U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Office of Construction & Facilities Management
Washington DC 20420

December 15th, 2023

Subject: Scoping for a Programmatic Environmental Assessment for Expansions and Improvements to U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemeteries

Dear Valued Stakeholder,

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration (NCA) provides burial services including gravesites, grave markers, and gravesite maintenance, for eligible Veterans, spouses, and dependents. The NCA currently operates 155 National Cemeteries in 42 states and Puerto Rico and 34 soldiers' lots and monument sites across the Nation. The VA proposes to perform cemetery expansions and/or infrastructure and building improvements at all National Cemeteries with the sole intent to maintain and improve the service to Veterans and their family and loved ones.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to support burial requests for eligible individuals and provide sufficient infrastructure to support the needs of Veterans, spouses, dependents, and staff at existing National Cemeteries. The Proposed Action is needed to provide burial benefits and services to Veterans, spouses, and dependents.

VA is preparing a programmatic environmental assessment (PEA) to assess the potential environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Action. The PEA aims to provide a streamlined NEPA compliance process for future National Cemetery projects that would result in less than significant environmental impacts. Use of the PEA would decrease the time and cost associated with having to prepare stand-alone NEPA documentation for those future National Cemetery projects that would meet the conditions of the PEA while ensuring that the environment is preserved.

VA is preparing the PEA in accordance with the regulations implementing the procedural provisions of the NEPA of 1969 (42 U.S. Code 4321-4370h), as implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508), and VA Implementing Regulations (38 CFR Part 26). The PEA will evaluate the potential direct and indirect impacts on the human environment from the Proposed Action and alternatives.

If you have comments on the scope of issues for analysis, input on potential alternatives, or information/analyses relevant to the Proposed Action, please submit your comments/input via email to vacoenvironment@va.gov with the subject line “National Cemetery Expansion PEA” within 30 days of receipt of this notice. For additional information or questions, please contact Mr. Fernando Fernandez at Fernando.Fernandez@va.gov. Reference “National Cemetery Expansion PEA” in your correspondence.

VA anticipates releasing the Draft PEA for a 30-day public review and comment period in 2024. VA will notify stakeholders via email/mail, publish a notice of availability of the Draft PEA in the Federal Register, and solicit comments at that time. The Draft PEA will be available for review via the VA website: https://www.cfm.va.gov/environmental/.

Respectfully,

KATHRYN DOMM

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Kathryn Domm
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Office of Construction & Facilities Management