

# Transcript

October 6, 2025, 6:29PM

**BA** **Bennett, Alec (CFM)** 1:05

So hello everyone.

I see that it's 2:30 PM Eastern.

Just wanted to a quick mic check to make sure that everyone can hear me.

**KW** **Kelly Sellers Wittie** 1:18

I can hear you.

**BA** **Bennett, Alec (CFM)** 1:20

Great. Thanks Kelly.

Umm.

So hello everyone.

Thank you for.

Signing on to the.

First, consultation meeting for the state Veterans Home Construction Grant program draft nationwide programmatic agreement.

Next slide please.

So my name is Alec Bennett.

I'm the deputy Federal preservation officer for the US Department of Veterans Affairs.

Before we get started, I did just want to say that this meeting is being recorded for those who are not able to participate.

VA is also taking notes and will retrain a summary for the administrative record.

If you would prefer not to be recorded, please decide either to just listen today or sign out and e-mail the VA Historic Preservation Office.

At the e-mail address that's here on the screen.

PA acknowledges the consultation is A2 way government to government exchange.

VA will meet with any tribal or native Hawaiian leader or their section 106. Contact that request a private or one-on-one meeting or discussion concerning the proposed nationwide programmatic agreement or any state Veterans Home program undertaking.

Please use the e-mail on the screen.

Or respond to the e-mail invitation to this webinar.

To make an arrangement.

Next slide please.

So thank you for joining today's webinar to discuss V as proposed nationwide programmatic agreement for the state Veterans Home Construction Grant program.

It has been nearly a year since we last met.

As I mentioned a couple minutes ago, I am Alec Bennett, Deputy Federal Preservation Officer for the US Department of Veterans Affairs.

I'm joined today by a number of VA colleagues, including.

Angela McArdle, the VA federal preservation officer.

Before we get started, Please note that the chat feature will be monitored throughout this call.

You can ask questions or post comments in the chat.

You we ask that you use the chat feature if you have a specific document or Web page reference so that we can record the link correctly.

These notes will be included in the administrative record.

We will pause the presentation at various points for questions and also take questions at the end.

Please use the hand raised feature if you would like to ask a question or provide a comment.

The comment period on the draft NPA remains open through October 17th.

The asks that you provide recommendations and suggestions via e-mail.

Those comments will be collated, summarized and posted to the VA Historic Preservation Office website.

This is the second round of meetings regarding the proposed state Veterans Home and P.

If you have a colleague or know of someone who could not attend today, please let them know that registration for round two remains open.

They can register by sending an e-mail to the historic preservation e-mail address or by visiting the VA Historic Preservation Office website.

Next slide please.

So the purpose of this call purpose of this meeting.

VA distributed the draft nationwide programmatic agreement for the state Veterans Home Grant program.

Last month.

That draft was included in the e-mail sent to your respective offices and is available online at the VA Historic Preservation Office website.

The purpose of today's meeting is to discuss the draft nationwide programmatic agreement for the state Veterans Home Grant program.

In the interest of everyone's time, VA intends to discuss the stipulations specific to allowances that VA is requesting.

But Virginia will open the floor at the end of the call for comments about other portions of the draft.

Next slide please.

So this is the one of the stipulations that was called out and that we would like to just, you know, briefly present on stipulation 6 refers to proposed exemptions in the nationwide programmatic agreement.

Specifically, undertakings to fall below the threshold for adverse effects to historic properties.

These exemptions would only apply for undertakings without ground disturbance or. If ground disturbance would be required.

In areas that have been determined not to contain intact archaeological deposits, either because the land was tested over the last 10 years or because the area does not have potential due to known ground disturbance.

And if the state Veterans Home subject to the undertaking was constructed after 1985.

Or determined to be not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places through consultation.

If these conditions are not met, then VA would follow standard section 106 consultation.

So just to expand upon that for a bit.

VA wood, for example.

Follow Standard Section 106 consultation for the construction of new State Veterans Home facilities, the state Veterans Home Program uses the term bed replacement projects for these types of for these types of projects.

One of the things that I wanted to do in this webinar is to kind of introduce that term just so.

That consulting parties can get familiar with it within the state Veterans Home context.

In addition to that replacement projects.

Demolition projects would also follow standard Section 106.

Next slide please.

So this slide highlights Appendix B of the proposed.

Nationwide programmatic agreement.

Appendix B includes a list of.

Proposed exemptions.

So these would be projects that would be included under those exemptions.

Many of these types of projects relate to safety systems such as nurse call systems and infection control.

Others relate to renovations.

Or remodeling of existing buildings and infrastructure, such as mold remediation, lead based paint abatement, roof and window replacements, appliance replacements and interior space renovations.

So let me pause there for a moment.

Are there any questions about the?

Proposed process in stipulation 6 or this list of Appendix B.

I see a hand raised. Barbara Howard.

**HB** **Howard, Barbara (She/Her/Hers) (ADM)** 11:33

Hi, this is Barbara Howard.

I'm from the Minnesota Shippo and I just have a question about the.

The the buildings and then this landscaping at the bottom here.

So what if you're 1985 or newer? Building is within a listed or eligible historic district?

And then the concern that I have is that landscaping in Appendix B also includes fencing, which could have an effect to the historic district.

**BA** **Bennett, Alec (CFM)** 12:06

So.

Barbara, thank you.

Thank you for that comment.

You know it is appreciated and it's something that we will.

You know, take into.

Take into account.

And we'll include that within the.

Comment matrix that's going to.

Follow.

This type of this.

The three.

The three webinars.

Basically, we would look at the.

Proposed projects and essentially determine you know, whether.

Would fit into those.

Exemptions, certainly we were thinking that, you know.

Landscaping would.

But you know typically mean certain types of projects, such as, you know, therapy gardens.

