



421 Aviation Way
Frederick, Maryland 21701

T. 301-695-2000
F. 301-695-2375

www.aopa.org

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U.S. Navy F-35C
West Coast Homebasing EIS Project
Manager; Naval Facilities Engineering Command
Southwest (Code EV21/AK)
1220 Pacific Highway, Bldg. 1
San Diego, CA 92132

Re: Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for U.S. Navy F-35C West Coast Homebasing

To whom it may concern,

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), representing more than 400,000 members nationwide, submits the following comments in response to the U.S. Navy's Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for U.S. Navy F-35C West Coast Homebasing. AOPA appreciates and supports the role of the U.S. Navy and understands their need to train as they fight. The Joint Strike Fighter represents a significant technological leap in terms of weapons and performance capabilities. As a result, it is likely the airspace needs of the U.S. Navy will change as well and subsequent airspace changes may be required. In the event that airspace changes are required, AOPA requests that the U.S. Navy develop an informal airspace working group to assist with the U.S. Navy with airspace recommendations that will work for both the Department of Defense as well as civilian operators.

AOPA recommends that any changes to special use airspace as a result of the Joint Strike Fighter West Coast Homebasing be coordinated with an ad hoc committee of affected airspace users, similar to the Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI). While the scale of the GRASI changes required a much larger group, a smaller more focused group could accomplish a similar task in a short timeframe. Such a committee would be able to provide immediate feedback and possible mitigation measures that can be considered early in the process. This early engagement and collaboration among airspace users will result in a solution that accomplishes the military's training goals with minimal impact on the National Airspace System.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit comments on the Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for U.S. Navy F-35C West Coast Homebasing and look forward to working collaboratively towards a solution that accommodates all airspace users.

Sincerely,

Tom Kramer
Manager, Air Traffic Services