



# FORT ORD REUSE AUTHORITY

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Government Shutdown Impacts Fort Ord Reuse**

Over the course of the past weeks, many people have directly or indirectly experienced the impact of the US Government “shut down”. The shut down has caused impacts at the Presidio of Monterey and at the Naval Post Graduate School, but has also impacted the Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA).

When federal agencies lack appropriated funding authority, under the Anti-deficiency Act, agencies must cease operations except in certain emergency situations or when law authorizes continued activity. Failure of the President and Congress to reach agreement on interim or full-year funding measures has occasionally caused government shutdowns, the longest of which lasted 21 full days, from December 16, 1995, to January 6, 1996. Government shutdowns have necessitated furloughs of several hundred thousand federal employees, required cessation or reduction of many government activities, and affected numerous sectors of the economy.

FORA must communicate and receive feedback from multiple federal government departments to obtain approval of core mission related programs and work products. The most critical programs and activities are listed below:

1. **Environmental Services Cooperative Agreement Remediation Program (ESCA):**

A variety of government agencies oversee ESCA actions/decisions. The furlough of US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Army, and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) personnel greatly impacts the ESCA.

- Required EPA and Army document review and decision-making has been delayed by the time of the shut down, and work demand upon return will make it difficult for ESCA-RP to meet document deadlines, hold regular meetings, etc.
- FORA and BLM partner on community outreach events, trespass concerns, trail access monitoring, etc. BLM’s absence creates difficulty and coordination problems in several areas.

2. **Army Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Office:**

The BRAC Office reviews all ESCA Documents and processes the Proposed Plan and Record of Decision Documents. The BRAC Office also processes non-ESCA property transfers to FORA. Due to the government shutdown, several meetings have been deferred, which will result in multiple weeks or months of delay.

3. **Veterans Administration (VA):**

In house attorneys have been furloughed and not available for contract review or the sign off on approvals needed for the Department of Defense/VA Clinic. As a consequence, construction will likely be delayed.

4. **Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA):**

FORA and California State University Monterey Bay have been jointly processing a grant for establishing a business plan to remove certain blighted areas of the former Fort Ord. Due to the shut down, two meetings have been cancelled, processing of the grant has been delayed, and expected award will likely be deferred to next quarter.

5. **US Fish and Wildlife (USFWS):**

FORA's Draft Installation-Wide Multispecies Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) work has been delayed due to the government shutdown furloughs of USFWS and BLM employees. Prior to the government shutdown, FORA had scheduled conference calls and in-person meetings for October and November. As one of the two regulatory agencies with oversight of the draft HCP, USFWS's participation is essential/necessary to advance habitat conservation planning efforts. BLM is the largest habitat manager on the former Fort Ord and their participation has also been deferred, which further exacerbates delays. FORA has been forced to postpone HCP meetings until these employees return to work and are able to participate.

6. **Veterans Cemetery:**

All VA Cemetery Application processing is impacted by the furlough. While the funding issues have been addressed by the recent fund raising and grant actions, we expect grant processing delays to impact the design, environmental review, and engineering work necessary to move toward construction in the coming fiscal year.

In addition, each of these items will have an impact on FORA annual budget. The most significant impact will be the additional costs for consultants to reschedule and reprogram meetings associated with the HCP.

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