



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Office of the Air Traffic Organization
Western Service Area

2200 S 216th Street
Des Moines, Washington 98198

Elinor Gates
Lick Observatory
120-Inch Telescope Dome
7281 Mount Hamilton Road
Mount Hamilton, CA 95140

Dear Ms. Gates:

This is in response to your Notice of Proposed Outdoor Laser Operation(s) dated January 13, 2025, on adding a Laser Guide Star system at the Lick Observatory in Mount Hamilton, California. Limitations on laser beam propagation into navigable airspace are necessary in order to integrate your laser operation into the National Airspace System (NAS).

We have reviewed your request in accordance with FAA Order JO 7400.2P, Procedures for Handling Airspace Matters, and do not object to the above-requested operations through February 9, 2026, contingent upon strict compliance with the following conditions:

- Operations must be conducted at the following location and dates:

Lick Observatory
Mount Hamilton, CA 95140
Latitude 37°20'34.931" N / Longitude 121°38'13.689" W
Present Day to January 15, 2027

- The Laser Safety Officer (LSO) must notify Northern California Terminal Radar Approach Control (NCT) at (916) 366-4080, 24 hours prior to laser propagation and immediately upon termination. This requirement may be altered with NCT and Lick agreement.
- The LSO must be instantly accessible to Air Traffic Control (ATC) facilities during all laser operations at (408) 238-0652 or (408) 238-0651.
- The "intrusion" radar must be operational at all times during laser operation. The LSO must shut down the laser operation in advance of approaching aircraft and resume lasing only after the area is clear.
- Safety Observers must be in place during laser operation and have a clear view of the airspace. The observers must immediately notify the LSO if aircraft are observed encroaching on the affected area.

- Observatory personnel must mitigate the effects of the laser to the NAS and air traffic. The FAA takes no responsibility for performing any actions to assist in the mitigation of the laser effects.
- This letter does not relieve Lick Observatory, or any subsidiary related to the laser operations from the requirements of 14 CFR, Section 91.11, *Prohibition on Interference with Crew Members*. The sponsor and operator assume complete liability for interference with crew members performing duties aboard an aircraft caused by laser beam emission associated with this project.
- Laser operation must be terminated immediately upon the request of ATC.
- All associated personnel must be briefed on and have a complete understanding of the conditions and limitations contained herein prior to operation.
- Proposed configuration changes require our review and an updated Letter of Determination to be issued.
- This laser activity is published in the FAA Chart Supplement.

This determination concerns the effect of this proposal on the safe and efficient use of navigable airspace by aircraft and does not relieve the sponsor or operator of compliance responsibilities related to laws, ordinances, or regulations of any federal, state, or local government agency.

For additional information, please contact Greg Kardong, Operations Support Group, Western Service Center, at (206) 231-2230.

Sincerely,

B. G. Chew
Group Manager, Operations Support Group
Western Service Center