



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS | OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT PROGRAM

JUAN A. SABLAN MEMORIAL BUILDING | CALLER BOX 10007 | SAIPAN, MP 96950 | 670.237.2200 EXT. 500

FINAL PUBLIC NOTICE

UNDERGROUND POWER DISTRIBUTION TO CHCC HOSPITAL SAIPAN, COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS HMGP-4404-2-0012

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) proposes to provide federal financial assistance under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC or Subapplicant) in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), to mitigate impacts from severe storms by undergrounding a power transmission line to the Commonwealth Health Care Corporation (CHCC) Hospital from nearby power plants (Proposed Action). Pursuant to Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), and FEMA's implementing regulations at Title 44 Code of Federal Regulations Part 9, FEMA hereby provides interested parties with a notice of its final decision and an explanation of the alternatives considered.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to reduce severe storm impacts. The Proposed Action consists of the following: 1) 2.2 miles of trenching between the CHCC hospital and Power Plants 1 and 4; 2) conduit duct bank installation in the trench to house the underground transmission line; 3) installation of concrete footings and suspension of the conduit in order to cross a small creek; and 4) installation of concrete utility vaults along the duct bank approximately every 330 feet. The conduit bank would largely run adjacent to the roads in the public right of way, as necessary it will cross under roads or run through roads. Best management practices such as straw wattles and silt fencing will be utilized as appropriate.

The project area is depicted on the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), Map Numbers 6900000032C and 6900000034C, effective date April 3, 2006. The FIRM shows that approximately half of the project area is in Zones AE and AO, 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard, and half of the project area is within Zone X, area of minimal flood hazard. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) map also shows a riverine wetland that passes through the project area. There is a bridge over the riverine wetland, and the conduit will be suspended over the wetland to avoid impact. There are estuarine intertidal wetlands and palustrine wetlands identified on the NWI map adjacent to the project area.

Maps of the project area and its location within the floodplain and wetland are available for public review. Parties interested in reviewing a copy of the maps should contact the FEMA Region 9 Environmental Officer using contact information provided in this notice.

Two alternatives to the Proposed Action were considered: the No Action Alternative and Alternative 1, Harden Existing Infrastructure. Under the No Action Alternative, no construction activity would occur to address severe storm risks. This Alternative is not recommended because if no action is taken, the CHCC hospital would remain vulnerable to future severe storm events and the resulting potential for power loss and loss of critical healthcare services. Under Alternative 1, the existing aboveground infrastructure would replace wooden power poles with concrete power poles. Alternative 1 is not recommended because it would leave the power lines susceptible to damage and would still need to be de-energized when wind speeds exceed 75 miles per hour.

FEMA has determined that the Proposed Action is the only practicable alternative available; therefore, the Proposed Action must occur within the floodplain and wetland. The Proposed Action would not have a significant adverse impact on the floodplain or wetland.

Additional information about the Proposed Action may be requested by writing to the FEMA Region 9 Environmental Officer at FEMA, 1111 Broadway, Suite 1200, Oakland, California 94607, or fema-r9-ehp@fema.dhs.gov. All requests should be received no later than 15 days after publication of this notice. No action will be taken before this date.