



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

[Docket No. FAA-2026-8185]

Request for Comments on Midway Atoll Airport / Henderson Airfield (MDY)

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is requesting comments from the aviation industry and general public (including federal, state, tribal, and local agencies) regarding the importance of Midway Atoll Airport / Henderson Airfield (MDY) for trans-Pacific Ocean aviation operations. Specifically, MDY serves in a “flight planning” role for routes across the North-Central Pacific Ocean, as an Extended Range Operation with Two-Engine Airplanes (ETOPS) alternate airport under Federal Aviation Regulations. However, MDY’s infrastructure is deteriorating and will require significant financial investments and rehabilitation within the next three to five years to maintain its operational capability and compliance with the FAA’s airport certification requirements and ETOPS requirements. The FAA is requesting responses to questions contained in this notice in order to better understand the potential impacts if MDY were no longer available as an ETOPS alternate airport.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*].

ADDRESSES: Send comments identified by docket number FAA-2026-8185 using any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and follow the online instructions for sending your comments electronically.

- **Mail:** Send comments to Docket Operations, M-30; U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Room W12-140, West Building Ground Floor, Washington, DC 20590-0001.
- **Hand Delivery or Courier:** Take comments to Docket Operations in Room W12-140 of the West Building Ground Floor at 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590-0001, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.
- **Fax:** Fax comments to Docket Operations at (202) 493-2251.

Privacy: In accordance with 5 U.S.C. 553(c), DOT solicits comments from the public to better inform its rulemaking process. DOT posts these comments, without edit, including any personal information the commenter provides, to <http://www.regulations.gov>, as described in the system of records notice (DOT/ALL-14 FDMS), which can be reviewed at <http://www.dot.gov/privacy>.

Docket: Background documents or comments received may be read at <http://www.regulations.gov> at any time. Follow the online instructions for accessing the docket or go to the Docket Operations in Room W12-140 of the West Building Ground Floor at 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590-0001, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Raquel Girvin, Western-Pacific Regional Administrator, Office of National Engagement and Regional Administration, 777 S. Aviation Blvd., Suite 150, El Segundo, CA 90245 (424) 405-7000, 9-APL-AWP-RA@faa.gov.

Confidential Business Information: Confidential Business Information (CBI) is commercial or financial information that is both customarily and actually treated as private by its owner. Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552, CBI

is exempt from public disclosure. If your comments responsive to this Notice contain commercial or financial information that is customarily treated as private, that you actually treat as private, and that is relevant or responsive to this Notice, it is important that you clearly designate the submitted comments as CBI. Please mark each page of your submission containing CBI as “PROPIN.” The FAA will treat such marked submissions as confidential under the FOIA, and they will not be placed in the public docket of this Notice. Submissions containing CBI should be sent to the person identified in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section of this document. Any commentary that the FAA receives which is not specifically designated as CBI will be placed in the public docket for this Notice.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Midway Atoll Airport (MDY) is a Part 139-certificated airport in the North-Central Pacific Ocean. Currently, MDY and the surrounding Atoll are managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), an agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior. Ownership was transferred from the Department of Defense to FWS in 1996 for wildlife conservation. Accordingly, MDY is unique as a Part 139 certificated airport that is owned and operated by a department of the U.S. Government, is not a joint-use airport, and serves a specific need in the global aviation system (trans-Pacific ETOPS flight planning for both military and commercial aircraft operations).

FWS is currently utilizing the FAA’s congressionally mandated \$2.5 million per year in Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funds designated under the 2003 FAA Reauthorization Act (Public Law 108-176) to maintain MDY’s airfield infrastructure, and the FWS contributes an additional \$2.6 million in annual funding to maintain minimum operational capability. However, the funding designated is only a small portion of the airfield’s needs according to the 2021 Midway Atoll Comprehensive Master Plan.

MDY's runway is expected to reach a severe level of deterioration within the next five years. The estimated cost for major airfield rehabilitation at MDY exceeds \$100 million for milling, repaving, and seawall repairs – an amount significantly higher than the annual AIP funding allocations. Additional non-airfield improvements, such as harbor upgrades to support shipment of construction materials, may also be needed.

Extended aircraft operations (known as ETOPS) for long-range international travel provide several benefits related to savings in time, fuel, and operational efficiencies. FAA's final rule on Extended Operations (ETOPS) of Multi-Engine Airplanes was published in the Federal Register on January 16, 2007 (72 FR 1808). In the event of an extremely rare in-flight emergency over the North-Central Pacific Ocean, aircraft can divert to MDY if they are previously approved to do so by the FAA and are within ETOPS range of that airport. Between 2003 and 2021, there were at least eleven commercial and military aircraft diversions that landed at MDY Airport. However, recent estimates indicate that MDY is currently used in ETOPS flight planning for tens of thousands of trans-Pacific flights annually across passenger, cargo, and military aircraft operations.

Part 121 air carriers to plan flight routes that include MDY as an ETOPS alternate airport, MDY must maintain compliance with the FAA's Part 139 airport certification requirements. If MDY (or any other airport) does not meet the FAA's Part 139 standards, the airport could not be used for ETOPS flight planning, and air carriers would be required to plan an alternate route of flight.

Aviation routes across the North-Central Pacific Ocean are also served by other ETOPS alternate airports, namely Wake Island Airfield (PAWK), Eareckson Air Station (PASY), and Marshall Islands International Airport (PKMJ). Of these airports, PAWK and PASY are owned and operated by the United States Department of War, and PKMJ is owned and operated by the Republic of the Marshall Islands Ports Authority.

Request for Comments: The FAA invites public comments from interested individuals, entities, and other parties on the following questions related to MDY Airport:
Operations

O1. Are there any routes (i.e. city pairs) that would be particularly impacted by the loss of MDY as an ETOPS alternate airport? What are the likely impacts to those routes, and to the extent possible please quantify the impacts on these specific routes.

O2. What would be the impact on aircraft fuel consumption if MDY were no longer available as an ETOPS alternate airport? To the extent possible, please quantify these impacts on an annual basis.

Customers

C1. What would be the impact to customers (passengers or cargo) if MDY were no longer available as an ETOPS alternate airport? To the extent possible, please quantify these impacts on an annual basis using any applicable measurement such as time, cost, consumer choices, etc.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. § 106(f)

Issued in Washington, DC on July 20, 2026.

Rebecca S. Cointin,

Deputy Assistant Administrator,

Office of Policy and Strategic Engagement.

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