

**Notice of Availability**  
**Draft Environmental Assessment for the**  
**Undersea Cable Replacement from Plum Island to Orient Point for the**  
**Plum Island Animal Disease Center**  
**United States Department of Homeland Security**  
**Plum Island, New York**

**Description:** Interested parties are hereby notified that the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) has prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) 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, the White House Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 1500-1508), DHS Management Directive 023-01, rev. 01, and DHS Instruction 023-01-002-01 rev. 01 Implementation of the NEPA.

**Proposed Action:** DHS S&T proposes to conduct activities relating to the abandonment in place of an existing undersea utility cable and the installation of a new undersea utility cable between Orient Point, New York (NY) and the Plum Island Animal Disease Center (PIADC) on Plum Island, NY, located 1.5 miles northeast of Orient Point (Proposed Action).

Plum Island currently receives electrical and fiber optic communications capabilities through two existing undersea cables connecting Orient Point and Plum Island. DHS requires continued electrical and communication capabilities on Plum Island during normal operation and throughout the duration of planned PIADC closure activities (i.e., five to seven years). DHS S&T conducted an inspection of the undersea cables' conditions in 2022. The inspection determined that the oldest of the two cables, M1, has reached the end of its planned lifespan and is degrading such that it is in danger of failing. Additionally, the island lacks redundant fiber optic communication measures. Therefore, the purpose of the Proposed Action is to replace one of the existing cables (M1 or M2) with a new undersea cable to supply Plum Island with mission-critical electrical and communication capabilities. The Proposed Action is needed to prevent any adverse effects that a potential loss of electrical or communication services may have on required operations at PIADC.

The Draft EA evaluates the potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic consequences associated with DHS S&T's proposal to abandon an existing undersea cable and install a new electric/fiber optic cable between Orient Point and Plum Island. The evaluation performed within this Draft EA concludes there would be no significant adverse impact to the environment or quality of life because of implementing the Proposed Action, provided routine best management practices specified in the EA are implemented.

**Public Review:** DHS S&T is soliciting public comments on the Draft EA, which is available for a 30-day public comment period from January 25, 2024, through February 24, 2024. The Draft EA can be accessed online at: <https://www.dhs.gov/national-environmental-policy-act>. Printed copies of the Draft EA are available at the Floyd Memorial Library at 539 1st Street, Greenport, New York 11944, and the Southold Free Library at 53705 Main Road, Southold, New York 11971 for public review.

**Comments:** Comments on the Draft EA or inquiries regarding the document should be submitted during the 30-day comment period via email at: [PlumIslandUnderseaCable@st.dhs.gov](mailto:PlumIslandUnderseaCable@st.dhs.gov).