

Total Estimated Burden Hours:
40,000.

Status: New.

Contact: Michael Diggs, HUD, (202) 708-0558, ext. 2514, Joseph F. Lackey, Jr., OMB, (202) 395-7316.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of the Secretary

Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Development of the Palau Compact Road, Babeldaob Island, Republic of Palau

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, Department of the Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of the Interior announces that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for development of the Palau Compact Road, Babeldaob Island, Republic of Palau is available for public review and comment.

DATES: The Office of the Secretary will consider written information and comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement received by June 9, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Comments on the Draft EIS should be submitted to Mr. Allen Chin, CEPOD-ET-E, U.S. Army Engineer District, Honolulu, Fort Shafter, HI 96858-5440. Copies of this document may be obtained by writing to the above address or by calling 808-438-6974.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Allen Chin, CEPOD-ET-E, U.S. Army Engineer District, Honolulu, Fort Shafter, HI 96858-5440, telephone (808) 438-6974.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The proponent for the Proposed Action discussed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is the United States Department of the Interior as program manager and on behalf of the United States of America.

Operating under the authority of the Compact of Free Association which became effective on October 1, 1994, the United States of America agreed to assist the Republic of Palau in its efforts to advance the economic development and self-sufficiency of the people of Palau. Concomitantly, the two governments entered into a joint agreement for the construction of a major road system on the island of Babeldaob in accordance with section 212(a) of the Compact of Free

Association and as implemented by certain nation-to-nation agreements.

The Department of the Interior published a Notice of Intent to prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement in the **Federal Register** on March 7, 1996. Scoping meetings were held for governmental agencies and the public on April 24, 1996. Intensive scoping was also conducted during a Social Impact Assessment prepared under contract for the Department of the Interior.

The Proposed Action in the DEIS calls for construction of a safe, high-quality, all-weather, two-lane vehicular road system on the island of Babeldaob. This roadway has been configured as a loop system with a northern spur to serve as a direct transportation and communication link between the 10 states on Babeldaob Island.

Additionally, the road would provide access through, or proximal to, known areas having potential for agricultural, forestry, mining and quarrying, industry and tourism, and water resource and port development. It would also provide a land-based transportation corridor to and from the proposed site of the Republic of Palau's new capital in Melekeok State.

In addition to the Proposed Action, the following three primary alternatives were assessed: Alternative Transportation Systems, Alternative Roadway Alignment Schemes, and No Action. Alternatives Transportation Systems include enhanced use of coastal waters and the ocean as a transit surface by wind-powered sailing craft, individually-owned motorized vessels, or water buses and ferries, and a land-based mass transit system such as a bus system with exclusive roadway, fixed guideway, or rail system. Alternative Roadway Alignment Schemes include a single north-south roadway alignment along the central axis (spine) of Babeldaob Island, and a radial system converging on the future Republic of Palau capital to be sited in Melekeok State. No Action refers to noncompliance with section 212(a) of the Compact of Free Association and certain nation-to-nation agreements, no provision for a new, paved roadway system, and perpetuation of the existing land-based transportation system on Babeldaob Island.

The selection of a Proposed Action in the Draft EIS does not constitute a final decision. The Final EIS, as well as comments submitted on the Draft EIS, will be used by the Department of the Interior in reaching a final decision and developing a final array of measures to avoid, reduce, or mitigate adverse impact. The Record of Decision will be

approved at least 30 days after publication of the Final EIS to allow for public review and comment.

Supplemental NEPA documents may be prepared after contract award to address any substantive changes from the Proposed Action or substantive change in environmental impacts.

A Notice of Availability of the Final Environmental Impact Statement will also be published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the **Federal Register** and by the Department of the Interior in newspapers in the Republic of Palau.

Ferdinand Aranza,

Deputy Director, Office of Insular Affairs, Department of the Interior.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Receipt of Applications for Permit

The following applicants have applied for a permit to conduct certain activities with endangered species. This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, *as amended* (16 U.S.C. 1531, *et seq.*):

PRT-827386

Applicant: Larry L. Hagebusch, Long Beach, CA.

The applicant requests a permit to import the sport-hunted trophy of one male bontebok (*Damaliscus pygargus dorcas*) culled from a captive herd maintained under the management program of the Republic of South Africa, for the purpose of enhancement of the survival of the species.

PRT-826217

Applicant: Lawrence T. Epping, Salem, OR.

The applicant requests a permit to import the sport-hunted trophy of one bontebok (*Damaliscus pygargus dorcas*) culled from a captive herd maintained under the management program of the Republic of South Africa, for the purpose of enhancement of the survival of the species.

PRT-827581

Applicant: National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C.

The applicant requests a permit for the import of the skins, skulls and skeletal elements from three male Severtsov's wild sheep, (*Ovis ammon severtzovi*) taken in Uzbekistan in 1995 for the purpose of scientific research on