

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY (NOA)

Final Site-Specific Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Proposed Construction and Operation of the Puerto Rico National Cemetery Replacement

Morovis, Puerto Rico

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration (NCA) announces the preparation and availability of the Final Site-Specific Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the VA's Proposed Action to construct and operate Phase 1 of the Puerto Rico National Cemetery Replacement on approximately 50-acres of the VA's approximately 275-acre property located at 11.2 km PR 137 in Morovis, Puerto Rico. The Phase 1 cemetery would provide approximately 14,000 interment sites, supporting physical infrastructure, and require approximately 30 months to construct. Full details of the Proposed Action are provided in the Final SEA. The purpose of the Proposed Action is to continue to enable the National Cemetery Association (NCA) to provide eligible Veterans and their families with a National Cemetery of sufficient size and capacity to serve the projected needs in Puerto Rico for the next 10 years. The existing Puerto Rico National Cemetery located in Bayamón is anticipated to reach full in-ground interment capacity by 2022 and full columbarium capacity by 2030. The Proposed Action is needed to meet the NCA's goal of providing eligible Veterans with reasonable access to VA burial options.

Prior to completing the Final SEA, the VA completed a Draft SEA that documented the potential environmental impacts associated with implementing the Proposed Action and the avoidance and management measures to be implemented to ensure potential minor adverse impacts would not increase to a significantly adverse level. Both the Final SEA and Draft SEA were prepared according to the regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA, Public Law 91-190, 42 USC 4321-4347 January 1, 1970, amendments, and VA's Implementing Regulations (38 CFR Part 26). The Draft SEA was published for a 30-day public review period, which began when the Notice of Availability (NOA) published in *El Nuevo Dia* and *Primera Hora* on March 17, 18, 23 and 24, 2017. Additionally, regulatory agencies were notified by letter of the availability of the Draft SEA. Comments received were not in opposition to the Proposed Action and have been incorporated in the Final SEA.

Upon review of the Final SEA, the VA concludes that implementing the Proposed Action would not constitute a major federal action that would have a significantly adverse impact on the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(C) of NEPA of 1969. Accordingly, the VA has finalized a FONSI, which incorporates the Final SEA by reference, and concludes that the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. The FONSI completes the NEPA review process for this Proposed Action. The Final SEA and FONSI are available for review at <http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/EA.asp>. For further information and/or a copy of the Final SEA or FONSI, please contact: Mr. Glenn Elliott, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Construction & Facilities Management, 425 I (eye) Street, NW, Room 6W417a, Washington, D.C. 20001; fax to 202-632-5832; or e-mail at Glenn.Elliott@va.gov. Please reference "Puerto Rico National Cemetery Replacement" in any correspondence.