



PRESS RELEASE

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Sustainable Coast Files Comments on “Spaceport Camden”

On June 14, the Center for a Sustainable Coast submitted comments to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) critical of the “Draft Environmental Impact Statement” (DEIS) for the proposed “Spaceport Camden” in the Harriett’s Bluff area of Camden County Georgia.

The Center described serious deficiencies in the DEIS, stating “We believe that the flaws in the DEIS are so numerous and substantive that, if these profound problems are corrected in the final EIS, the only finding possible would be to deny the project as proposed.”

Criticism of the DEIS focus on five major concerns of the Center:

- Lack of justification for the project – currently licensed spaceports in the U.S. are underutilized.
- Hazardous materials in the area severely restrict use of the proposed site.
- Residents and visitors are in harm’s way – unlike any other licensed spaceport in the U.S.
- “Danger zones” for rocket launching are grossly understated, misleading the public.
- Spaceport operations degrade the value of Cumberland Island National Seashore & Wilderness.

“It is remarkable that the FAA allowed this DEIS to be released with so many errors and omissions,” said the Center’s executive director, David Kyler. At a public hearing on the DEIS held in April, Kyler declared that, “Among many such environmental reports reviewed over the 40-plus years of my career, this is one of the worst I’ve ever seen.”

Perhaps the most glaring fault of the proposed spaceport, inadequately evaluated in the DEIS, is the significant endangerment to the public caused by residents and visitors being in the “launch danger zone (LDZ),” according to the Center’s review. No other licensed spaceport in the nation has occupied areas in the flight path of rocket launches.

Quoting from the Center’s written comments.

“Private property and public resources within the LDZ would be in jeopardy, and any damages incurred due to launches could be – and most likely would be – granted monetary compensation in civil court. In the event of a failed launch, such monetary compensation awards, for property damage alone, could be in the many millions of dollars. Cumulatively, over decades of operation, such court-awarded payments could amount to billions of dollars, by any reasonable range of estimated impacts. Despite these costs, the DEIS provides no evaluation of them.”

Moreover, by the Center’s reckoning, if rocket-launching operators using “Spaceport Camden” could not afford paying such monetary compensation, it is likely that taxpayers would ultimately be held accountable for shortages, since the spaceport is to be owned by Camden County.

Another key grievance underscored by the Center is the project’s affront to the public’s renowned interest in Cumberland Island National Seashore. Aside from offensively disrupting Cumberland’s treasured tranquility, which would substantially degrade visitor experience, “Scheduling launches while ensuring adequate public safety would be extremely expensive if not impossible to implement,” asserts the Center. The DEIS deflects this essential issue and marginalizes its significance, according to the Center’s review.

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Copies of Center comments are available from the Center. See more about issues the Center is addressing at <https://www.facebook.com/Center-for-a-Sustainable-Coast-141003446180/posts/>

Advocating responsible decisions that sustain coastal Georgia's environment and quality of life.