

**Notice of Availability**  
**Final Programmatic Environmental Assessment and**  
**Final Finding of No Significant Impact for the**  
**Nationwide Operation of Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems**  
**United States Department of Homeland Security**

**Description:** Interested parties are hereby notified that the United States (US) Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has prepared a Final Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Proposed Action described below.

**Statutory Authority:** This notice is being issued to all interested parties in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 1500-1508), and DHS Management Directive 023-01, rev. 01 (Implementation of NEPA).

**Proposed Action:** DHS proposes the ongoing use of small unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS; i.e., drone) activities nationwide. The PEA analyzes sUAS as an asset to DHS mission and operations. DHS and its Components utilize sUAS (i.e., small unmanned aircraft that weigh less than 55 pounds) on a recurring basis to meet mission needs, and currently review proposed sUAS activities on a project-specific basis. DHS prepared the subject Final PEA to streamline the review process and avoid duplicative, lengthy reviews for repetitive sUAS actions that may be broadly analyzed given their similar scopes.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide DHS with the capability to expand visual capability and gather information, surveillance, reconnaissance, and communications by employing remote controlled aerial reconnaissance equipment equipped with cameras, sensors, and other data collecting equipment. The continued use of sUAS would allow access to areas that are otherwise difficult to reach, and would support existing and emerging mission requirements of the various Components within DHS. The Proposed Action is needed to enhance and extend sUAS capability to DHS missions over various geographic areas in order to inform DHS operational and situational decisions, fulfill mission requirements, and ensure the long-term security of the US.

The Final PEA evaluates the potential environmental, cultural, socioeconomic, and physical impacts of the No Action Alternative and Proposed Action Alternative to implementing the Proposed Action. The evaluation performed within this Final PEA concludes there would be no significant adverse impact to the environment or quality of life as a result of implementing the Proposed Action, provided routine best management practices specified in the PEA are implemented. This is documented in the FONSI.

**Public Review:** The Draft PEA and Draft FONSI were made available for a public review period between August 11, 2022, and October 9, 2022, to solicit public input or comments. All public comments received on the Draft PEA and FONSI during this review period are addressed in the Final PEA and FONSI.

**Availability:** The Final PEA and FONSI can be accessed online at: <https://www.dhs.gov/national-environmental-policy-act>.