

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) Addressing the Restricted Airspace for the Operation of a Tethered Aerostat at South Padre Island, Texas

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Air and Marine Operations (AMO), has prepared a Draft EA and Draft FONSI requesting the establishment of a Restricted Area for a tethered aerostat system at South Padre Island, Texas by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The Draft EA and Draft FONSI were prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, and CBP instructions implementing NEPA.

The Draft EA describes the CBP proposal to establish a new Special Use Airspace by FAA consisting of a Restricted Area for a "Tethered Maritime Surveillance System" (TMSS). The balloon-borne radar system provides long-range detection of low-altitude aircraft to detect and track suspicious air traffic. The Proposed Action ensures protection of the approximately 200-mile-long coastline in South Padre Island, which is frequently used by transnational criminal organizations for smuggling narcotics and people. The Draft EA evaluates potential impacts on the environment from the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative. The Draft EA demonstrates that the Proposed Action would not significantly impact the environment and based on this analysis, CBP has prepared a Draft FONSI.

Publication of this notice begins a 30-day public review period. We look forward to and welcome your participation in this analysis. The public is invited to review and provide written comments regarding the Draft EA and Draft FONSI. Both documents are available for review on CBP's website at <https://www.cbp.gov/about/environmental-management>, the Port Isabel Public Library at 213 N. Yturria St., Port Isabel, Texas 78578, and at the Cameron Public Library at 304 East 3rd Street, Cameron, Texas 76520.

Comments regarding this document will be accepted for 30 days from the publication of this notice. Comments for consideration and other inquiries should be directed To request further information, a copy of the document, or to provide written comments, please email BPAMNEPA@cbp.dhs.gov.