



# NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS | Jacksonville District

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## ***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

### **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers clarifies position on Via Verde permit application**

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District has informed Puerto Rico Electric and Power Authority that its application for a Department of the Army permit to construct and install a natural gas pipe line transversing the island of Puerto Rico will be held in abeyance pending receipt of additional information and documentation.

The proposed 1,672-acre project area would impact 235 river and wetlands crossings, a total of 369 acres of jurisdictional Waters of the United States. The Corps renders permit decisions under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1972, which regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands.

The Corps informed the permit applicant, in a Dec. 22 letter, that its initial review of the project proposal and a preliminary review of comments received from resource agencies and the public following a Nov. 19 public notice revealed environmental and public interest concerns that cannot be adequately evaluated with the information initially submitted by the applicant. Among these concerns are public safety, environmental impacts, endangered species, habitat conservation and historic properties.

The National Environmental Policy Act requires that these concerns be properly addressed. Further, the Corps must coordinate with resource agencies, as appropriate, to satisfy Endangered Species Act (ESA), National Historic Properties Act and other legal requirements. At the direction of the Corps, the applicant is currently conducting cultural resources and ESA surveys, evaluating impacts and meeting with various agencies to address concerns.

The Corps will resume its evaluation once the applicant submits the required information. There is no estimate at this time of when the Corps expects to make a permit decision.

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For more information, including a copy of the Corps' Dec. 22 letter, please visit [www.saj.usace.army.mil/Divisions/Regulatory/interest.htm](http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/Divisions/Regulatory/interest.htm) and click on the link for Via Verde Natural Gas Pipe Line.

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