

# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

As Lead Federal Agency pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

## FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

### REQUEST FOR OPERATIONS SPECIFICATIONS AMENDMENT BY HORIZON AIR TO PROVIDE SCHEDULED AIR SERVICE TO MAMMOTH YOSEMITE AIRPORT Mammoth Lakes, Mono County, California

As indicated in the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Notice of Intent published in the Federal Register on July 24, 2006, 71 FR 41859, the FAA, as the lead agency, prepared this DEIS to disclose the potential environmental impacts of FAA approval of Horizon Air's request for amendment of their Operations Specifications to accommodate proposed scheduled commercial air service into Mammoth Yosemite Airport (MMH). Horizon Air's proposed service includes two daily flights beginning in the winter ski season of 2008/2009, increasing to no more than eight daily flights in 2011. The proposed scheduled commercial air service would be provided using a Bombardier DHC 8-402 (Q400 Dash 8) aircraft. No changes to the existing MMH airport runways or facility locations are proposed.

The establishment of scheduled commercial air service into MMH also necessitates a change in the airport's Operating Certificate from Class IV to Class I, pursuant to Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 139. The proposed scheduled commercial air service would utilize the existing airport runway and facilities.

The Proposed Action and the No-Action Alternative have been assessed in detail and the potential impacts are disclosed within this document. The FAA presents this EIS for agency and public review pursuant to the following public law requirements: Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act, and special purpose laws that apply to the Proposed Action.

March 2008

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**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**  
**REQUEST FOR OPERATIONS SPECIFICATIONS AMENDMENT BY HORIZON AIR**  
**TO PROVIDE SCHEDULED AIR SERVICE TO MAMMOTH YOSEMITE AIRPORT**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**The Horizon Air Proposed Air Service to Mammoth Yosemite Airport**

Horizon Air proposes to initiate scheduled commercial air service into Mammoth Yosemite Airport (MMH), which is owned and operated by the Town of Mammoth Lakes, CA. The proposed service would begin in December 2008 with two daily flights from Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) to MMH during the winter ski season (approximately December to April). Horizon Air has proposed to use their Bombardier DHC 8-402 (Q400 Dash 8) aircraft which can seat up to 76 passengers. The Q400 Dash 8 is part of the Bombardier Dash 8 family of turbo-propeller driven passenger aircraft. A depiction of a Horizon Air Q400 aircraft is presented in [Figure ES-1](#).

The Town of Mammoth Lakes has prepared and submitted to FAA a forecast of future commercial aviation activity at MMH. The FAA has reviewed and approved this forecast. Winter ski service is projected to increase to a maximum of eight flights per day by the year 2011. The aviation activity forecast also considers the addition of two flights per day during the summer months beginning in 2012.

**The Proposed FAA Action**

FAA's Proposed Federal Action consists of:

- Approval of the proposed amendment to operations specifications for Horizon Air to permit scheduled commercial air service to MMH using the Bombardier Q400 Dash 8 aircraft pursuant to 14 CFR Part 119.

FAA's Associated Administrative Actions include:

- Approval of the Town of Mammoth Lakes' Application for Certificate Amendment pursuant to 14 CFR Part 139, and
- Approval of modifications to the Town of Mammoth Lakes' MMH Airport Certification Manual pursuant to 14 CFR Part 139.

**Purpose of and Need for Proposed Action**

The purpose of FAA's Federal action is to evaluate a request from Horizon Air for the FAA to issue an operations specifications amendment to allow scheduled commercial air service to the Mammoth Yosemite Airport.

FAA's primary mission is to ensure safety in air commerce. One of the multiple mechanisms the FAA employs in fulfilling this mission is the issuance of operations specifications to commercial air carriers. Horizon Air has requested an amendment to its operations specifications, and therefore FAA has a need

to evaluate the requested operations specification amendment to determine that safety in air commerce and public interest allows the amendment, pursuant to 14 CFR Section 119.51.

49 U.S. Code Section 40101, Paragraph (a)(11), establishes as part of FAA policy “maintaining a complete and convenient system of continuous scheduled interstate air transportation for small communities and isolated areas with direct financial assistance from the United States Government, when appropriate.” MMH currently has no scheduled commercial air service. The nearest airport with scheduled commercial air service is Reno, NV, located approximately 170 miles away. The primary surface route from Mammoth Lakes north to Reno and south to Southern California is US 395. US 395 can be heavily trafficked and winter conditions frequently require the road to be closed. Mammoth Lakes is a tourist destination as well as a small community, with the local economy largely driven by tourism. While the Town's amenities are heavily used on the weekends, the mid-week period is often underutilized. The Town sees scheduled commercial air service as a means to attract additional tourists that would more likely stay beyond a weekend. This combination of factors demonstrates the need for scheduled commercial air service into MMH.

## Summary of Projected Environmental Impacts

**Table ES-1** summarizes the projected environmental impacts of the Proposed Action. The FAA has determined that the Proposed Action would have no significant impacts on any environmental category examined in this EIS pursuant to FAA Order 1050.1E.

## Key Environmental Issues Identified During Scoping

Key issues raised during the scoping process for this EIS included the following:

- Potential impacts of aircraft noise associated with the proposed scheduled commercial air service on parks and other recreational lands in the vicinity of MMH.
- Potential impacts of the proposed scheduled commercial air service on threatened and endangered species and other species of elevated concern in the vicinity of MMH.
- Potential impacts of the proposed scheduled commercial service on land use and land development in the vicinity of Mammoth Lakes, as well as potential impacts on the use of public recreation lands and facilities in the region.
- Potential impacts on water quality associated with aircraft operations at MMH associated with the proposed scheduled commercial service.

