



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

[FAA-2026-12808]

Notice of Intent to Prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS), Open Public Scoping Period, and Hold Public Scoping Meetings on the Proposed SpaceX Starship-Super Heavy Launch and Landing Operations at the Boca Chica Launch Site at Starbase, Texas and Expansion of Starship Landing and Expenditure Locations

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

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare a PEIS, open a public scoping period, and hold public scoping meetings.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA) and FAA Order 1050.1G, *FAA National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures*, FAA is announcing its intent to prepare a PEIS analyzing Space Exploration Technologies Corp.'s (SpaceX) proposal to increase Starship-Super Heavy operations at the Boca Chica Launch Site at Starbase, TX and expand Starship landing and expenditure locations. Subsequent license modifications or renewals under 14 CFR Part 400 are within the scope of the PEIS, and the issuance of temporary airspace closures associated with the Proposed Action are included in FAA's Federal Action. FAA is requesting comments concerning the scope and content of the PEIS. A Draft PEIS will be released for public review and comment at a later date.

DATES: FAA invites interested agencies, organizations, Native American Tribes, and members of the public to submit comments on alternatives and impacts and on relevant information, studies, or analyses with respect to the proposed agency action. The public scoping period starts with the publication of this Notice in the **Federal Register**. To ensure sufficient time to consider

issues identified during the public scoping period, comments should be submitted by one of the methods listed under “**ADDRESSES**” no later than **November 30, 2026**. All comments will receive the same attention and consideration in the preparation of the PEIS.

ADDRESSES: Comments, statements, or questions concerning scoping issues may be provided to FAA as follows:

- *Federal E-Rulemaking Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Search for Docket No. FAA-2026-12808 to retrieve the docket and follow the instructions to submit a comment.

Please note that all comments submitted to the docket will be posted on the internet without changes, including any personal identifying information provided.

- By U.S. mail to: Ms. Amy Hanson, FAA Environmental Protection Specialist, SpaceX
Boca Chica, c/o Kimley-Horn, 767 Eustis Street, Suite 100, St. Paul, MN 55114

We encourage the submission of comments electronically through the Federal E-Rulemaking Portal. If comments are submitted electronically, it is not necessary to also submit a hard copy. All comments received will be posted without change to <http://www.regulations.gov>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Starship- Super Heavy is composed of two stages: Super Heavy is the first stage (or booster), and Starship is the second stage. SpaceX proposes to increase Starship-Super Heavy launch, as well as Super Heavy and Starship landing operations at the Boca Chica Launch Site at Starbase, TX. In addition, SpaceX proposes to expand Starship landing and expenditure locations to support the evolving needs of the Starship program and broader space exploration objectives. Currently, SpaceX is authorized by FAA to conduct up to 25 annual launches and 50 total annual landings (25 of the Starship and 25 of the Super Heavy) per year at the Boca Chica Launch Site at Starbase, TX. The Boca Chica Launch Site at Starbase, TX is an exclusive-use launch site that

serves as SpaceX's primary research, development, and flight test launch facility for Starship-Super Heavy. Additional information can be found on the project website at:

https://www.faa.gov/space/stakeholder_engagement/spacex_starship/activity_archive

Proposed Action

This PEIS will evaluate a maximum annual capacity of up to 456 annual launches originating from and up to 912 annual landings at the Boca Chica Launch Site at Starbase, TX.

Phase 1 would include up to 100 annual launches and up to 200 annual landings (100 of the Starship and 100 of the Super Heavy). Launches and landings could occur at any day or time of the week. As the vehicle continues to mature and reliability improves, launch and landing rates are expected to increase. Starship and Super Heavy are designed to require minimal post-flight refurbishment.

Phase 2 would include up to 456 launches originating from, and 912 annual landings at, the Boca Chica Launch Site at Starbase, TX. Launches could occur at any time of day, but would only occur Monday through Friday. This phase represents a mature program launching more than 100 times annually and would be implemented within several years. These launch and landing thresholds represent the maximum annual number of landings that could occur at the Boca Chica Launch Site at Starbase, TX, regardless of the launch origin, and bound the analysis in this PEIS.

SpaceX's Proposed Action within the context of this PEIS is to increase launch and landing operations at the Boca Chica Launch Site at Starbase, TX and expand Starship landing and expenditure locations to support the evolving needs of the Starship-Super Heavy program and broader space exploration objectives. The landing thresholds outlined herein represent the maximum annual number of landings that could occur at the Boca Chica Launch Site at Starbase, TX, regardless of the launch origin. Any currently unforeseen, future proposed increase in launch or landing cadence would require additional NEPA review. Super Heavy would either land at the launch site, soft water land in the Gulf of America, or be intentionally expended during flight.

Starship would either land at the launch site; soft water land in the Gulf of America or in the broad open ocean; or be expended in the broad open ocean. Launches may occur during the day or night. For the purposes of the PEIS analysis, it is assumed that half of the launches and landings would occur during the day (7 a.m. to 10 p.m.) and half would occur at night (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.).

