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**Ali Bahrami,**

*Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### 14 CFR Part 71

[Airspace Docket No. 97-AWA-2]

RIN 2120-AA66

#### Proposed Modification of the Tampa Class B Airspace Area; FL

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Proposed rule; withdrawal.

**SUMMARY:** This action withdraws a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) published in the **Federal Register** on November 18, 1998. In that action, the FAA proposed to modify the Tampa, FL, Class B airspace area by renaming two existing subareas, configure the boundaries of three subareas, and create an additional subarea. However, the conditions that prompted the development of the proposal did not fully materialize. Therefore, the FAA has determined that withdrawal of the proposed rule is warranted in order to best serve aviation safety and the efficient management of aircraft operations in the Tampa terminal area.

**DATES:** This withdrawal is made as of February 4, 2003.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Paul Gallant, Airspace and Rules Division, ATA-400, Office of Air Traffic Airspace Management, Federal Aviation Administration, 800 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20591; telephone: (202) 267-8783.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

The basis for the proposed modification of the Tampa Class B airspace area was a 1991 recommendation by the Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission that MacDill Air Force Base (AFB) be closed and the 56th Tactical Fighter Wing located there be deactivated. That action prompted the FAA to conduct a staff study of the Tampa terminal area to determine if any modifications to the Tampa Class B airspace area were warranted. The staff study resulted in a recommendation to raise the floor of Class B airspace over Tampa Bay south

of MacDill AFB to the boundary of Sarasota-Brandenton Class C airspace area from the current 1,200 feet mean sea level (MSL) to 3,000 feet MSL. The airspace floor in that area was established at 1,200 feet MSL in 1990 as an additional safety measure between civil aircraft operating in the vicinity of Tampa International Airport and the F-16 fighter aircraft based at MacDill AFB.

In 1995, however, the Commission amended its findings and recommended that MacDill AFB remain open and continue to host an active flying mission. The F-16 unit, formerly assigned to the base, was replaced by an air refueling wing comprised of KC-135 heavy jet aircraft.

The decision that MacDill AFB would remain open with a continuing flying mission was acknowledged in the NPRM. The FAA elected to proceed with the proposal to modify the Class B airspace area because it was anticipated that the termination of the fighter mission would lead to fewer operations at MacDill AFB, as well as less high-speed, low-altitude military aircraft operations over Tampa Bay.

It is with this in mind that, on November 18, 1998, the FAA published an NPRM in the **Federal Register** (63 FR 64016) proposing to amend 14 CFR part 71 to modify the Tampa, Florida Class B airspace area. Interested parties were invited to participate in the rulemaking process by submitting written data, views, or arguments regarding the proposal.

The FAA received a total of nine comments on the proposal. The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) wrote in support of the proposal stating that the elimination of Class B airspace below 3,000 feet MSL as proposed would result in more efficient use of the airspace by segments of the general aviation community. The United States Air Force (USAF) submitted two comments opposing the proposal. The USAF was concerned that the proposal to raise the floor of Class B airspace area, from 1,200 feet MSL to 3,000 feet MSL, south of MacDill AFB would pose a hazard to flight operations in the area. Another commenter also opposed the proposal stating that the existing 1,200-foot floor is necessary based on the amount of aircraft operations in the area, the number of airports located within a few miles of each other, and weather conditions over Tampa Bay that reduce long-range visibility much of the time. Five other commenters supported the proposal stating that the changes would benefit general aviation.

As a result of the NPRM, however, questions arose regarding the impacts of the change on the efficiency and safety

of operations in the Tampa terminal area if the floor of Class B airspace area was raised from the current 1,200 feet MSL to 3,000 feet MSL, as proposed. These concerns were based on the fact that MacDill AFB did not close and that the airspace over Tampa Bay encompasses high density traffic operating to and from six airports in the vicinity.

##### Airspace Study

In January 2002, the FAA conducted a thorough review of the proposed Tampa, FL, Class B airspace area modifications to better evaluate these concerns. The review included an analysis of traffic flows within the Tampa Approach Control airspace, with special emphasis given to that segment of Class B airspace from MacDill AFB south to the boundary of the Sarasota-Brandenton Class C airspace area. In its review, the FAA considered the following information: MacDill AFB remains open and hosts a variety of aircraft operations including KC-135 heavy jets, aviation elements of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Department of Agriculture, and routine transient aircraft. In addition, fighter aircraft from other locations frequently deploy to, and operate from, MacDill AFB to conduct training in the nearby off-shore and over-land military special use airspace areas. The MacDill AFB aircraft operations count for the year 2001 totaled more than 30,000 operations, contributing to the overall complexity of airspace in the Tampa terminal area.

The Tampa Class B airspace area was configured to provide Class B airspace protection for air carrier aircraft serving the Tampa International Airport (the primary airport) and to enhance the management of air traffic operations in this high-density terminal area. Air traffic control makes extensive use of the Class B airspace segment over Tampa Bay to ensure the safe and efficient management of aircraft operations in the terminal area. Raising the floor of Class B airspace to 3,000 feet MSL, as proposed, would place a significant portion of traffic in the Tampa terminal area outside of Class B airspace during critical phases of flight. For example, arrivals to Runways 36L/36R at Tampa International Airport are descended to 2,600 feet MSL to be at the approach intercept altitude. This altitude is 1,000 feet above the approach intercept altitude of 1,600 feet MSL used for Runway 04 at MacDill AFB. This altitude difference provides the required instrument flight rules separation between Tampa and MacDill arrivals. Aircraft departing Runway 22

at MacDill AFB are initially stopped at 1,600 feet MSL, southbound, in order to provide separation from Tampa arrivals and departures. When multiple aircraft are being vectored in the radar pattern for Runway 04 at MacDill AFB, the pattern often extends to the southwest of MacDill AFB as far as the Skyway Bridge and beyond.