## Interested Agencies

The FAA has consulted with a range of resource agencies during the preparation of this EIS. Agencies which have expressed a particular interest in the Proposed Action have included:

- U.S. Department of Interior
  - The National Park Service
  - The Bureau of Land Management
  - The Fish and Wildlife Service

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture
  - Forest Service – Inyo National Forest
  - Forest Service – Sierra National Forest
- State of California
  - California Department of Fish and Game
  - California Regional Water Quality Control Board – Lahonton District
- Local Agencies
  - Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

## **Alternatives Evaluated**

The FAA has determined that the only reasonable alternatives available for study in this EIS are the approval of the proposed amendment to operations specifications for Horizon Air to permit scheduled commercial air service to MMH, and the No-Action Alternative, under which the proposed amendment would not be approved. Other alternatives evaluated but discarded included the use of alternative airports and the use of alternative aircraft.

## **Preferred and Environmentally Preferred Alternatives**

**Preferred Alternative:** The FAA preferred alternative is the approval of the proposed amendment to operations specifications for Horizon Air.

**Environmentally Preferred Alternative:** The Horizon Air EIS identified no significant difference in the potential environmental impacts under either the No-Action Alternative or the Proposed Action Alternative. However, under the No-Action Alternative the projected increases in potential environmental impacts would not occur at the same rate as the Proposed Action. Therefore, the No-Action Alternative is considered the Environmentally Preferred Alternative.

## **Other Permits and Approvals**

No additional federal permits or authorizations would be required to allow the introduction of scheduled commercial air service into MMH by Horizon Air.

## **Compliance With Applicable Laws and Regulations**

The EIS has been prepared in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations. Specific consultation with resource agencies has been conducted by the FAA pursuant to:

- The Endangered Species Act of 1973: Appendix H includes documentation of FWS concurrence
- The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966: Appendix G includes documentation of State Historic Preservation Officer concurrence

- Section 303, 49 U.S. Code Subtitle 1, formerly known as Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act “[DOT 4(f)]: Sections 4.5 and 5.5 document compliance with DOT 4(f)

## **Mitigation**

Implementing the Proposed Action would not result in any significant impacts; therefore, no mitigation measures are proposed.

## **Finding**

After careful and thorough consideration of the facts contained herein and following consideration of the views of those Federal agencies having jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to the environmental impacts described, 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.



Sources: [www.alaskaair.com](http://www.alaskaair.com), 2006



**Environmental Impact Statement**  
**Mammoth Yosemite Airport**  
Horizon Air Operations Specifications  
Amendment Service to/from MMH

PHOTOGRAPH OF Q400 AIRCRAFT

FIGURE  
ES-1

**TABLE ES-1  
SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

Environmental Impact Categories	Level of Impact		Exceeds Significant Impact Threshold <sup>2</sup>
	No-Action Alternative (2015)	Proposed Action (2015)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noise               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acres of non-compatible land use within the CNEL 65+ dBA area</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	0	0	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compatible Land Use               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acres of noise sensitive land use within the CNEL 65+ dBA area</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	0	0	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socioeconomic, Environmental Justice, Children's Health               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential or Business Acquisitions or Relocations</li> <li>• Division or Disruption of Established Communities</li> <li>• Disruption of Local Traffic Patterns</li> <li>• Disruption of Orderly Planned Development</li> <li>• Environmental Justice Considerations</li> <li>• Environmental Health and Safety Risks to Children</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	None None None None None None	None None Minor None None None	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary (Induced) Impacts<sup>1</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional jobs/population</li> <li>• Additional occupied housing units</li> <li>• Additional commercial space</li> <li>• Changes in public service demands</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	0 / 0 0 0 None	1,158 / 1,518 646 336,736 square feet Minor	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic, Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Resources               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of resources within the APE</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	0	0	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DOT Section 4(f)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct Impacts</li> <li>• Indirect Impacts</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	None	None	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fish, Wildlife, and Plants               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of Federally Protected Species Impacted</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	0	0	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air Quality               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2015 Air Pollutant Emissions (Annual Total - tpy)                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– CO</li> <li>– VOCs</li> <li>– NO<sub>x</sub></li> <li>– PM<sub>10</sub> / PM<sub>2.5</sub><sup>3</sup></li> <li>– SO<sub>2</sub></li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	69.68 4.60 1.88 0.77 0.29	92.41 5.41 4.34 0.93 0.49	No

**TABLE ES-1 (CONTINUED)  
SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

Environmental Impact Categories	Level of Impact		Exceeds Significant Impact Threshold <sup>2</sup>
	No-Action Alternative (2015)	Proposed Action (2015)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hazardous Materials</li> <li>• Solid Waste</li> <li style="padding-left: 20px;">– tons per day</li> </ul>	None	None	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural Resources</li> <li>• Energy</li> </ul>	None None	None None	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water Quality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surface Water</li> <li>• Groundwater</li> <li>• Water Supply</li> <li>• Wastewater</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	None None None None	None None Minor 1,800 gpd	No

<sup>1</sup> - Impacts within Socioeconomic Study Area of Mono and Inyo counties.

<sup>2</sup> - Based on FAA Order 1050.1E, Significant Impact Thresholds.

<sup>3</sup> - PM<sub>2.5</sub> is assumed to be the same as PM<sub>10</sub> for this analysis.

Source: URS Corporation, 2007.