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Governor: Halt buildup construction

Gaynor D. Daleno | The Daily Post Staff 5 hrs ago



Gov. Eddie Calvo

"I have been provided no viable options by anyone in the federal government and now must resort to options not considered before."

– Gov. *Eddie Calvo*

Gov. Eddie Calvo announced yesterday he will ask for a “total stoppage” of military construction activities related to the decade-old agreement between the United States and Japan to move about 4,700 U.S. Marines from Okinawa to Guam.

Some of the construction activities directly related to the \$8 billion relocation of the Marines to Guam are underway, or have yet to start, but they’re all located within the military fence lines. It’s unclear if the governor can stop the military projects from proceeding within the military bases.

Calvo, in a press release, said he’s doing this because the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services continues to deny Guam employers’ petitions to hire foreign workers under the H-2B visa program.

Under the National Defense Authorization Act that’s working its way through Congress, however, there’s a provision that provides relief for military construction projects by allowing defense

contractors to hire foreign labor, if needed. That legislation passed the House but the combined Senate and House version is still being ironed out.

The governor has expressed concern that while the military construction projects will get relief from Guam's ongoing labor shortage, civilian projects won't get the same solution offered in the defense spending legislation.

'No viable options'

The governor's feisty stance followed his recent trip to Washington, D.C., where he had meetings with some of the top federal immigration and Homeland Security officials.

"I have been provided no viable options by anyone in the federal government and now must resort to options not considered before," the governor wrote this week to acting Director James W. McCament, of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

"I have directed my senior staff adviser on the military buildup to begin the process of informing the Department of Defense of my desire to request a total stoppage of any further military construction on Guam, while we reassess the Record of Decision and Programmatic Agreement," the governor said.

The record of decision and programmatic agreement are documents that gave the military's plan to build a Marine Corps base on Guam the green light.

Despite numerous calls and letters to the Department of Labor, Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in the last two years, there has been no resolution to the problem created with the denied requests to augment local labor workforces with skilled foreign laborers, the governor's office stated.

Gaynor Daleno