

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

BRAC 05 Closure of Riverbank Army Ammunition Plant

Recommendations of the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission made in conformance with the provisions of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (Base Closure Act), Public Law 101-510, as amended, require the closure of Riverbank Army Ammunition Plant (RBAAP), CA, in conjunction with the relocation of military missions to other installations.

The Army has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) to evaluate the environmental and socioeconomic impacts of the proposed action outlined below. The EA has been developed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and implementing regulations issued by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ, 40 CFR 1500–1508), the Army (32 CFR Part 651), and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Base Redevelopment and Realignment Manual - DoD 4165.66M).

Proposed Action

The proposed action (Army primary action) is to dispose of the surplus federal property generated by the BRAC-mandated closure of RBAAP. Reuse of the RBAAP surplus property by others is a secondary action resulting from disposal. RBAAP consists of 173 acres of land located within the City of Riverbank in Stanislaus County, in central California. The installation is composed of two noncontiguous sites – the Main Site, comprising 146 acres and containing the primary manufacturing plant area, and the 27-acre Evaporation/Percolation ponds (E/P ponds) area, located about 1.5 miles north of the Main Site. The Army utilized the *Riverbank Army Ammunition Plant Base Reuse Plan* developed by the Riverbank Local Redevelopment Authority (RLRA) and finalized in October 2008, as the primary source for developing reuse scenarios considered in the EA.

Alternatives Considered

The no action alternative is included in the EA to identify the existing baseline conditions against which potential impacts were evaluated.

The first disposal alternative evaluated in the EA is the early transfer alternative. Under the early transfer alternative, property transfer occurs prior to the completion of environmental cleanup. Under this alternative, the Army has available various property transfer and disposal methods that allow the reuse of the property to occur before environmental remedial action has been completed, provided that the property is suitable for the new owner's intended use, and the intended use is consistent with protection of human health and the environment. Typically, the Army performs the environmental cleanup. The property could also be transferred to a new owner who agrees to perform all environmental remediation, waste management, and environmental compliance activities required for the property. A combined approach is also possible.

The traditional disposal alternative is another disposal alternative evaluated in the EA. Under this alternative, the Army transfers or disposes of property once environmental remediation is

completed. Uncontaminated property is defined as areas where no release or disposal of hazardous substances or petroleum products has occurred, including no migration of these substances from adjacent areas. Such property would be available for transfer or disposal fairly quickly. For property on which hazardous substances are known to have been released or disposed of, necessary environmental remedial actions may take a long time to be selected, approved, and implemented. There may be a prolonged period under this traditional disposal alternative during which some parcels are not available for transfer or disposal.

The EA also evaluates a caretaker alternative. It represents a prolonged period after closure if properties are not transferred as anticipated. Under caretaker status there would be reduced maintenance to levels consistent with federal government standards for surplus properties. Under this alternative, the Army would continue remediation activities as with other disposal alternatives.

Two reuse alternatives, a medium intensity reuse (MIR) scenario and a medium-high intensity reuse (MHIR) scenario are evaluated in the EA. The proposed level of intensity of reuse represented in the RLRA's reuse plan (October 2008) is considered commensurate with the MIR scenario. The MHIR scenario was also evaluated in the EA, to accurately capture, or "bracket," the higher end of the reasonably foreseeable reuse of the RBAAP property.

Factors Considered in Determining that No Environmental Impact Statement is Required

The EA, which is incorporated by reference into this Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI), examined potential effects of the proposed action and no action alternatives on resource areas of environmental and socioeconomic concern including land use, aesthetics and visual resources, air quality, noise, geology and soils, water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, socioeconomics, transportation, utilities, and hazardous and toxic substances.

In general, implementation of the disposal and reuse actions would potentially result in minor adverse effects to all resource areas. Moderate adverse impacts would also occur to air quality, noise, biological resources, socioeconomics, and transportation. Moderate beneficial effects are also anticipated for land use (under the reuse scenarios) and socioeconomics.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the EA and careful review of the potential impacts, as well as consideration of comments received during the 30-day comment period on the EA and Draft FNSI, I conclude that implementation of the proposed action or any of the alternatives would not result in a significant direct, indirect, or cumulative impact on the quality of the natural or human environment. Furthermore, no mitigation measures are required to reduce any environmental effects to below significant levels. Redevelopment of the RBAAP property would result in manageable adverse effects and beneficial effects related to the socioeconomics and environment resource areas. Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required, and preparation of this FNSI is appropriate.

I have also concluded that the no action alternative would not support Congressional requirements under the BRAC law (Public Laws 101-510 and 107-107); consequently, it has not been selected for implementation.

Public Comment

The public and all interested parties were invited to review and comment on the EA and FNSI within 30 days of the publication of the Notice of Availability in the *Modesto Bee*. Comments were directed to Ms. Toni Taylor, Commander's Representative, Riverbank Army Ammunition Plant via regular mail or email. The EA and Draft FNSI were also available for review on the Web at http://www.hqda.army.mil/acsim/brac/env_ea_final.htm. In addition, the EA and Draft FNSI were available for review at the following libraries.

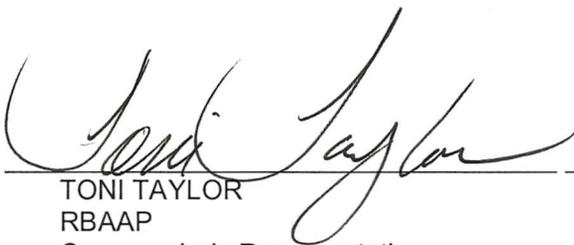
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After the 30-day comment period, which ended on 30 April 2009, four comment letters were received, including responses from the RLRA, the Department of Toxic Substances Control, the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the City of Modesto. These comment letters were evaluated and responses to the comments and concerns raised in these letters were prepared as an addendum to the EA and included in the Administrative Record. The Army has also provided copies of the state agency comment letters to the RLRA, as their comments principally pertain to transfer of RBAAP to other entities.

Date: 13 July 2009


TONI TAYLOR
RBAAP
Commander's Representative