



United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region 2
Caribbean Environmental Protection Division
City View Plaza II–Suite 7000, #48 Rd. 165 km 1.2
Guaynabo, Puerto Rico 00968-8069

FACT SHEET

DRAFT NATIONAL POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM
Ponce Vieja Water Treatment Plant
PERMIT No. PR0022781

This Fact Sheet sets forth the principle facts and technical rationale that serve as the legal basis for the requirements of the accompanying draft permit. The draft permit has been prepared in accordance with Clean Water Act (CWA) section 402 and its implementing regulations at Title 40 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR), Parts 122 through 124, and the final Water Quality Certificate (WQC) issued by the Puerto Rico Environmental Quality Board (EQB) pursuant to CWA section 401 requirements.

Pursuant to 40 CFR 124.53, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico must either grant a certification pursuant to CWA section 401 or waive this certification before the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) may issue a final permit. On **April 17, 2017**, EQB provided in the WQC that the allowed discharge will not cause violations to the applicable water quality standards at the receiving water body if the limitations and monitoring requirements in the WQC are met. In accordance with CWA section 401, EPA has incorporated the conditions of the final WQC into the draft permit. The WQC conditions are discussed in this Fact Sheet and are no less stringent than allowed by federal requirements. Additional requirements might apply to comply with other sections of the CWA. Review and appeals of limitations and conditions attributable to the WQC were made through the applicable procedures of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and not through EPA procedures.

PART I. BACKGROUND

A. Permittee and Facility Description

The Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority (PRASA) (referred to throughout as the Permittee) has applied for renewal of its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. The Permittee is discharging pursuant to NPDES Permit No. PR0022781. The Permittee submitted Application Form 1 and Form 2C dated October 11, 2016, and applied for an NPDES permit to discharge treated wastewater from the Ponce Vieja Water Treatment Plant, Ponce, called the facility. The facility is classified as a minor discharger by EPA in accordance with the EPA rating criteria.

The Permittee owns and operates water treatment plant. Attachment A of this Fact Sheet provides a map of the area around the facility and a flow schematic of the facility.

The treatment system consists of the following:

The Ponce Vieja WTP is a water supply that provides conventional treatment to raw water from the Toa Vaca or Cerrillos Dams to supply potable water to Ponce. It has a capacity of 0.256 MGD (monthly average), and has a Sludge Treatment System (STS) to treat the filter backwashes and sedimentation tanks drains and discharge its effluent to the Portugués River.

Water is processed through the following units:

- Aeration
- Flash-Mixing
- Coagulation & Flocculation Tank
- Sedimentation Tanks (2)
- Filters

- Post Chlorination
- Sludge Treatment System also known as STS
- Chlorination System
- Dichlorination System

Sludge is thickened, dewatered and disposed in a municipal landfill.

Summary of Permittee and Facility Information

Permittee	Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority (PRASA)
Facility contact, title, phone	Mrs. Irma M. López-Santos, Executive Director Environmental Compliance and Quality Control (787) 620-2277, ext. 2379/2427
Permittee (mailing) address	Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority P.O. Box 7066 Barrio Obrero Station Santurce, Puerto Rico 00916-7066
Facility (location) address	Borinquen Ward Main Street, Ponce, PR 00715
Type of facility	Water Treatment Plant
Pretreatment program	N/A
Facility monthly average flow	0.256
Facility design flow	0.690 MGD (based on the day of expected maximum flow)
Facility classification	Minor

B. Discharge Points and Receiving Water Information

Wastewater is discharged from Outfall **001** to the Portugués River, a water of the United States, in the Portugués River Watershed.

The draft permit authorizes the discharge from the following discharge point(s):

Outfall	Effluent description	Outfall latitude	Outfall longitude	Receiving water name and classification
001	Wastewater from a sludge treatment system	18°, 01', 34" N	66°, 36', 37" W	Portugués River, SD

As indicated in the Puerto Rico Water Quality Standards (PRWQS) Regulations, the designated uses for Class SD receiving waters include:

- Use as a raw source of public water supply; and
- Propagation and preservation of desirable species, including threatened or endangered species.

