

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**Office of Justice Programs**

[OJP (OJP)-1209]

RIN 1121-ZB43

Office for State and Local Domestic Preparedness Support; Notice of Intent To Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Office of Justice Programs' Center for Domestic Preparedness at Fort McClellan, Alabama

AGENCY: Office for State and Local Domestic Preparedness Support, Office of Justice Programs, Justice.

ACTION: Notice of Intent (NOI).

SUMMARY: In response to the increased threat from international and domestic terrorism, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), was tasked with the establishment of the Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP) at Fort McClellan, Alabama, to provide training to state and local emergency first responders on handling of incidents involving weapons of mass destruction. Through DOJ's Fiscal Year 1998 Appropriations Act (Pub. L. No. 105-119) and the accompanying Conference Report, Congress expressed its concern regarding the reality and potential catastrophic effects of incidents involving weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological terrorism. Congress declared that while the Federal government plays an important role in preventing and responding to these types of threats, it is state and local public safety personnel who will be first responders on the scene when such incidents occur. A critical element in the national domestic preparedness initiative is the training and support available to states and local communities.

Congress appropriated funds so the OJP could establish the CDP at Fort McClellan to develop national operational standards in domestic preparedness and to train emergency first responders on handling of incidents involving weapons of mass destruction. Two crucial factors contributed to Congress' direction that the CDP locate at Fort McClellan. The first was that the U.S. Army's Chemical Defense Training Facility (CDTF) at Fort McClellan was the only such facility in the United States that provided live chemical agent decontamination training, and thus the only existing location that could provide the highest level of this type of training to potential responders. The second factor was congressional recognition that a very

real threat currently exists, and that time was not available to design and build new facilities for this training initiative.

The purpose of the CDP is to establish and maintain national operational standards in domestic preparedness and to provide high-level training through the utilization of facilities that would not otherwise be available to most local emergency first responders.

Courses focus on emergency operations center training, including simulations and computer models/scenarios to teach operational standards and test state and local procedures. Other advanced awareness training courses will be designed for different levels of personnel within the emergency first responder community, from basic emergency medical technician, fireman, or policeman to high-level supervisors. Central to the establishment of the CDP and the location of this training at Fort McClellan is the ability of trainers and students from Federal, State, and local agencies to interact in a real environment involving the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and the unique opportunity to train with live chemical agents. The live agent environment reinforces confidence in the PPE and provides the most realistic scenarios available for those who will be first on the scene of an incident involving weapons of mass destruction.

Fort McClellan is scheduled to close on October 1, 1999, pursuant to the 1995 recommendation of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission. The establishment of the CDP at Fort McClellan and the development of this training was proposed to occur in stages. The first stage of CDP training, which is an interim program and which is ongoing, involves the use of existing U.S. Army facilities and training programs at Fort McClellan by the CDP, but under the auspices of the Army. This interim action was the subject of a separate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Assessment (EA).

The proposed final stage involves the transfer of ownership from the Army to OJP of several existing training and support facilities at Fort McClellan and the assumption of responsibility for the training program to be provided to state and local emergency first responders. The proposed training program will use existing housing, buildings, and facilities, and train approximately 10,000 students per year or about 200 students a week. With the departure of the Army upon closure of Fort

McClellan, some existing operational procedures will be changed. By law, the U.S. Army is the only agency authorized to manufacture and transport the chemical agents used in the first responder training. If OJP assumes full responsibility for the first responder training after the closure of Fort McClellan, the Army can no longer produce chemical agents at Fort McClellan but will transport approximately two liters of chemical agents annually to the CDP from the Army's production facility at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. Use of the Anniston and/or Talladega Airport is under consideration for purpose. This NOI pertains to the planned preparation of a DEIS to assess the proposed CDP operations and training at Fort McClellan subsequent to base closure.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. L Z Johnson, Director, Center for Domestic Preparedness, Post Office Box 5100, Fort McClellan, AL 36205-5100, telephone (256) 848-4139; or E-mail: Johnsonz@OJP.USDOJ.GOV

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**1. Proposed Action**

The DEIS is to assess the environmental impacts associated with the proposed OJP assumption of responsibility for and the conduct of emergency first responder training in support of State and local needs. The training is proposed to be conducted at Fort McClellan, using existing U.S. Army facilities that would be transferred to OJP upon closure of the base pursuant to the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission recommendation of 1995.

2. Alternatives

The only reasonable alternative to be considered in this DEIS is the No Action Alternative. Congress mandated and funded the use of Fort McClellan by OJP, in large measure because of the availability of an existing live chemical agent training capability there. If it should be determined that OJP will not assume responsibility for continued emergency first responder training at Fort McClellan after base closure, a new review of needs and alternatives involving coordination at the national level would then be required.

