

ANNOUNCEMENT

Tipton Airport (FME) Expansion Draft Environmental Assessment (ER14-0476) and Impacts to Patuxent Research Refuge

Public comments due JAN 9, 2015

Dear Friend, Partner, Colleague:

Tipton Airport and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) are proposing runway improvements and an expansion of the airport, located adjacent to the North boundary of Patuxent Research Refuge, to accommodate a projected future increase in aviation activity. The proposed preferred alternative is for an easterly expansion of the runway and an obstruction clearance easement of approximately 74 acres of mature mixed hardwood forest on the refuge containing a well-developed blueberry understory and intermittent streams. This forest is known or suspected to support priority species such as Northern long-eared bat, eastern box turtle, forest interior dwelling birds, and native forest plant communities. The maps provided in the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) show the proposed obstruction clearance area, however, they do not clearly show the refuge property boundary, which approximately follows the road beyond the east end of the runway.

Although the draft EA has concluded that there will be a Finding of No Significant Impact, the refuge is concerned this is based on insufficient data and that there will be significant impacts to forest quality and wildlife on the refuge.

The draft EA is available for review from November 23 to December 22. The FAA and Tipton Airport are now accepting comments from the public. ***The deadline to get comments in is January 9, 2015.*** To view the entire EA or download a PDF copy of the EA, please visit ["http://tiptonairport.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Tipton Airport EA \(November 2014\).pdf"](http://tiptonairport.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Tipton_Airport_EA_(November_2014).pdf)
(Note: Large PDF file – 580 pages)

Copies of the draft EA are also available at:

- 1) Tipton Airport
7515 General Aviation Drive, Suite 1
Ft. Meade, MD 20755
- 2) Anne Arundel County Public Library
West County Branch
1325 Annapolis Road
Odenton, MD 21113
- 3) MD Aviation Office of Regional Aviation Assistance
991 Corporate Blvd., Suite 130
Linthicum, MD 21090
- 4) Federal Aviation Administration
Washington Airports District Office
23723 Air Freights Lane, Suite 210
Dulles, VA 20166

This is your opportunity to point out any and all concerns regarding the preferred alternative. We encourage you to send in your comments as individuals or through your respective agency or organization. You are welcome to share your views with the refuge as well. Patuxent Research Refuge will submit its comments to FAA in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Chesapeake Bay Field Office and the Department of the Interior.

Comments from the public should be submitted in writing to:

Mr. Michael Wassel, Tipton Airport Manager
7515 General Aviation Drive, Suite 1
Ft Meade, MD 20755

Or

Marcus Brundage, Federal Aviation Administration
Washington Airports District Office
23723 Airfreight Lane, Suite 210
Dulles, VA 20166

If you have questions or seek more information about this project, please contact Sandy Spencer at 301 497-5587 or Sandy_Spencer@fws.gov.