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**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
OF
AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS**

Prepared for
**THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**
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I: INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDANCE BOOK

The purpose of this document is to provide specific step-by-step guidance on the preparation of environmental impact assessment reports and statements for airport projects in accordance with DOT/FAA, EPA, CEQ, and other regulatory and reviewing agency requirements. It is intended that this document provide instructional material which will extend beyond present guidelines which state what impacts to consider; the guidance book is designed to explain how each potential impact should be approached, analyzed, referenced, and presented. Included in this text are instructions on how to collect and analyze environmental impact data so as to provide clear, responsive documentation in conformance with specific Federal, state and local laws and regulations. This book covers all steps of the study and review process including assessment methodologies and report preparation, public hearing presentation, responses to comments raised by reviewing agencies and the general public, and final statement preparation.

A brief discussion of the major sections of the guidebook is presented here. Section I explains the purpose of the document and its relationship to four instructive model impact statements which were prepared concurrently to illustrate the guidance techniques.

Section II presents the broad base of environmental legislation by citing and highlighting those "authority" regulations which are applicable to airport development actions affecting the environment.

Section III then presents a series of those applicable supplemental laws and regulations which the preparer of an environmental impact statement will encounter and will have to consider.

Section IV of the guidance book identifies exactly what type of environmental report and review are required under various circumstances.

Section V comprises the major portion of the guidance book since it discusses the actual preparation of the component parts of the statement. This section basically follows the format of FAA Order 5050.2B (Instructions for Processing Airport Development Actions Affecting the Environment). Within the discussion of each environmental impact category, levels of analysis are suggested to aid in determining, for any airport situation, that depth of study sufficient to make a reliable evaluation of impact.

Section VI contains guidance pertaining to involvement in the statement review process.

Thus, the purpose of the guidebook is to provide general instruction as to the rationale behind, and the steps involved in, the environmental study, statement preparation and review process. Its content covers laws,

regulations and procedures; identification of specific disciplines to be studied; and approved methodologies to be used in studying each discipline. It indicates suggested graphic presentations and step-by-step organization of the text, including the handling of alternative actions and the No Project Alternative. Finally, it specifies action to be taken in coordinating the study and review processes with governmental agencies and the general public. Four model statements provide concrete illustrations of applying guidebook instructions to specific airport development actions.

It is emphasized that this document is not the ultimate reference on environmental analysis and should not be used as a substitute for actual analysis. The guidance book is intended to serve as a tool to be utilized along with specific analysis and good judgement in each case.

B. RELATED MODEL IMPACT STATEMENTS

Four instructive model environmental statements have been developed in conjunction with the guidance book. These provide specific examples of how to apply a number of the specified instructions set forth in this book for the following airport development actions:

- Model No. 1 - Significant expansion of an existing major air carrier airport.
- Model No. 2 - Location and phased development of a new reliever airport serving a major metropolitan area.

- Model No. 3 - Location and phased development of a new general aviation airport in a rural area.
- Model No. 4 - Expansion of a general aviation airport which would not constitute a significant impact on the environment.

Each of the four hypothetical models includes problems which may be typically encountered in airport development or expansion projects. Examples include the overflight of parkland, the acquisition of low income or minority group housing, alteration of wetlands or floodplains, and infringement on habitat of endangered species or historic/archaeological sites.

The guidebook and model statements are carefully cross-referenced. The guidebook should be reviewed for specific information on laws and regulations affecting impact statement preparation, general format, content, impact categories to be covered, and methodologies to assemble and analyze data.

Model statements should be reviewed for two sets of conditions:

- Comparable or similar airport development actions.
- Specific problem or no-problem areas.

From a project point of view, a sponsor of a major expansion of an existing large commercial carrier airport in a large metropolitan community

will find Model Statement No. 1 most relevant, whereas a sponsor of a new general aviation facility in a rural area will find Model Statement No. 3 most applicable. However, from an environmental point of view, any one model statement may not involve all the major impacts.

Sponsors encountering a particular problem -- regardless of the type of proposed development -- may find appropriate examples of the defined analysis of that problem in any one of the four model statements. For example, Model Statement No. 1 includes acquisition of low cost, minority housing, increased noise in residential areas, and runway construction within a floodplain. Model Statement No. 2 covers such items as alteration of wetland communities, potential degradation of water quality, and impact on recreation. Model Statement No. 3 addresses the problem of endangered species habitat, induced development, and the evaluation of historic and archaeological sites. Finally, Model No. 4 exemplifies the minimal impact which permits elimination of in-depth investigations for numerous disciplines within the study process.

In every case where potential problem areas are cited in the guidance manual, cross-reference is provided to the specific model statement sections dealing with this problem. Conversely, every complication or conflict covered in a model statement is cross-referenced to the guidebook sections dealing with that particular discipline's data requirements and analytic methodologies.

Thus, the guidebook and model statements provide clear and comprehensive direction on how to execute environmental study, statement preparation and review procedures for airport development projects. It is hoped that this documentation will help to insure timely compliance with the law and decrease unnecessary delays and costs in processing airport development programs.