CWA section 303(d) requires the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to develop a list of impaired waters, establish priority rankings for waters on the list, and develop TMDLs for those waters. The receiving water **has not** been determined to have water quality impairments for one or more of the designated uses as determined by section 303(d) of the CWA.

C. Mixing Zone/Dilution Allowance

A mixing zone or dilution allowance has not been authorized for the discharger.

D. Compliance Orders/Consent Decrees

The Permittee has a Consent Decree with the Agency (Civil Action No. 3:15-cv-02283 (JAG)) in which the facility is included. This consent decree does not affect this permit action.

E. Summary of Basis for Effluent Limitations and Permit Conditions - General

The effluent limitations and permit conditions in the permit have been developed to ensure compliance with the following, as applicable:

- Clean Water Act section 401 certification requirements;
- NPDES regulations (40 CFR Part 122); and
- PRWQS (August, 2016).

PART II. RATIONALE FOR EFFLUENT LIMITATIONS AND MONITORING REQUIREMENTS

CWA section 301(b) and 40 CFR 122.44(d) require that permits include limitations more stringent than applicable technology-based requirements where necessary to achieve applicable water quality standards. In addition, 40 CFR 122.44(d)(1)(i) requires that permits include effluent limitations for all pollutants that are or may be discharged at levels that cause, have the reasonable potential to cause, or contribute to an exceedance of a water quality criterion, including a narrative criterion. The process for determining reasonable potential and calculating water quality-based effluent limits (WQBELs) is intended to protect the designated uses of the receiving water, and achieve applicable water quality criteria. Where reasonable potential has been established for a pollutant, but there is no numeric criterion for the pollutant, WQBELs must be established using (1) EPA criteria guidance under CWA section 304(a), supplemented where necessary by other relevant information; (2) an indicator parameter for the pollutant of concern; or (3) a calculated numeric water quality criterion, such as a proposed state criterion or policy interpreting the state's narrative criterion, supplemented with other relevant information, as provided in 40 CFR 122.44(d)(1)(vi).

The effluent limitations and permit conditions in the permit have been developed to ensure compliance with all federal and state regulations, including PRWQS. The basis for each limitation or condition is discussed below.

A. Effluent Limitations

The permit establishes both Technology-based Effluent Limitations (TBELs) and WQBELs for several pollutants and the basis for these limitations are discussed below.

1. **Flow:** An effluent limitation for flow has been established in the permit. Monitoring conditions are applied pursuant to 40 CFR 122.21(j)(4)(ii) and the WQC.
2. **pH:** The effluent limitation for pH is based on technology-based secondary treatment standards for POTWs specified in 40 CFR 133.102(c).
3. **Temperature:** The effluent limitation for temperature is based on the water quality criterion for Class SD waters as specified in Rule 1303.1D. of PRWQS, and the WQC.
4. **Dissolved Oxygen (DO):** The effluent limitation is based on the water quality criterion for Class SD waters as specified in Rule 1303.2.D.2.a of PRWQS, and the WQC.
5. **Color:** The effluent limitation is based on the water quality criterion for Class SD waters as specified in Rule 1303.2.D.2.e of PRWQS, and the WQC.
6. **Total Residual Chlorine (TRC):** The effluent limitation is based on the water quality standards as specified in Rule 1303.1.J.1 of PRWQS, and the WQC.
7. **Total Ammonia Nitrogen:** The effluent limitation is based on the water quality criterion for Class SD waters as specified in Rule 1303.2 D.2.I of PRWQS, and the WQC. This parameter needs to be evaluated for this NPDES discharge and a monitoring only requirement has been included in the NPDES permit until an evaluation and determination of the effluent limitation is made.
8. **Turbidity:** The effluent limitation is based on the water quality criterion for Class SD waters as specified in Rule 1303.2.D.2.f of PRWQS, and the WQC.

9. **Taste and Odor Producing Substances:** The effluent limitation is based on the water quality criterion for Class SD waters as specified in Rule 1303.2.D.2.h of PRWQS, and the WQC.

10. **Suspended, Colloidal or Settleable Solids:** The effluent limitation is based on the water quality standards as specified in Rule 1303.1.E of PRWQS, and the WQC.

