



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality
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Eli D. Cabrera
Administrator

Janice E. Castro
Director, DCRM

Ref No: PLN21-088

June 17, 2021

Dr. Harriet Nash
Deputy Director, Coral Reef Conservation Program
Office for Coastal Management
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1305 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Federal Consistency Review for the Proposed Implementation of the Coral Reef Conservation Program

Dear Dr. Nash,

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) has reviewed the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office for Coastal Management (OCM) Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) Section 307 General Consistency Determination (GCD) for the implementation of the Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) within the coastal zone of the CNMI. The GCD was received by DCRM through email on April 30, 2021 and contains an evaluation of the CRCP Preferred Alternative, or the No Action Alternative, outlined in the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS). The Preferred Alternative to continue implementing the CRCP as it is currently being operated was reached in the Record of Decision (ROD). As outlined in 15 C.F.R. § 930.36(c), GCDs are issued “[i]n cases where Federal agencies will be performing repeated activity other than a development project (e.g., ongoing maintenance, waste disposal) which cumulatively has an effect upon any coastal use or resource...where the incremental actions are repetitive and do not affect any coastal use or resource when performed separately.”

The proposed action, as stated in the GCD and PEIS, includes: 1) monitoring, mapping, and research, 2) coral restoration, 3) land-based watershed restoration activities 4) buoy installation and marine debris removal, and 5) outreach activities. DCRM concurs that the proposed activities implemented through the CRCP are consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of the CNMI Coastal Management Program (CMP).

A GCD is issued for “de minimis activities or any other repetitive activity or category of activity(ies).” 15 C.F.R. § 930.36(c). Therefore, any new activities that may also affect any coastal use or resource under the CRCP program which are not de minimis or repetitive in

nature, or were not previously evaluated within the PEIS, shall trigger additional CZMA Section 307 federal consistency review. This includes construction activities and other activities to be conducted outside of existing restoration sites, as well as activities that require issuance of federal permits.

In addition, 15 C.F.R. § 930.36(c) provides that "If a Federal agency issues a general consistency determination, it shall thereafter periodically consult with the State agency to discuss the manner in which the incremental actions are being undertaken." DCRM also requests that supplemental coordination with OCM-CRCP be conducted on an annual basis, to discuss the manner in which the incremental actions are taken.

Thank you for coordinating with the CNMI DCRM. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Arthur Charfauros at (670) 664 8314 or fedcon@dcrm.gov.mp.

Sincerely,



for

JANICE E. CASTRO

Director

Division of Coastal Resources Management