



**FEMA**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
DALLAM COUNTY COMMUNICATION TOWER  
DALLAM COUNTY, TEXAS  
HSGP PROJECT # 2014-SS-00029 (19876)**

**BACKGROUND**

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969; the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) regulations for implementing NEPA at 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 10; as implemented by the regulations promulgated by the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ; 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508); FEMA prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to assess the environmental impacts that might result from the construction of the proposed Dallam County Communication Tower. The project has been approved by the State of Texas (Recipient) and proposed by the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission (Subrecipient) under the application number 2014-SS-00029 (19876) of the Homeland Security Grant Program. FEMA provides funds under this program for activities which help enhance the country's ability to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from potential attacks and other hazards in the United States.

The proposed project is to construct a new 300-foot tall guyed-wired communications tower in Dallam County. The Subrecipient has indicated that the tower will greatly improve radio reception across two-thirds of Dallam County, including its western and northern sections, and thereby improving the public safety for residents, first responders, and motorists that travel U.S. Highway 87.

Two project alternatives were considered in the EA: 1) the No Action Alternative, and 2) the Proposed Action Alternative – the construction of a communications tower. Under the No Action Alternative, nothing would be done to improve the signal strength and radio reception in Dallam County. This alternative was considered unacceptable because there is a need to improve the public safety radio communications coverage in Dallam County. Taking no action would allow this problem to persist leaving residents and first responders in the western and northern parts of the county with insufficient communication coverage.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, FEMA would fund the construction of a new 300-foot tall guyed-wired communications tower near the intersection of Perico Lane and U.S. Highway 87 in Dallam County, Texas. This site, located at the coordinates 36.273056, -102.855944 in a fallow corner of a farm field, would significantly improve communications coverage for Dallam County. The tower would provide for more reliable interoperable communications for public safety first responders to protect the public.

A 12-foot x 12-foot x 6-inch reinforced concrete pad and a 2-foot x 3-foot generator pad would be built at the base of the tower. A modular 10-foot x 12-foot equipment shelter would be placed atop

the reinforced pad and a 16 Kilowatt propane backup generator would be installed on top of the generator pad. The tower, shed, and generator would be enclosed within a chain link fenced yard measuring 50-foot x 50-foot x 6-foot. Each of the three guy-wire anchors would also be fenced. Being in close proximity to a public road, no additional access drives will be needed to provide site access.

The public was notified of the availability of the EA by a public notice on December 25, 2015, in the *Dalhart Texan*. The EA was available for comment and could be viewed and downloaded from the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission website at [www.theprpc.org](http://www.theprpc.org). The EA could also be viewed at the Dallam County Library, and the public was invited to comment on the Proposed Action Alternative presented in the EA. No comments were received from the public during the 30-day comment period.

## FINDINGS

The Proposed Action Alternative as described in the EA will not significantly affect geology, soil, water resources, wetlands, floodplains, coastal resources, wildlife and fish, threatened or endangered species, migratory birds, historic properties, American Indian or religious sites, air quality, noise, infrastructure, or waste management. Positive long-term benefits for the community are anticipated since the project will provide better communication for first responders in the event of an emergency or natural disaster. During the construction period, short-term impacts to air quality, migratory birds, noise, and traffic are anticipated. All adverse short-term potential impacts have conditions to minimize and mitigate harm to the proposed project site and surrounding areas.

## CONDITIONS

The following conditions must be met as part of this project. Failure to comply with these conditions may jeopardize the receipt of federal funding.

1. Significant change, addition, and/or supplement to the approved scope of work, which alters the existing use and function of the structure, including additional work not funded by FEMA but performed substantially at the same time, will require resubmission of the application prior to construction to FEMA for reevaluation under NEPA.
2. This review does not address all federal, state, and local requirements. Acceptance of federal funding requires the Recipient/Subrecipient to comply with all federal, state, and local laws. Failure to obtain all appropriate federal, state, and local environmental permits and clearances may jeopardize federal funding.
3. Best Management Practices (BMPs) are required to reduce erosion and sedimentation. BMPs may include wetting soil to reduce erosion and dust, installing silt and sediment control fences, seeding, and wheat straw mulching.

4. BMPs are also required during construction to minimize potential for disturbance or conflict with migratory birds. Bird flight diverters are required to be installed on the tower's guy-wires to make them more visible to oncoming birds. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) compliant lighting is required to be mounted to the tower as a means of avian visual awareness.
5. The amount of soil permanently disturbed will be kept to a minimum and will only include the approximate 0.058 acres of land within the 50-foot x 50-foot tower compound.
6. The Recipient/Subrecipient will be responsible for having the contractor properly maintain vehicles and equipment used during construction.
7. The Recipient/Subrecipient will be responsible for having the contractor implement measures to minimize ground cover disturbances to mitigate encroachments on local species habitat.
8. If historic or archaeological materials are discovered during construction, all ground disturbing activities shall cease, the Recipient/Subrecipient will inform FEMA immediately, and FEMA will consult with the Texas Historic Commission.
9. Propane is required to be stored and well maintained in an American Society of Mechanical Engineers compliant tank.
10. Project construction will be carried out expeditiously to minimize the potential for noise.
11. Construction equipment is required to be located out of the traffic lanes during the tower construction.
12. The Recipient/Subrecipient will be responsible for having the contractor verify the potential presence of any underground lines before excavating.
13. The Recipient/Subrecipient will ensure that all applicable provisions of 47 CFR §1.1307(b), §§1.1310, and §§ 2.1093 are met. These provisions, recommended by the Federal Communication Commission, require the Subrecipient to consider the potential electromagnetic field impacts on the quality of the human environment.

## CONCLUSIONS

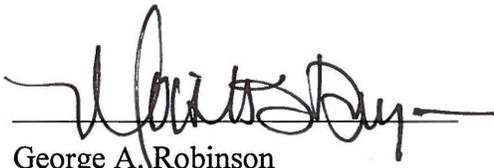
Based on the findings of the EA, coordination with the appropriate agencies, and adherence to the project conditions set forth in this FONSI, FEMA has determined that the proposed project qualifies as a major federal action that will not significantly affect the quality of the natural and human environment, nor does it have the potential for significant cumulative effects. As a result of this FONSI, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared (44 CFR 10.9) and the proposed project as described in the attached EA may proceed.

APPROVAL



Kevin Jaynes  
Regional Environmental Officer  
FEMA Region 6

Date 2/11/16



George A. Robinson  
Regional Administrator  
FEMA Region 6

Date 2/11/16