11. **Solids and Other Matter:** The effluent limitation is based on the water quality standards as specified in Rule 1303.1.A of PRWQS, and the WQC.

12. **Arsenic, Mercury, and Copper:** The effluent limitation is based on the water quality standards as specified in Rule 1303.1.J.1 of PRWQS, and the WQC.

B. Effluent Limitations Summary Table

1. Outfall Number 001

Parameter	Units	Effluent limitations					
		Averaging period	Highest Reported Value (1)	Existing limits	Interim limits	Final limits	Basis
Arsenic	ug/L		4.63	10	--	10	WQBEL
Color	Pt-Co		15	15	--	15	WQBEL
Copper	ug/L		12.9	10	--	11.6	WQBEL
Dissolved Oxygen	mg/L		5.2	≥ 5.0	--	≥ 5.0	WQBEL
Flow	MGD		0.816	0.256	--	0.256	WQBEL
Mercury	ug/L		0.0232	0.012	--	0.05	WQBEL
pH	SU		7.0-8.55	6.0-9.0	--	6.0-9.0	WQBEL
Residual Chlorine, Total	ug/L		0.51 mg/L	0.50 mg/L	--	11	WQBEL
Solids and Other Matters			--	--	--	--	WQBEL
Suspended, Colloidal or Settleable Solids			10.0	--	--	Monitor	WQBEL
Taste and Odor Producing Substances			--	--	--	--	WQBEL
Temperature	°C		30.7	≤ 32.2	--	≤ 32.2	WQBEL
Total Ammonia Nitrogen	ug/L		New	--	--	Monitor	WQBEL
Turbidity	NTU		27.0	50	--	50	WQBEL

Notes, Footnotes and Abbreviations

Note: Dashes (--) indicate there are no effluent data, no limitations, or no monitoring requirements for this parameter.

(1) Wastewater data from DMRs dated March 31, 2015 to February 28, 2017.

2. Outfall 001 Narrative Limitations

- a. The waters of Puerto Rico shall not contain floating debris, scum or other floating materials attributable to the discharge in amounts sufficient to be unsightly or deleterious to the existing or designated uses of the water body.
- b. Solids from wastewaters source shall not cause deposition in or be deleterious to the existing or designated uses of the water body.
- c. Taste and Odor Producing Substances shall not be present in amounts that will interfere with the use for potable water supply, or will render any undesirable taste or odor to edible aquatic life.
- d. Except by natural causes, no heat may be added to the waters of Puerto Rico, which would cause the temperature of any site to exceed 90°F (32.2°C).

C. Monitoring Requirements

NPDES regulations at 40 CFR 122.48 require that all permits specify requirements for recording and reporting monitoring results. The Part III of the Permit establishes monitoring and reporting requirements to implement federal and state requirements. The following provides the rationale for the monitoring and reporting requirements for this facility.

1. Influent Monitoring Requirements

This facility is not subject to influent monitoring requirements.

2. Effluent Monitoring Requirements

Effluent monitoring frequency and sample type have been established in accordance with the requirements of 40 CFR 122.44(i) and recommendations in EPA's TSD. Consistent with 40 CFR Part 136 monitoring data for toxic metals must be expressed as total recoverable metal.

D. Compliance with Federal Anti-Backsliding Requirements and Puerto Rico's Anti-Degradation Policy

Federal regulations at 40 CFR 131.12 require that state water quality standards include an anti-degradation policy consistent with the federal policy. The discharge is consistent with the anti-degradation provision of 40 CFR 131.12, 72 Federal Register 238 (December 12, 2007, pages 70517-70526) and EQB's *Anti-Degradation Policy Implementation Procedure* in Attachment A of PRWQS. In addition, CWA sections 402(o)(2) and 303(d)(4) and federal regulations at 40 CFR 122.44(l) prohibit backsliding in NPDES permits. Further, the Region 2 Antibacksliding Policy provides guidance regarding relaxation of effluent limitations based on water quality for Puerto Rico NPDES permits. These anti-backsliding provisions require effluent limitations in a reissued permit to be as stringent as those in the previous permit with some exceptions where limitations may be relaxed.

