



September 8, 2023

Re: Notice of Availability, Public Notice of Draft Finding of No Practicable Alternative, and Announcement of Public Meeting for the Raul Hector Castro and Proposed Commercial Land Ports of Entry, Douglas, Arizona Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement

To Whom It May Concern,

Please be advised that the revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) examining the potential impacts of a proposal by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) to expand and modernize the Raul Hector Castro (RHC) Land Port of Entry (LPOE) and to construct a new Commercial LPOE in Douglas, Arizona is now available. Following issuance of the original DEIS in January 2023, GSA identified a third action alternative – Alternative 3 – through internal scoping. Due to the change in the analysis, GSA is re-issuing a revised DEIS for public review during a 45-day comment period. The revised DEIS describes: the purpose and need for the project; alternatives considered; the existing environment that could be affected; the potential impacts resulting from each of the alternatives; and proposed best management practices and/or mitigation measures. The revised DEIS also includes the revised Draft Finding of No Practicable Alternative (FONPA), which provides a floodplain assessment and statement of findings as a result of construction in a floodplain at the RHC LPOE. Previously, GSA collected comments from interested persons and stakeholders during a 45-day comment period beginning on January 27, 2023. Comments received during this comment period have been addressed in this revised Draft EIS.

Further information on the project, including an electronic copy of the DEIS, may be found online at: <https://www.gsa.gov/about-us/regions/welcome-to-the-pacific-rim-region-9/land-ports-of-entry/douglas-commercial-land-port-of-entry> and <https://www.gsa.gov/about-us/regions/welcome-to-the-pacific-rim-region-9/land-ports-of-entry/raul-hector-castro-land-port-of-entry>.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: The RHC LPOE is a port of entry for vehicles and pedestrians crossing the U.S.-Mexico border, between Douglas, Arizona and Agua Prieta, Sonora in Mexico. The port is a full-service, multi-modal facility where CBP currently inspects commercially-owned vehicles (COVs), privately-owned vehicles (POVs), and pedestrians. The purpose of the project is for GSA to support CBP's mission by bringing the RHC LPOE operations in line with current land port design standards and operational requirements of CBP while addressing existing operational deficiencies. The project is needed to: improve capacity and functionality of the LPOE to meet future demand while maintaining the capability to meet border security initiatives; ensure the safety and security for workers and users of the LPOE; and improve traffic congestion and safety for the City of Douglas.

The Proposed Action would comprise of two main components: 1) construction of a new Commercial LPOE dedicated to COVs, located approximately 5 miles west of the existing port; and 2) expansion and modernization of existing RHC LPOE facilities to serve as a noncommercial

LPOE dedicated to processing POVs and pedestrians. The DEIS analyzes three “action” alternatives and one “no action” alternative. The three “action” alternatives are described as follows:

- **Alternative 1 (Sequential Construction).** Includes construction of the new Commercial LPOE first, followed by a phased expansion and modernization of the existing RHC LPOE *after* the Commercial LPOE is operational. This alternative would require land acquisition near the existing RHC LPOE and at the Commercial LPOE site.
- **Alternative 2 (Concurrent Construction – Westward Expansion).** Includes construction of the new Commercial LPOE and phased expansion and modernization of the existing RHC LPOE *at the same time*, to include additional land acquisition primarily to the west of the existing RHC LPOE, allowing expansion and modernization activities to occur while the existing RHC LPOE remains operational. This alternative also includes the acquisition of land in the Alternative 1 Expansion Area.
- **Alternative 3 (Concurrent Construction – Eastward Expansion).** Includes construction of the new Commercial LPOE and phase expansion and modernization of the existing RHC LPOE *at the same time*, to include additional land acquisition primarily to the east of the existing RHC LPOE, allowing expansion and modernization to occur while the existing RHC LPOE remains operational. This alternative also includes the acquisition of land in the Alternative 1 Expansion Area.

All action alternatives would take place within 100-year and 500-year floodplains at the existing RHC LPOE. In compliance with Executive Order 11988 (*Floodplain Management*), GSA prepared a revised Draft FONPA addressing potential impacts on floodplains, which is included in the revised DEIS for public review and comment. As described in the DEIS, GSA would follow regulatory compliance (e.g., measures outlined in the Arizona Stormwater General Construction Permit) and incorporate design standards at the RHC LPOE to minimize impacts to floodplains.

The “no action” alternative is included and analyzed to provide a baseline for comparison with impacts from the Project and also to satisfy federal requirements for analyzing “no action” under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1502.14(d)). The “no action” alternative assumes that the current issues with the RHC LPOE would not be addressed and that operations would continue under current conditions.

PUBLIC MEETING AND COMMENT PERIOD: The public is encouraged to attend and participate in an upcoming meeting for the revised DEIS. The purpose of this meeting is to provide information and receive comments on the environmental analysis presented in the revised DEIS. The public meeting for the DEIS will be held on **Wednesday, September 27, 2023, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., Mountain Time** at:

Douglas Visitor Center
345 16th Street
Douglas, AZ 85607

The meeting will be conducted in an informal open house format, where project information will be displayed and distributed. The open house format will encourage discussion and information sharing through opportunities for the public to speak one-on-one with GSA representatives. **No formal presentation will be provided.**

Interested parties are encouraged to attend and provide written comments regarding the revised DEIS. Comments on the revised DEIS and Draft FONPA must be received by **October 23, 2023**. After this date, GSA will prepare the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted by one of the following methods:

- In writing. Submit comments at the public meeting.
- By e-mail. Send to *osmahn.kadri@gsa.gov* (reference “*RHC LPOE EIS*” in subject line)
- By U.S. mail. Send to:

Attention: Osmahn Kadri, RHC LPOE EIS
U.S. General Services Administration
c/o Potomac-Hudson Engineering, Inc.
77 Upper Rock Circle, Suite 302
Rockville, MD 20850

For more information or if special assistance is needed to attend and participate in the public scoping meeting, please contact Osmahn Kadri, GSA NEPA Project Manager, at 415-522-3617.

Para obtener más información o si necesita ayuda especial para asistir y participar en la reunión pública, comuníquese con Osmahn Kadri, gerente de proyectos de GSA NEPA, al 415-522-3617.