Landscaping.

In facilities.

That were.

You know.

Not historic. You know, that had been constructed, you know.

In the.

In the last, you know, couple of decades.

But we certainly appreciate that comment and and and we will take it into consideration. Thank you.

**HB** **Howard, Barbara (She/Her/Hers) (ADM)** 13:42

Thank you.

I'll also make sure that we have written comments that come in, I think that was our primary concern.

**BA** **Bennett, Alec (CFM)** 13:49

Great. Thank you.

I see Sarah Carr. You have your hand raised.

**CS** **Carr, Sarah (DOS)** 13:56

Hi. Yeah. I just had a quick question for you guys.

So I noticed in the definition you don't define previously disturbed ground.

That is something that I would really recommend that you define.

It's helpful for us archeologists.

**BA Bennett, Alec (CFM)** 14:12

So thank you, Sarah.

Appreciate that. And we are actually going to touch upon that in.

A follow up slide.

So that is something that will be discussed in just a minute or.

**CS Carr, Sarah (DOS)** 14:30

Wonderful. Thank you.

**BA Bennett, Alec (CFM)** 14:41

Any other questions?

Next slide please.

Still kind of, you know, connecting to the comment that Sarah just made, we have already received a comment from a consulting party.

About the stipulation related to high probability for archaeological deposits. You know as a result of that comment, we did just want to.

Call it out here in the.

Presentation.

And want to make sure the consulting parties are aware of this provision in the draft NPA.

I know if if you have comments you know, please e-mail us.

We're welcome to have that conversation on this webinar right now.

This is something you know, in addition to Sarah's comment, just from a few moments ago, you know, we have received an e-mail on it. So it's something that we are tracking.

And something that we will respond to.

Next slide please.

So one of the things that we touched on in the last round of consultation meetings which which did take place some time ago, it took place last fall.

One of the primary goals with this proposed MPA is the establishment of emergency or disaster response procedures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

VA as part of the state Veterans Home Grant program.

Did utilize emergency procedures under 36 CFR 800.12 I believe, and one of the consistent comments we did get back from the Advisory Council preservation is that

they did recommend that VA, you know, establish emergency procedures.

For this program.

So that was really, you know, directly related to that request.

So this part of the MPA connects to that.

The proposed procedures relate to VA's role as the grantor of funds to states.

As a kind of brief refresher to state Vern's home grant.

Program. You know VA provides.

Grant funding.

Two states for construction projects.

These are not VA facilities.

They're not VA owned facilities or state home facilities.

So you know VA, you know, within this framework is a grantor of funds, not a direct response team.

So you know.

Within the.

Emergency procedures. First BA would apply the exemptions we just discussed to these emergency response requests and so as an example, if there was a proposed. You know, replacement nurse call system as part of the emergency procedure that would be exempt.

You know, just as if VA was following.

When the procedures that were proposed under stipulation 6.

If a proposed under undertaking was not exempted.

Under the.

Under the proposed exemptions, a Virginia would consult within the comment period afforded by 36 CFR 800 point 12B.

In the events of a ongoing disaster or emergency, you know, such as the COVID-19 pandemic similar to that.

VA has requested that ACH.

Extend the 30 day period afforded by 36 CFR 800.12.

D.

So let me stop there.

Are there any questions about the proposed emergency response procedures?

Hearing none.

Thank you.

Let me move to the next slide please.

So here I want to just.

You know, open up the floor to questions or comments on any portion of the draft nationwide programmatic agreement or the State Veterans Home Grant program.

And.

One thing I should also mention.

You know if if you do have any, you know specific, you know, recommendations for text or edits to text. If you could please provide that recommendation.

Via e-mail.

If you would like to.

Provide a comment now.

Please feel free to do so and then you know follow up.

By e-mail.

Well, if that, you know comment would include kind of specific text recommendations.

Any other comments?

OK.

Thank you. Next slide, please.

So.

VA will be hosting this presentation and a copy of the meeting summary to the VA Historic Preservation Office website.

We do have a section of our website that's specific to this program to program alternatives, and so we're going to be, you know, including all information there.

Paula, thank you.

We have made a request, you know, for all comments on the draft NPA to be submitted by October 17th.

You know through e-mail.

You know next steps after that.

We will.

Consider all the comments provided and then develop a matrix of comments and responses.

And then we will post this to the VA Historic Preservation Office website and also push it out.

Through e-mail. So.

You know, we will review and consider.

All submitted comments.

Before.

Making revisions to the draft NPA.

Oh, and I see that Angela has posted the link to the program alternatives website in the chat.

Thank you, Angela.

So please feel free to.

To click on that link, that's where we're really compiling all of this information.

So you know, on this slide, we do have the.

E-mail address that we're really using for intake.

You know, and our web address.

You know we.

You know, do have you know about a week and a half left in the comment period.

We really look forward to receiving your comments and continuing this engagement.

You know, we really find this process to be, you know, useful and, you know, hearing about the the NPA and how we can.

Work with you on it.

Any last questions for me?

So.

Next slide.

So just wanted to say thank you everyone for for participating. We are going to have. Webinars scheduled for tomorrow afternoon and Wednesday afternoon.

It's going to be the the same presentation, but if any of your colleagues or any other offices that you know we're not able to attend today.

We are going to be doing this twice more, so certainly you know, if you have colleagues that weren't able to make it today, we will be here tomorrow and Wednesday as well.

So thank you again for your time and for your engagement.

And you know, one last plug, you know, if if you would like to have a one-on-one consultation meeting or.

Would like to talk to talk about this, separate from a webinar setting, please you know, reach out to our website.

We would be happy to to schedule to schedule that that meeting.

Thank you again everyone.

I hope.

That I hope that you have a good rest of your day.

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