The effluent limitations in the permit are at least as stringent as the effluent limitations in the existing permit, with the exception of effluent limitations for Copper, and Mercury. The effluent limitations for these pollutants are less stringent than those in the existing permit. This relaxation of effluent limitations is consistent with the anti-backsliding requirements of CWA section 401(o), 40 CFR 122.44(l), EPA Region 2's Anti-backsliding Policy dated August 10, 1993, and Puerto Rico's Anti-Degradation Policy Implementation Procedure established in PRWQS. CWA Sec. 402(o)(2)(B)(i) allows backsliding if information is available which was not available at the time of permit issuance and would have justified a less stringent effluent limitation at the time of permit issuance. EPA has determined that it is appropriate to relax the effluent limitation for these parameters without violating anti-backsliding provisions of the CWA, in accordance with section 402(o)(2), since one of the exceptions to the provisions has been satisfied; and section 402(o)(3) since it complies with EQB's WQS which include antidegradation requirements. The EQB WQC constitutes a determination that the limit is sufficient to assure that the water quality standards are or will be attained.

Existing effluent limitations for 2,4,6-Trichlorophenol, 2,4-Dichlorophenol, 2,4-Dimethylphenol, 2,4-Dinitrophenol, 2-Chlorophenol, 2-Methyl-4,6-Dinitrophenol, BOD₅, Cyanide, Fecal Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms % Samples Exceeding Limit, Lead, Oil and Grease, Pentachlorophenol, Sulfide (undissociated H₂S), Total Nitrogen, and Zinc have been removed based on CWA section 402(o)(2)(B)(i). CWA section 402(o)(2)(B)(i) authorizes the backsliding of effluent limitations if information is available which was not available at the time of permit issuance that would have justified the application of a less stringent effluent limitation at the time of permit issuance. Based on review of effluent data since issuance of the existing permit, the modified discharge does not show a reasonable potential for the exceedance of water quality criteria for these parameters.

PART III. RATIONALE FOR STANDARD AND SPECIAL CONDITIONS

A. Standard Conditions

In accordance with 40 CFR 122.41, standard conditions that apply to all NPDES permits have been incorporated by reference in Part IV.A.1 of the permit and expressly in Attachment B of the permit. The Permittee must comply with all standard conditions and with those additional conditions that are applicable to specified categories of permits under 40 CFR 122.42 and specified in Part IV.A.2 of the Permit.

B. Special Conditions

In accordance with 40 CFR 122.42 and other regulations cited below, special conditions have been incorporated into the permit. This section addresses the justification for special studies, additional monitoring requirements, Best Management Practices, Compliance Schedules, and/or special provisions for POTWs as needed. The special conditions for this facility are as follows:

1. Special Conditions from the Water Quality Certificate

In accordance with 40 CFR 124.55, EPA has established Special Conditions from the WQC in the permit that EQB determined were necessary to meet PRWQS. The Special Conditions established in this section are only those conditions from the WQC that have not been established in other parts of the permit.

2. Whole Effluent Toxicity Testing

Part IV. Standard and Special Condition B.2 Whole Effluent Toxicity Testing was included in the permit to collect data necessary to determine whether this discharge has the reasonable potential to cause or contribute to an exceedance of Puerto Rico's water quality standards for toxicity, pursuant to water quality based permitting requirements at 40 CFR 122.44(d)(1), which requires EPA and delegated states to evaluate each National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the potential to exceed state numeric or narrative water quality standards, including those for toxics, and to establish effluent limitations for those facilities with the "reasonable potential" to exceed those standards. These federal regulations require both chemical specific limits, based on the state numeric water quality standards or other criteria developed by EPA, and whole effluent toxicity effluent limits.

This Condition also includes language to clarify the right of EPA to reopen this permit to include additional toxicity requirements if warranted.

3. Best Management Practices (BMP) Plan

In accordance with 40 CFR 122.2 and 122.44(k), BMPs are schedules of activities, prohibitions of practices, maintenance procedures, and other management practices to prevent or reduce the pollution to waters of the United States. The Permittee is required to develop a BMP Plan in Part IV.B.3.a of the permit to control or abate the discharge of pollutants.

