

Public, Partner, and Stakeholder Review Summary – The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Draft Watershed Plan

The CNMI Draft Watershed Plan was distributed for a 45-day review period on March 1st, 2022 to the following Federal and local agencies: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Department of the Interior, CNMI Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM), CNMI Office of Planning and Development (OPD), CNMI Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality, CNMI Department of Forestry, CNMI Infrastructure Recovery Program, Office of the Mayor of Tinian, Office of the Mayor of Rota, CNMI Historic Preservation Office (HPO), and the CNMI Department of Public Works. The report link was posted online for public access and was sent directly to all agencies. No Federal Register notice was required. The team also coordinated with CNMI Commonwealth Utilities Corporation, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) following the release of the draft.

Formal comments were received from OPD and Tinian and Aguiguan Office of the Mayor (Appendix A). Comments related to referencing existing CNMI planning efforts and minor adjustments to the risk assessment, prioritization, and recommendations, which were addressed as applicable. Informal comments were received from DCRM and FEMA. A couple comments requested to include recommendations related to increasing unexploded ordnance (UXO) technical assistance and training opportunities for avoidance and clearing techniques during local construction and land clearing activities. Due to the scope and authority of the study, the team did not concur with the UXO comments and communicated this with the partners. The exclusion of this information did not result in changes to the report. The majority of the other informal comments received were related to minor adjustments to the risk assessment and prioritization, which were addressed. Additional informal one-on-one meetings were set up with several stakeholder agencies to review recommendations and incorporate their input, which refined the scope and scale of the recommendations and potential agency involvement.

Letters of Support were received from nine different agencies who may have a championing role in implementing recommendations: FEMA, USFWS, NRCS, DOE, EPA, NOAA, CNMI DCRM, CNMI OPD, and CNMI HPO.