In addition to the Tampa International Airport and MacDill AFB operations described above, the same general airspace is used by other aircraft descending into, or departing from, the Albert Whitted (SPG), St. Petersburg-Clearwater International (PIE), Peter O. Knight (TPF), and Sarasota-Bradenton International (SRQ) Airports. Arrivals to these airports are normally descended to 2,000 feet MSL to intercept the approach. The final approach paths for these airports lie within 10 nautical miles of each other.

The airspace segment from MacDill AFB southward to the Sarasota-Bradenton Class C airspace boundary contains a high volume of aircraft operations and a widely varied mix of instrument flight rules and visual flight rules aircraft operations.

#### Decision

Based on this latest study, the FAA has concluded that the current configuration of the Tampa Class B airspace area best provides for the safety and efficiency of operations within the Tampa terminal area.

In light of these considerations, the FAA has reexamined the proposed modification of the Tampa Class B airspace area and has decided to withdraw the proposal.

#### List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 71

Airspace, Incorporation by reference, Navigation (air).

#### The Withdrawal

In consideration of the foregoing, the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, Airspace Docket No. 97-AWA-2, as published in the **Federal Register** on November 18, 1998 (63 FR 64016), is hereby withdrawn.

**Authority:** 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40103, 40113, 40120; E.O. 10854; 24 FR 9565, 3 CFR, 1959-1963 Comp., p. 389.

Issued in Washington, DC, on January 29, 2003.

**Reginald C. Matthews,**

*Manager, Airspace and Rules Division.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Coast Guard

#### 33 CFR Part 165

[CGD14-03-001]

RIN 2115-AA97

#### Security Zones; Oahu, Maui, Hawaii, and Kauai, HI

**AGENCY:** Coast Guard, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking.

**SUMMARY:** The Coast Guard proposes to establish permanent security zones in designated waters adjacent to the islands of Oahu, Maui, Hawaii, and Kauai, HI. These security zones and a related amendment to regulations for anchorage grounds in Mamala Bay are necessary to protect personnel, vessels, and facilities from acts of sabotage or other subversive acts, accidents, or other causes of a similar nature during operations and will extend from the surface of the water to the ocean floor. Entry into the proposed zones would be prohibited unless authorized by the Coast Guard Captain of the Port Honolulu, HI.

**DATES:** Comments and related material must reach the Coast Guard on or before April 7, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** You may mail comments and related material to Commanding Officer, U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Office Honolulu, 433 Ala Moana Blvd., Honolulu, Hawaii 96813. Marine Safety Office Honolulu maintains the public docket for this rulemaking. Comments and material received from the public, as well as documents indicated in this preamble as being available in the docket, will become part of this docket and will be available for inspection or copying at Marine Safety Office Honolulu between 7 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

LTJG E. G. Cantwell, U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Office Honolulu, Hawaii at (808) 522-8260.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Request for Comments

We encourage you to participate in this rulemaking by submitting comments and related material. If you do so, please include your name and address, identify the docket number for this rulemaking (CGD14-03-001), indicate the specific section of this document to which each comment applies, and give the reason for each comment. Please submit all comments and related material in an unbound

format, no larger than 8½ by 11 inches, suitable for copying. If you would like to know your submission reached us, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed postcard or envelope. We will consider all comments and material received during the comment period. We may change this proposed rule in view of them.

To provide additional notice, we will place a notice of our proposed rule in the local notice to mariners. You may request a copy of this notice via facsimile by calling (808) 522-8260.

In our final rule, we will include a concise general statement of comments received and identify any changes from the proposed rule based on the comments. If, as we expect, we will make the final rule effective in less than 30 days after publication in the **Federal Register**, we will explain our good cause for doing so as required by 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3).

#### Public Meeting

We do not now plan to hold a public meeting. But you may submit a request for a meeting by writing to Marine Safety Office Honolulu at the address under **ADDRESSES** explaining why one would be beneficial. If we determine that one would aid this rulemaking, we will hold one at a time and place announced by a separate notice in the **Federal Register**.

#### Background and Purpose

Terrorist attacks in New York City, New York and on the Pentagon Building in Arlington, Virginia, on September 11, 2001, have called for the implementation of additional measures to protect national security. National security and intelligence officials warn that future terrorist attacks against civilian targets may be anticipated. This proposed rule is similar to a temporary rule published October 30, 2002, creating security zones in these areas until April 19, 2003.

#### Discussion of Proposed Rule

The Coast Guard proposes designated security zones in the waters adjacent to the islands of Oahu, Maui, Hawaii, and Kauai, HI. These security zones are necessary to protect personnel, vessels, and facilities from acts of sabotage or other subversive acts, accidents, or other causes of a similar nature during operations. In addition to creating security zones, this proposed rule would also amend an anchorage grounds regulation by adding the requirement that permission of the Captain of the Port be obtained before entering anchorage grounds in Mamala Bay.