3. Scoping Process and Public Participation

Letters and informational fliers describing the proposed action and soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens and citizen groups who

have previously expressed or are known to have an interest in activities associated with the closure of Fort McClellan. Additionally, two public scoping meetings will be held. One meeting will be held in Talladega, AL and the other scoping meeting will be held in Anniston, Alabama. The public, as well as Federal, State, and local agencies are encouraged to participate in these scoping meetings and/or submit data, information, and comments by mail identifying relevant environmental and socioeconomic issues to be addressed in this environmental analysis. Comments and information should be mailed to Mr. L Z Johnson at the above address. Requests to be placed on the mailing list for announcements and the Draft EIS should also be sent to Mr. L Z Johnson. The first public scoping meeting will be held at the Colony House Motel, Banquet Room, 65600 Highway 77 North, Talladega, AL at 7:30 PM, CST, on Tuesday, March 16, 1999. The second public scoping meeting will be held at the City Meeting Center, Meeting Room B, 1615 Noble Street, Anniston, AL at 7:30 PM, CST, on Wednesday, March 17, 1999.

4. Related Documents

Environmental Assessment For the Center for Domestic Preparedness, Fort McClellan, Alabama, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, July 1998 and Final Environmental Impact Statement for Disposal and Reuse of Fort McClellan, Alabama, U.S. Department of the Army, August 1998.

Laurie Robinson,

Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs.

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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Office of the Secretary

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Review

February 16, 1999.

The Department of Labor (DOL) has submitted the following public information collection request (ICR) to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and approval in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13, 44 U.S.C. Chapter 35). A copy of the ICR, with applicable supporting documentation, may be obtained by calling the Department of Labor, Departmental Clearance Officer, Todd R. Owen ({202} 219-5096 ext. 143) or by E-Mail to Owen-Todd@dol.gov.

Comments should be sent to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Attn: OMB Desk Officer for the Office of the Secretary, Office of Management and Budget, Room 10235, Washington, DC 20503 ({202} 395-7316), on or before March 22, 1999. The OMB is particularly interested in comments which:

- Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;
- Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumption used;
- Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.

Agency: Office of the Secretary.

Title: Applicant Background

Questionnaire.

OMB Number: 1225-0072 (Revision).

Frequency: On occasion.

Affected Public: Applicants for positions recruited in the Department of Labor.

Number of Respondents: 3,000.

Estimated Time Per Respondent: 5 minutes.

Total Burden Hours: 250.

Total Annualized Capital/startup

Costs: \$0.

Total Annual (operating/
maintaining): \$0.

Description: The Applicant Background Questionnaire gathers information concerning the gender, race or ethnic background, and disability status of applicants for employment. Applicants for employment are asked to voluntarily complete this form to assist the agency in evaluating and improving its efforts to publicize job openings and to encourage applications for employment, from a diverse group of qualified candidates, including minorities and persons with disabilities. The Department will use the information to assess the effectiveness of specific outreach efforts and means of communicating information on job vacancies. The form is revised to delete the applicant's Social Security Number for the requested responses, and to add a question concerning whether an

applicant's disability is among a list of targeted disabilities.

Todd R. Owen,

Departmental Clearance Officer.

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BILLING CODE 4510-23-M

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Employment Standards Administration; Wage and Hour Division

Minimum Wages for Federal and Federally Assisted Construction; General Wage Determination Decisions

General wage determination decisions of the Secretary of Labor are issued in accordance with applicable law and are based on the information obtained by the Department of Labor from its study of local wage conditions and data made available from other sources. They specify the basic hourly wage rates and fringe benefits which are determined to be prevailing for the described classes of laborers and mechanics employed on construction projects of a similar character and in the localities specified therein.

The determinations in these decisions of prevailing rates and fringe benefits have been made in accordance with 29 CFR Part 1, by authority of the Secretary of Labor pursuant to the provisions of the Davis-Bacon Act of March 3, 1931, as amended (46 Stat. 1494, as amended, 40 U.S.C. 276a) and of other Federal statutes referred to in 29 CFR Part 1, Appendix, as well as such additional statutes as may from time to time be enacted containing provisions for the payment of wages determined to be prevailing by the Secretary of Labor in accordance with the Davis-Bacon Act. The prevailing rates and fringe benefits determined in these decisions shall, in accordance with the provisions of the foregoing statutes, constitute the minimum wages payable on Federal and federally assisted construction projects to laborers and mechanics of the specified classes engaged on contract work of the character and in the localities described therein.

Good cause is hereby found for not utilizing notice and public comment procedure thereon prior to the issuance of these determinations as prescribed in 5 U.S.C. 553 and not providing for delay in the effective date as prescribed in that section, because the necessity to issue current construction industry wage determinations frequently and in large volume causes procedures to be impractical and contrary to the public interest.