1998. This notice also announces the availability of this program for public review and comment.

Under section 103 of Title I of the Aviation Safety and Noise Abatement Act of 1979 (hereinafter referred to as ''the Act''), an airport operator may submit to the FAA noise exposure maps which meet applicable regulations and which depict noncompatible land uses as of the date of submission of such maps, a description of projected aircraft operations, and the ways in which such operations will affect such maps. The Act requires such maps to be developed in consultation with interested and affected parties in the local community, government agencies, and persons using the airport.

An airport operator who has submitted noise exposure maps that are found by FAA to be in compliance with the requirements of Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Part 150, promulgated pursuant to Title I of the Act, may submit a noise compatibility program for FAA approval which sets forth the measures the operator has taken or proposes for the reduction of existing noncompatible uses and for the prevention of the introduction of additional noncompatible uses.

Indianapolis Airport Authority submitted to the FAA on February 18, 1998, noise exposure maps, descriptions and other documentation, which were produced during Indianapolis International Airport's FAR Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study, February 1998. It was requested that the FAA review this material as the noise exposure maps, as described in section 103(a)(1) of the Act, and that the noise mitigation measures, to be implemented jointly by the airport and surrounding communities, be approved as a noise compatibility program under section 104(b) of the Act.

The FAA has completed its review of the noise exposure maps and related descriptions submitted by Indianapolis Airport Authority. The specific maps under consideration are the Existing Noise Exposure Map and 2002 Official NEM/NCP Noise Contours in the submission. The FAA has determined that these maps for Indianapolis International Airport are in compliance with applicable requirements. This determination is effective on April 15, 1998. FAA's determination on an airport operator's noise exposure maps is limited to a finding that the maps were developed in accordance with the procedures contained in appendix A of FAR Part 150. Such determination does not constitute approval of the applicant's data, information or plans, or a commitment to approve a noise compatibility program or to fund the implementation of that program.

If questions arise concerning the precise relationship of specific properties to noise exposure contours depicted on a noise exposure map submitted under section 103 of the Act, it should be noted that the FAA is not involved in any way in determining the relative locations of specific properties with regard to the depicted noise contours, or in interpreting the noise exposure maps to resolve questions concerning, for example, which properties should be covered by the provisions of Section 107 of the Act. These functions are inseparable from the ultimate land use control and planning responsibilities of local government. These local responsibilities are not changed in any way under Part 150 or through FAA's review of noise exposure maps.

Therefore, the responsibility for the detail overlaying of noise exposure contours onto the map depicting properties on the surface rests exclusively with the airport operator which submitted those maps, or with those public agencies and planning agencies with which consultation is required under section 103 of the Act. The FAA has relied on the certification by the airport operator, under section 150.21 of FAR Part 150, that the statutorily required consultation has been accomplished.

The FAA has formally received the noise compatibility program for Indianapolis International Airport, also effective on April 15, 1998. Preliminary review of the submitted material indicates that it conforms to the requirements for the submittal of noise compatibility programs, but that further review will be necessary prior to approval or disapproval of the program. The formal review period, limited by law to a maximum of 180 days, will be completed on or before October 12, 1998.

The FAA's detailed evaluation will be conducted under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 150, section 150.33. The primary considerations in the evaluation process are whether the proposed measures may reduce the level of aviation safety, create an undue burden on interstate or foreign commerce, or be reasonably consistent with obtaining the goal of reducing existing noncompatible land uses and preventing the introduction of additional noncompatible land uses.

Interested persons are invited to comment on the proposed program with specific reference to these factors. All comments, other than those properly addressed to local land use authorities, will be considered by the FAA to the extent practicable. Copies of the noise exposure maps, the FAA's evaluation of the maps, and the proposed noise compatibility program are available for examination at the following locations:

Federal Aviation Administration, Chicago Airports District Office, Room 201, 2300 East Devon Avenue, Des Plaines, Illinois 60018

Indianapolis Airport Authority, Post Office Box 100, 2500 S. High School Road, Indianapolis International Airport, Indianapolis, Indiana 46241–4941.

