

## **F-35s at TIA Environmental Impact Statement**

Before the U.S. Air Force can bring F-35 aircraft to Tucson, it must prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Air Force has asked the public to help determine which subjects the EIS should address. You can provide your own suggestions in writing by visiting either of two workshop-style meetings:

Monday, March 1 6:00 – 9:00 PM  
Sunnyside High School Foyer/Auditorium  
1725 E. Bilby Road  
Tucson AZ 85706

Friday, March 5 6:00 – 9:00 PM  
Roskrudge Elem. School Auditorium  
501 E. Sixth Street  
Tucson AZ 85705

Prior to March 25, you can also mail your suggestions to:

ATTN: Mr. David Martin, AETC NEPA Program Manager  
HQ AETC/A7C  
266 F Street West, Bldg 901  
Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4319

*Some of the subjects that you might ask the Air Force to consider in its EIS are:*

◆ **Analysis of the noise impacts should be based upon sound measurements of actual flights of F-35s over Tucson.** The flights should be conducted at the power settings, altitudes, directions, and paths which the F-35s will use when they are based at TIA.

The Advanced Acoustics Model, which the Air Force has developed to predict the noise levels of the F-35, can provide only theoretical results. The Air Force acknowledges that the Advanced Acoustics Model is not always accurate. “Acoustical impact is highly dependent on local environmental conditions,” the Air Force states.

◆ **The EIS should consider alternative sites that are close to Tucson and are accessible to the Barry M. Goldwater Range.** The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires every EIS to include “alternatives to the proposed action.”

Alternative sites might include the Libby Airfield in Sierra Vista, The Gila Bend Auxiliary Airfield in Gila Bend, the Pinal Air Park in Marana, and others.

◆ **The EIS should give substantial weight to the effects of noise of the F-35s.** Noise is a grave concern of many residents of Tucson. The concern will be even more widespread when the F-35 is introduced to Tucson, and its noise affects a wider swath of residences than current aircraft do.

◆ **The EIS should include a Noise Exposure Map that shows DNL contours.** The map should include a 65-dB contour. The EIS should also include a contour map of peak sound exposure levels.

“DNL” is the 24-hour day-night average of the sound exposure level, as measured in decibels (dB). The 65-dB contour is especially important, because the Federal Aviation Administration and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development both stipulate that all properties inside the 65-dB contour are “incompatible with residential use.” Substantial restrictions are placed on any property with that designation.

◆ **If TIA-based F-35s will occasionally fly in and out of Davis-Monthan AFB, the EIS should include those flights in its analysis of noise impacts.**

◆ **The EIS should use results-oriented specifications in any recommendations for sound mitigation.** The EIS should specify the maximum allowable decibel level after mitigation has been implemented.

Because TIA and Davis-Monthan are very close together, flight paths and altitudes cannot be easily altered. Mitigation will be difficult.

◆ **The EIS should analyze the effects of F-35 sound exposure levels upon the livability of the affected neighborhoods.** This analysis will consider the consequences of homeowners and tenants migrating from the neighborhoods as they seek quieter surroundings; it will consider the consequences of owner-occupied homes being converted into rental units; it will consider the consequences of lower rents in neighborhoods that have become noisier; it will consider the consequences of properties that will be allowed to physically deteriorate as pride-of-ownership erodes.

In establishing the requirement for an EIS, the National Environmental Policy Act states, “it is the continuing responsibility of the Federal Government to . . . assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings.”

◆ **The EIS should analyze the effects of F-35 sound exposure levels upon the property values of the affected neighborhoods.** This analysis will include changes in the tax base of the affected neighborhoods, as well as changes in property-tax revenues collected from those neighborhoods.

◆ **The EIS should analyze the health effects of increased noise.**

The National Environmental Policy Act states, “each person should enjoy a healthful environment. . . .”

In a publication called “Community Noise”(edited by Birgitta Berglund and Thomas Lindvall; 1995), the World Health Organization compiled the results of more than nine hundred separate studies of the effects of noise upon humans. The studies demonstrated

that increased levels of noise causes—among other things—elevated blood pressure, vasoconstriction, headaches, irritability, instability, argumentativeness, anxiety, nervousness, insomnia, and loss of appetite. The effects were most pronounced among children.

◆ **The EIS should analyze the effects of increased noise upon the learning abilities of students—including students at the University of Arizona.**

“Community Noise” [cited above] found that students affected by aircraft noise have more difficulty learning to read and processing information.

At present, lectures and classroom discussions at the U of A are interrupted by the intermittent noise of aircraft. With the introduction of louder aircraft, this problem will become worse.

◆ **The EIS should analyze the economic effects of increased noise upon businesses in the affected areas.**

Businesses that cater to Tucson’s visitors may be particularly vulnerable to elevated noise levels.

◆ **The EIS should analyze the handling, storing, and loading of live ordnance for the F-35.** If ordnance is kept at TIA, the analysis will consider the safety of civilians who fly in and out of TIA via commercial aircraft. The analysis will also consider the methods used to ensure that ordnance is secured against potential terrorists and other criminals.

◆ **The EIS should analyze the safety aspects of F-35s as they fly among the mix of other air traffic.** Both commercial and military aircraft currently arrive and depart TIA; additional military aircraft use the nearby Davis-Monthan AFB.

◆ **The EIS should analyze the sound exposure levels of two or more F-35s as they fly in formation or in close proximity to each other.**

◆ **The EIS should analyze the effects of air pollution from F-35s.** Exhaust from the F-35s will affect Tucson’s air quality. Further, hydrocarbons will be released to the atmosphere during storage and transfer of aviation fuel.

◆ **The EIS should analyze the effects of F-35 noise upon the tranquility of parks and preserves that lie between TIA and the Barry M. Goldwater Range.** These areas include Saguaro National Park, Organ Pipe National Monument, Ironwood Forest National Monument, Tucson Mountain Park, Picacho Peak State Park, and Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge.

◆ **The EIS should analyze the effects of F-35 noise upon wildlife that inhabit the undeveloped areas between TIA and the Barry M. Goldwater Range.**