eager to work with the Navy on our shared goal of avoiding detrimental impacts to the unique character of the Florida Keys. Questions or comments may be directed to Mr. Michael L. Davis at (954) 776-1616 (mdavis@keithandschnars.com) or Ms. Mayté Santamaria at (305) 289-2500 (Santamaria-Mayte@MonroeCounty-FL.Gov).

Sincerely,



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David Rice  
Mayor

Cc: Monroe County Board of County Commissioners  
Roman Gastesi, County Administrator  
Christine Hurley, Director, Monroe County Growth Management Division  
Michael L. Davis, Vice President, Keith and Schnars, P.A.