Copies of the FAR Part 150 Noise Compatibility Program documents are also available for public review during normal business hours at the following locations:

Decatur Township Branch Library, 5301 Kentucky Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana 46241

Marion County Public Library, 40 East St. Clair, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Mooresville Public Library, 220 W. Harrison Street, Mooresville, Indiana 46158

Plainfield Public Library, 1120 Stafford Road, Plainfield, Indiana 46208

Wayne Township Branch Library, 198 South Girls School Road, Indianapolis, Indiana 46214.

Aeronautics Section, Intermodal Division, Indiana Department of Transportation, Indiana Government Center North, Room N901, 100 North Senate Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204–2219.

Questions may be directed to the individual named above under the heading **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

Issued in Des Plaines, Illinois, on April 15, 1998.

Pené A. Beversdorf,

Acting Manager, Chicago Airports District Office, FAA Great Lakes Region.

[FR Doc. 98–10806 Filed 4–22–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

[Docket No. 29208]

Proposed Finding of No Significant Impact

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Proposed finding of no significant impact; Notice.

SUMMARY: The FAA prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA), evaluating a Sea Launch Limited

Partnership (SLLP) proposal to construct and operate a mobile, floating launch platform in international waters in the east-central equatorial Pacific Ocean. After reviewing and analyzing currently available data and information on existing conditions, project impacts, and measures to mitigate those impacts, the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA), Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation (AST) proposes to determine that licensing the operation of the proposed launch activities is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. Therefore, the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) would not be required and AST is proposing to issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

FOR A COPY OF THE SEA LAUNCH ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CONTACT: Mr. Nikos Himaras, FAA, Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation, Suite 331/AST–100, 800 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20591; phone (202) 267–7926, or refer to the following Internet address: http://ast.faa.gov

DATES: There will be a thirty (30) day comment period before the FAA makes its final determination on the proposed FONSI. Interested individuals, Government agencies, and private organizations are invited to send comments on the proposed FONSI to the address set forth below by May 26, 1998 by mail.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be sent to, Docket Clerk, Docket No. *29208,* Federal Aviation Administration, 800 Independence Ave., S.W., Room 915, Washington, D.C. 20591.

Proposed Action

If a foreign entity controlled by a U.S. citizen conducts a launch outside the United States and outside the territory of a foreign country, its launch must be licensed. 49 U.S.C. 70104(a)(3). The FAA determined that SLLP is a foreign entity controlled by a U. S. Citizen, Boeing Commercial Space Company. 49 U.S.C. 70102(1)(C); 14 CFR 401.5. Because it proposes to launch in international waters, outside the territory of the United States or a foreign country, SLLP must obtain an FAA license to launch. Licensing a launch is a Federal action requiring environmental analysis by the FAA in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.* Upon receipt of a completed application, the Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation must determine whether or not to issue a license to SLLP to launch. Environmental findings are required for a license evaluation. In this instance, the proposed action is the licensing by the FAA of all possible launches by the SLLP at the specified launch location.

SLLP proposes to conduct commercial space launch operations from a mobile, floating platform in international waters in the east-central equatorial Pacific Ocean. The SLLP is an international commercial venture formed to launch commercial satellites. It is organized under the laws of the Cayman Islands, BWI, and the partnership members are Boeing Commercial Space Company of the United States, RSC Energia of Russia, KB Yuzhnoye of the Ukraine, and Kvaerner Maritime a.s. of Norway.

The SLLP would use a launch platform (LP) and an assembly and command ship (ACS). A floating oil drilling platform is being refurbished in Norway to serve as the self-propelled LP. The ACS is being built in Scotland specifically for Sea Launch operations.

A Zenith–3 SL expendable launch vehicle fueled by Kerosene and liquid oxygen would be the only launch vehicle used at the Sea Launch facilities. In the first year of operation, SLLP intends to conduct two launches. Six launches are proposed for each subsequent year. The launches are proposed to occur at the equator in the vicinity of 154 degrees west to maximize inertial and other launch efficiencies. The distances from South America (over 7,000 km) and from the nearest inhabited island (340 km) are intended to ensure that stage one and stage two would drop well away from land and coastal populated areas.

