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National Reconnaissance Office Environmental Quality Team Award Nomination Narrative

Introduction and Background:

The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) Cape Canaveral Air Force Station (Cape) is the NRO's eastern space vehicle processing and launch facility. The NRO Cape's mission is complex, varied, and extremely important to national security. The NRO Cape's Environmental Quality Team has excelled in environmental, health and safety (EHS) management, usually defined as setting and meeting environmental management goals, objectives, and targets.

Summary of Achievements:

The team's exceptional EHS management performance and the strength of the NRO Cape's EHS Program were confirmed by their outstanding results on a third party, EHS Program audit. This audit of the NRO Cape was conducted from 2-11 May 2017, was comprehensive in scope, and served as an update to the program baseline. The audit results were one of the best ever received by an NRO site and identified only five minor EHS findings. The audit noted that the NRO Cape EHS management facilities are well maintained, and pertinent compliance documents, such as permits and regulatory inspections, were up-to-date and easily accessible for audit review. These were noted by the Auditors as indications of the good relationships the NRO Cape has established with the Cape's regulatory authorities. The NRO Cape's EHS Program is one of the NRO's flagship programs and its success is the result of NRO senior leadership's commitment to all aspects of EHS compliance. This commitment flows down through middle management to the lowest levels of all contributing elements.

The NRO Cape EHS Team was noted for being highly professional and actively engaged in maintaining high standards for environmental performance. The audit even noted that two of the five aforementioned environmental findings were not indications of noncompliance but rather opportunities for improvement. One such finding recommended that the NRO Cape evaluate double-wall piping for above-ground fuel transfer, which is not required by law. The second of these findings recommended improved placement of spill-response kits for forklift charging.

The audit made similar comments regarding the NRO Cape's Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Program, stating that it was an example of an effective safety culture demonstrating a strong commitment to safety. The overall NRO Cape OSH Program, evident at the time of this audit, demonstrated site-specific professional dedication, development, and commitment as well as knowledge of the applicable programs and training requirements. The audit stated that the two minor OSH findings were not indicative of overall program deficiencies. Rather, those two findings were of a potential fall hazard near an infrequently used set of doors, and lack of confined space signs on a water tank that provides backup cooling water.

In addition to receiving laudatory audit results, the NRO Cape has successfully addressed numerous environmental challenges that had the potential to impact site operations critical to

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national security. A significant one was the installation of a critically important power upgrade that passed through the natural habitat of an endangered bird species: the Florida Scrub Jay.

The NRO Cape team worked with multiple regulatory entities and NRO facilities to assure that the power upgrade could be completed successfully without affecting critical mission launches or disturbing the nesting of the endangered Florida Scrub Jay.

The NRO Cape team has successfully integrated environmental management with mission, energy, and operational activities. An example of this is the recent Energy Conservation Investment Program (ECIP) project undertaken by the Cape at the Eastern Processing Facility, the NRO's premier facility for space vehicle processing. Despite the fact that the facility is still relatively new at less than six years old, the Cape team successfully campaigned and received ECIP funding for a project to replace all of the facility's processing-area fluorescent lighting with light-emitting diode (LED) lighting. While the energy savings from the upgraded lighting fixtures were significant, the true cost savings associated with this project are the reductions in labor, equipment, and downtime associated with the slow, labor- and equipment-intensive process for replacing the old fluorescent light fixtures. When the facility's fluorescent lights needed replacing, the bay had to be shut down, a 180-foot man-lift was brought in, and then the man-lift exhaust system had to be modified. The lift was then used to replace fluorescent tubes in individual luminaries throughout the bay. LED lighting, on the other hand, can go longer periods of time between scheduled replacements. As a result, the bays will experience significantly less down time, so the labor and equipment costs for operations and maintenance will be decreased--all in addition to the cost savings for electricity.

The recent audit and the demonstrated results of meeting the challenge for integrating environmental management with maintaining critical operations show that the NRO Cape Environmental Quality Team has accomplished lasting environmental compliance results.