Starship-Super Heavy launch trajectories would be specific to each particular mission. Approved trajectories would be based on launch vehicle performance and characteristics and would satisfy 14 CFR Chapter III regulations. Launch azimuths for the Starship-Super Heavy (the initial direction of travel for the vehicle for launch) would range from 40 degrees to 115 degrees, from a reference of due north at 0 degrees and due east at 90 degrees. Super Heavy landing trajectories would also be within the Starship-Super Heavy launch azimuth range. Starship landing trajectories would range from 155 degrees to 185 degrees and 240 degrees to 340 degrees.

The potential environmental impacts of all proposed operational activities, including those from launches and landings, will be analyzed in the PEIS. The PEIS will evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with aviation emissions and air quality; biological resources (including fish, wildlife, and plants); coastal resources; Department of Transportation Act, Section 4(f); Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, Section 6(f); farmlands; hazardous materials, solid waste, and pollution prevention; historical, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources; land use; natural resources and energy supply; noise and noise-compatible land use; socioeconomics and children's health and safety risks; visual effects; and water resources (including wetlands, floodplains, surface waters, groundwater, and wild and scenic rivers). This analysis will consist of an evaluation of potential reasonably foreseeable impacts resulting from the Proposed Action, as compared to a No Action Alternative.

Concurrently with the NEPA process, FAA is initiating National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultation to determine the potential effects of the Proposed Action on historic

properties. In addition, FAA is consulting with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) regarding potential impacts on federally listed threatened and endangered species. FAA is also consulting with the National Marine Fisheries Service under Section 7 of the ESA and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act for potential impacts on protected marine species. Pursuant to the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966, the PEIS will comply with the requirements of Section 4(f) of the Act (codified at 49 U.S.C. § 303), as applicable.

Alternatives

FAA Order 1050.1G defines reasonable alternatives as those that are technically and economically feasible, meet the purpose and need for the Proposed Action, and, where applicable, meet the goals of the applicant. Prior NEPA documents have established the Boca Chica Launch Site at Starbase, TX as an approved location for Starship-Super Heavy operations. The Boca Chica Launch Site at Starbase, TX already has the necessary infrastructure to support launch operations, therefore other sites are not reasonable alternatives and do not meet the purpose and need of this project. Given these facts, the only alternative to the Proposed Action as described in this PEIS is the No Action Alternative.

Under the No Action Alternative, FAA would not modify SpaceX's launch license for Starship-Super Heavy launch and reentry operations from the Boca Chica Launch Site at Starbase, TX and would not issue any additional associated temporary airspace closures. In this scenario, SpaceX would be permitted to operate at the cadence approved in the 2025 *Final Tiered Environmental Assessment and Mitigated Finding of No Significant Impact and Record of Decision for SpaceX Starship/Super Heavy Vehicle Increased Cadence at the SpaceX Boca Chica Launch Site in Cameron County, Texas*. Potential impacts associated with the No Action Alternative will be analyzed in the PEIS.

Scoping Meetings

FAA will hold four IN-PERSON public scoping meetings and one VIRTUAL public scoping meeting. The meetings will allow the public to receive information on the Proposed Action and provide comments to the record.

The IN-PERSON meetings will be held on Tuesday, November 17, 2026, and Thursday, November 19, 2026. The November 17, 2026, meetings will be held from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. (Central) at the Texas Southmost College, Jacob Brown Auditorium, 600 International Blvd, Brownsville, TX 78520. The November 19, 2026, meetings will be held from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. (Central) at the Port Isabel Event & Cultural Center, 309 Railroad St, Port Isabel, TX 78578. The IN-PERSON meetings will consist of an open house information-station format wherein FAA will provide information describing the purpose of the scoping meetings, project schedule, opportunities for public involvement, the Proposed Action and alternatives summary, and environmental resource area summary. The public will have the opportunity to provide verbal comments to a court reporter or written comments via a written comment form at one of several commenting stations at any time during the meetings.

A VIRTUAL meeting will be held on November 18, 2026; 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. (Central); the URL and call-in number for the meeting will be provided in advance on FAA's project website: https://www.faa.gov/space/stakeholder_engagement/spacex_starship. The virtual meeting will consist of a closed-captioned auto-run presentation describing the purpose of the scoping meetings, project schedule, opportunities for public involvement, Proposed Action and alternatives summary, and environmental resource area summary. The pre-recorded presentation will be run at the beginning of the meeting, followed by an opportunity for formal comments. Members of the public may provide comments verbally during the virtual meeting; comments received via the chat function will not be part of the public record. A moderator will facilitate verbal comments. English-Spanish translation services for verbal comments will be provided. Both English and Spanish versions of the presentation will be made available to the public on

FAA's project website no later than November 10, 2026. If additional accommodations for the public meetings are needed beyond the planned Spanish translation services, please submit a request by November 2, 2026, to the project email address: spacexbocachica@icf.com.

More information regarding the scoping meetings, is available on FAA's project website: https://www.faa.gov/space/stakeholder_engagement/spacex_starship.

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[FR Doc. 2026-20963 Filed: 10/13/2026 8:45 am; Publication Date: 10/14/2026]