The FAA evaluated open sea areas, the Kiribati Islands, the Galapagos Islands and the Home Port in Long Beach, California for environmental impacts from the proposed launch activities. The environmental study focused on Sea Launch activities conducted at the launch location, activities that may impact the launch range during nominal launches, and failed missions. Sea Launch payloads (i.e., commercial satellites) are not included in this evaluation because they will be fueled and sealed at the Home Port and will only become operational at an altitude of 35,000 km. The environmental study incorporates by reference an environmental assessment conducted by the Navy on the Home Port Facility which resulted in 1996 in a Finding of No Significant Impact. Potential environmental impacts of payloads are not discussed here except with regard to failed mission scenarios.

Environmental Impacts

Air Quality

Pre-launch activities that may impact air quality include LP and ACS positioning, final equipment and process checks, coupling of fuel lines to the integrated launch vehicle (ILV) prior to fueling, the transfer of kerosene and liquid oxygen (LOX) fuels, and decoupling of the fueling apparatus. Normal operations would result only in an incidental loss of kerosene and LOX. This loss of vapors would dissipate immediately and form smog. An unsuccessful ignition attempt would result in automatic defueling of the ILV. Defueling would release LOX vapor and approximately 70 kg of kerosene when the fuel line is flushed. The LOX would dissipate and the vapor and kerosene would evaporate, dissipate rapidly and degrade, thereby having little effect on the surrounding environment.

Potential environmental impacts from launch activities would include spent stages, residual fuels and combustion emissions released into the atmosphere and ocean from spent stages, combustion emissions, thermal energy and noise. During nominal launches, any impacts would be distributed across the east-central equatorial pacific region in a predictable manner. Kerosene released during descent of a failed launch attempt would evaporate within minutes. Any residual liquid oxygen would instantly evaporate without consequence.

The proposed launch location is relatively free of combustion source emissions. That fact coupled with the size of the Pacific Ocean and air space allows most launch emissions to dissipate rapidly. Launch effects on the boundary layer up to two thousand meters would be short term and cause minimal impacts. Emissions occurring in the boundary layer would be dispersed away from inhabited islands by prevailing easterly trade winds and local turbulence caused by solar heating. Because dispersion occurs within hours, the planned six missions per year would preclude any chance of cumulative effects.

All emissions to the troposphere would come from first stage combustion of LOX and kerosene. Photochemical reactions involving Sea Launch Zenit rocket emissions would form carbon dioxide (CO_2) and oxygenated organic compounds. Nitrogen oxide in the exhaust trail would form nitric and nitrous acids. Cloud droplets and atmospheric aerosols efficiently absorb

water-soluble compounds such as acids, oxygenated chemical compounds, and oxidants, thereby reducing impacts to insignificant levels.

Approximately 36,100 kg of carbon monoxide (CO) would be released into the troposphere during the first 55 seconds of flight resulting in an estimated CO concentration at Christmas Island of 9.94 mg/m3. This release is well below the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Permissible Exposure Limit (PEL) of 55 mg/m3, the Environmental Protection Agency level of concern of 175 mg/m3 and the industry Emergency Response Planning Guideline-2 of 400 mg/m3. Nitrogen compounds in the exhaust trail of liquid propellant rockets would cause a temporary reduction of ozone, with return to near background levels within a few hours. Models and measurement of other space systems comparable to Sea Launch indicate that these impacts would be temporary, and the atmosphere is capable of replacing by migration or regeneration the destroyed ozone within a few hours. The high-speed movement of the Zenit-3L rocket and the re-entry of the stages after their use may impact stratospheric ozone. The exact chemistry and relative significance of these processes are not known but are believed to be minimal.

Impacts to air quality would be minimal. Those impacts that do occur would be of short duration and would naturally reverse themselves over a short period of time.

Waste

Post-launch operations involve cleaning the launch platform for subsequent launches. Cleaning would result in particulate residues being washed from the LP with fresh water. Only a few kilograms of debris and residues would be generated. These materials would be collected and handled onboard as solid waste for later disposal at the Home Port.

Noise

Noise from a launch is calculated at approximately 150 decibels at 378 meters with the equivalent sound intensity in the water estimated at less than 75 decibels. Due to the small number of launches per year and scarcity of higher trophic level organisms, noise impacts are expected to be negligible.

