



PUBLIC NOTICE

APPLICATION FOR CNMI WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION

The Antidegradation Policy of the Water Quality Standards of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands states that the protection and maintenance of the quality of the waters of the Commonwealth are an historic and legal right of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands, and that this shall be the public policy of the Commonwealth. Any proposed activity that will impact the waters of the Commonwealth must receive a Water Quality Certification from the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality (BECQ). In issuing a Water Quality Certification, BECQ must assure that the proposed activity complies with all applicable provisions of the CNMI Water Quality Standards and federal Clean Water Act, will not interfere with the attainment or maintenance of the existing or designated use of the Commonwealth waters, and that all appropriate and practicable steps have been taken to minimize potential adverse impacts to aquatic life and human health.

Upon receiving an application, BECQ issues a public notification which describes the proposed activity and potential impacts on water quality, aquatic life and human health. A thirty (30) day public comment period will commence from the date of the first publication of the notice.

The Administrator of BECQ may conduct a public hearing to solicit comments on the application if a hearing is requested by the public. BECQ will make a determination for issuing a Water Quality Certification based upon a complete technical review of the application and the public comments received.

BECQ is soliciting comments on the following application for a CNMI Water Quality Certification.

- 1. APPLICANT:** NEC Corporation, 7-1, Shiba 5-Chrom, Minato-ku
- 2. APPLICABLE STATUTORY AUTHORITY:** CNMI Commonwealth Environmental Protection Act (Public Law No. 3-23); CNMI Water Quality Standards, (NMIAC Chapter 65-130).
- 3. LOCATION OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY:** Philippine Sea at Lasarino Beach, Tinian, at N 14.982730°, E 145.610834°.
- 4. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY:** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is proposing to issue a permit to the applicant for the installation of two subsea cable branching units from the existing Proa and TPU Cable Systems that will land on Tinian, at Lasarino Beach. In addition, a bulkhead and conduit will be installed and buried on

the reef flat and beach. These improvements are components of the larger “Pika Project.” The cables will then connect into onshore infrastructure, including two beach manholes, being installed and operated by others.

5. IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED ACTION: Construction will utilize a temporary access corridor 20 feet in width and 360 feet long across the reef flat, and will result in the excavation of reef flat substrate within a 5-foot wide cable conduit trench that will be capped with concrete. Within the access corridor, construction equipment will drive over and potentially damage the reef flat substrate. The exact routing of the trenches and construction corridor is still under development in consultation with CNMI and federal resource management agencies. Construction activities will disturb and introduce sediment, and will also include placement of concrete, causing temporary lowering of water quality in the immediate vicinity of the project. Land-based activities at Lasarino Beach may result in additional temporary lowering of water quality due to sedimentation from construction site erosion.

6. PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES: In-water work will utilize silt curtains, sheet piles, or geotubes depending on the seabed conditions and contractor preference. Damage to the reef flat within the access corridor will be limited through the use of amphibious equipment and/or removable matting. Land-based construction activities will utilize erosion and sediment control best management practices to minimize water quality impacts. Water quality monitoring will be required.

The full Section 401 Water Quality Certification application may be viewed at <https://www.deq.gov.mp/news.html> or at the BECQ office on Chalan Pale Arnold, Gualo Rai, Saipan.

Written comments and inquiries should be submitted to BECQ within thirty (30) days of the first date of publication of this notice (by November 21, 2025). Please email comments to cnmi.waterquality@gmail.com, or mail to Administrator, Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality, P.O. Box 501304, Saipan, MP 96950.