Biological and Ecological Impacts

Pre-launch preparations include spraying fresh water from a tank on the LP into the LP's flame bucket, which would dissipate heat and absorb sound during the initial fuel burn. There would be minor impacts to the ecosystem because of the input of heated freshwater. However, the natural variation in plankton densities would ensure rapid and timely recolonization of plankton in the water surrounding the LP.

Launch and flight activities may impact the ocean environment by depositing spent stages and residual fuels. During nominal launches, these impacts would occur and be distributed across the east-central equatorial pacific region. It is unlikely that any falling debris would impact animals, although a small number of marine organisms would be impacted. Kerosene reaching the ocean would form a surface sheen covering several square kilometers. Over 95% of the kerosene sheen would evaporate from surface waters within hours with the remaining 5% dispersing or degrading in a few days. Plankton immediately beneath the kerosene slick would likely be killed. However, overall plankton mortality would be minimal as the population densities are greatest around 30 meters below the surface.

Two worst case scenarios were evaluated and determined to cause only minimal damage to the environment. The first case evaluated ILV failure and explosion on the LP with the ILV being fully fueled and ready for launch. This failure would result in an explosion of the ILV fuels scattering pieces of the LLV and LP up to 3 km away. Particulate matter from the smoke plume would drift downwind and be distributed a few kilometers before dissipating. Plankton and fish in the immediate area would be killed over the course of several days. Thermal energy would be deflected and absorbed by the ocean and 100% of the fuels would be consumed or released into the atmosphere through combustion or evaporation. Disruption to the atmosphere and the ocean would be assimilated and the environment would return to pre-accident conditions within several days.

The second scenario evaluated involved failure of the rocket's upper stage. Loss and re-entry of the upper stage and payload would result in materials and fuels being heated by friction and vaporizing. Remaining objects would fall into the ocean causing a temporary disruption as the warm objects cooled and sank. The risk of debris striking any populated areas or ecological habitats is very remote.

Socioeconomics

The SLLP launch activities would occupy the launch location for two to seven days during each launch cycle. Due to the brief period of time that the LP and the ACS will be present at the launch location, social and economic impacts to the Kiribati are considered negligible. The brief duration of launch activities, and the relative degree of isolation of the launch location provides a barrier between Sea Launch and the cultural and economic character of the Kiribati society. The baseline plan for operations does not include any use of facilities based on any of the Kiribati Islands. Impacts to the Islands, associated with employees transiting Christmas Island on an emergency basis, would be positive given that the expenditures would be an addition to the local economy.

Health and Safety

The FAA's licensing process will examine all safety-related aspects of the proposed launch operations. The SLLP adopted a common risk value, an upper limit of one in a million casualty expectations, as the population protection criteria. Public Safety assurance and analysis issues are discussed in the SLLP document ''Sea Launch System Safety Plan''. The launch location was shifted away from South America to ensure that stage one, the fairing, and stage two would drop well away from land and coastal commercial activity. The instantaneous impact point speed would increase over South America, decreasing the dwell time and potential risk as the rocket traverses land. The launch area, in the vicinity of 154 degrees west, was selected because it is located outside of the Kiribati 320 km exclusive economic zone and is roughly 340 km from the nearest inhabited island. The licensing process will evaluate these factors.

Threatened and Endangered Species

There are no known threatened and endangered species that will be impacted by the proposed launch activities.

Archeological and Cultural Resources

The launch activities, proposed to occur in the open ocean, will not impact archeological or cultural resources.

Cumulative Impacts

There are no other foreseeable planned developments in the area of the proposed launch location at this time; therefore, no cumulative impacts are expected. The Navy Mole facility is currently underutilized as compared to its historical level of operation and development. The Home Port facility may be the impetus for other development in the area.

Other Environmental Considerations

Home Port

The design, permitting, construction, and operation of the Home port would be managed under the jurisdiction of the state, regional, county, municipal, and port authorities of the Port of Long Beach, California. The Navy, as part of the California Environmental Quality Act Process, submitted the Mole EA to the California Coastal Commission for review, which determined the proposed Home Port activities were not inconsistent with the California Coastal Zone Management Program. The Port of Long Beach has approved the construction and operation of the Home Port through the Harbor Development Permit process. One of the standard conditions in the Harbor Development Permit is that SLLP will follow all applicable Federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including those pertaining to safety and the environment.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action alternative the SLLP would not launch satellites from the Pacific Ocean and the Port of Long Beach would remain available for other commercial or government ventures. The goals of 49 U.S.C. Subtitle IX, ch. 701 Commercial Space Launch Activities, would not be realized. Predicted environmental impacts of the proposed launch activities would not occur and the project area would remain in its current state.

Determination

An analysis of the proposed action has concluded that there are no significant short-term or long-term effects to the environment or surrounding populations. After careful and thorough consideration of the facts contained herein, the undersigned finds that the proposed Federal action is consistent with existing national environmental policies and objectives as set forth in section 101(a) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and that it will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment or otherwise include any condition requiring consultation pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of NEPA. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed action would not be required.

Issued in Washington, DC on April 17, 1998.

Manuel F. Vega,

Acting Deputy Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation.

[FR Doc. 98–10748 Filed 4–22–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

Notice of Intent To Rule on Application 98–04–C–00–BTM To Impose and Use the Revenue From a Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) at Bert Mooney Airport, Submitted by the Bert Mooney Airport Authority, Butte, Montana

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of Intent to Rule on Application.

SUMMARY: The FAA proposes to rule and invites public comment on the application to impose and use PFC revenue at Bert Mooney Airport under the provisions of 49 U.S.C. 40117 and Part 158 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 158).

DATES: Comments must be received on or before May 26, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Comments on this application may be mailed or delivered in triplicate to the FAA at the following address: David P. Gabbert, Manager; Helena Airports District Office; Federal Aviation Administration; 2725 Skyway Drive, Suite 2; Helena, Montana 59602–1213.

In addition, one copy of any comments submitted to the FAA must be mailed or delivered to Mr. Rick Griffith, Airport Manager, at the following address: Bert Mooney Airport, 101 Airport Road, Butte, Montana 59701.

Air Carriers and foreign air carriers may submit copies of written comments previously provided to Bert Mooney Airport, under section 158.23 of Part 158.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David P. Gabbert, Manager; Helena Airports District Office; Federal Aviation Administration; 2725 Skyway Drive, Suite 2; Helena, Montana 59602–1213; Phone (406) 449–5271. The application may be reviewed in person at this same location.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FAA proposes to rule and invites public comment on the application 98–04–C–00–BTM to impose and use PFC revenue at Bert Mooney Airport under the provisions of 49 U.S.C. 40117 and Part 158 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR Part 158).

On April 16, 1998, the FAA determined that the application to impose and use the revenue from a PFC submitted by the Bert Mooney Airport Authority, Bert Mooney Airport, Butte, Montana, was substantially complete within the requirements of section 158.25 of Part 158. The FAA will approve or disapprove the application, in whole or in part, no later than July 24, 1998.

The following is a brief overview of the application.

Level of the proposed PFC: $3.00

Proposed charge effective date: February 1, 2000

Proposed charge expiration date: January 31, 2002

Total requested for use approval: $215,040

Brief description of proposed project: Land acquisition in fee for Runway Protection Zone, approach and transition areas and land acquisition for security fence improvements.

Class or classes of air carriers which the public agency has requested not be required to collect PFC's: On demand non-scheduled Air Taxi/Commercial operators.

Any person may inspect the application in person at the FAA office listed above under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** and at the FAA Regional Airports Office located at: Federal Aviation Administration, Northwest Mountain Region, Airports Division, ANM–600, 1601 Lind Avenue S.W., Suite 315, Renton, WA 98055–4056.

In addition, any person may, upon request, inspect the application, notice and other documents germane to the application in person at the Bert Mooney Airport.

Issued in Renton, Washington on April 16, 1998.

David A. Field,

Manager, Planning, Programming and Capacity Branch Northwest Mountain Region.

[FR Doc. 98–10807 Filed 4–22–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

Notice of Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) Approvals and Disapprovals

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Monthly Notice of PFC Approvals and Disapprovals. In March 1998, there were eight applications approved. This notice also includes