4. Compliance Schedules

A compliance schedule has not been authorized for any pollutant or parameter in the permit on the basis of 40 CFR 122.47

PART IV. COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE PROVISIONS OF OTHER FEDERAL LAWS OR EXECUTIVE ORDERS

A. Coastal Zone Management Act

Under 40 CFR 122.49(d), and in accordance with the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended, 16 *United States Code* (U.S.C.) 1451 *et seq.* section 307(c) of the act and its implementing regulations (15 CFR Part 930), EPA may not issue an NPDES permit that affects land or water use in the coastal zone until the Permittee certifies that the proposed activity complies with the Coastal Zone Management Program in Puerto Rico, and that the discharge is certified by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to be consistent with the Commonwealth's Coastal Zone Management Program. The Permittee has indicated the outfall is not in a coastal area managed by the Commonwealth's Coastal Zone Management Program and, although nearby, EPA has

determined it will not affect the coastal area. Therefore, the requirements of 40 CFR 122.49(d) do not apply to this discharge.

B. Endangered Species Act

Under 40 CFR 122.49(c), EPA is required pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.* and its implementing regulations (50 CFR Part 402) to ensure, in consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) that the discharge authorized by the permit is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered or threatened species or adversely affect its critical habitat. No federally listed endangered or threatened species, or critical habitat, are in the vicinity of the discharge. Therefore, EPA has determined that the discharge is not likely to affect species or habitat listed under the ESA.

C. Environmental Justice

EPA has performed an Environmental Justice (EJ) Analysis for the discharge in accordance with Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Population and Low-Income Populations*, and EPA's Plan EJ 2014. EJ is the right to a safe, healthy, productive and sustainable environment for all, where "environment" is considered in its totality to include the ecological, physical, social, political, aesthetic and economic environments. In the NPDES permitting program, the public participation process provides opportunities to address EJ concerns by providing appropriate avenues for public participation, seeking out and facilitating involvement of those potentially affected, and including public notices in more than one language where appropriate. The facility is in an area characterized as a Community of Concern (COC) and therefore is subject to the EJ requirements. In the EJ Analysis, EPA determined that there is no potential for a disproportionate and/or adverse environmental burden in the COC since the conditions are similar through the Island. Nevertheless, EPA is committed to taking all necessary actions to minimize any possible and/or potential adverse effects on COC from the **Ponce Vieja WTP**.

D. Coral Reef Protection

Under Executive Order 13089, *Coral Reef Protection*, EPA is required to ensure that discharge authorized under the permit will not degrade any coral reef ecosystem. No corals or coral ecosystems are in the vicinity of the discharge.

E. Climate Change

EPA has considered climate change when developing the conditions of the permit. This is in accordance with the draft *National Water Program 2012 Strategy: Response to Climate Change* that identifies ways to address climate change impacts by NPDES permitting authorities (77 Federal Register 63, April 2, 2012, 19661-19662). Climate change is expected to affect surface waters in several ways, affecting both human health and ecological endpoints. As outlined in the draft National Water Program 2012 Strategy, EPA is committed to protecting surface water, drinking water, and ground water quality, and diminishing the risks of climate change to human health and the environment, through a variety of adaptation and mitigation strategies. These strategies include encouraging communities and NPDES permitting authorities to incorporate climate change strategies into their water quality planning, encouraging green infrastructure and recommending that water quality authorities consider climate change impacts when developing water load and load allocations for new TMDLs, identifying and protecting designated uses at risk from climate change impacts. The 2010 *NPDES Permit Writers' Manual* also identifies climate change considerations for establishing low-flow conditions that account for possible climatic changes to stream flow. The conditions established in the permit are consistent with the draft National Water Program 2012 Strategy.

F. National Historic Preservation Act

Under 40 CFR 122.49(b), EPA is required to assess the impact of the discharge authorized by the permit on any properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and mitigate any adverse effects when necessary in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.* EPA's analysis indicates that no soil disturbing or construction-related activities are being authorized by approval of this permit; accordingly, adverse effects to resources on or eligible for inclusion in the NHRP are not anticipated as part of this permitted action.

G. Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act

Under 40 CFR 122.49, EPA is required to ensure that the discharge authorized by the permit will not adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) as specified in section 305(b)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA), 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.* The Portugués River does not contain EFH.

PART V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

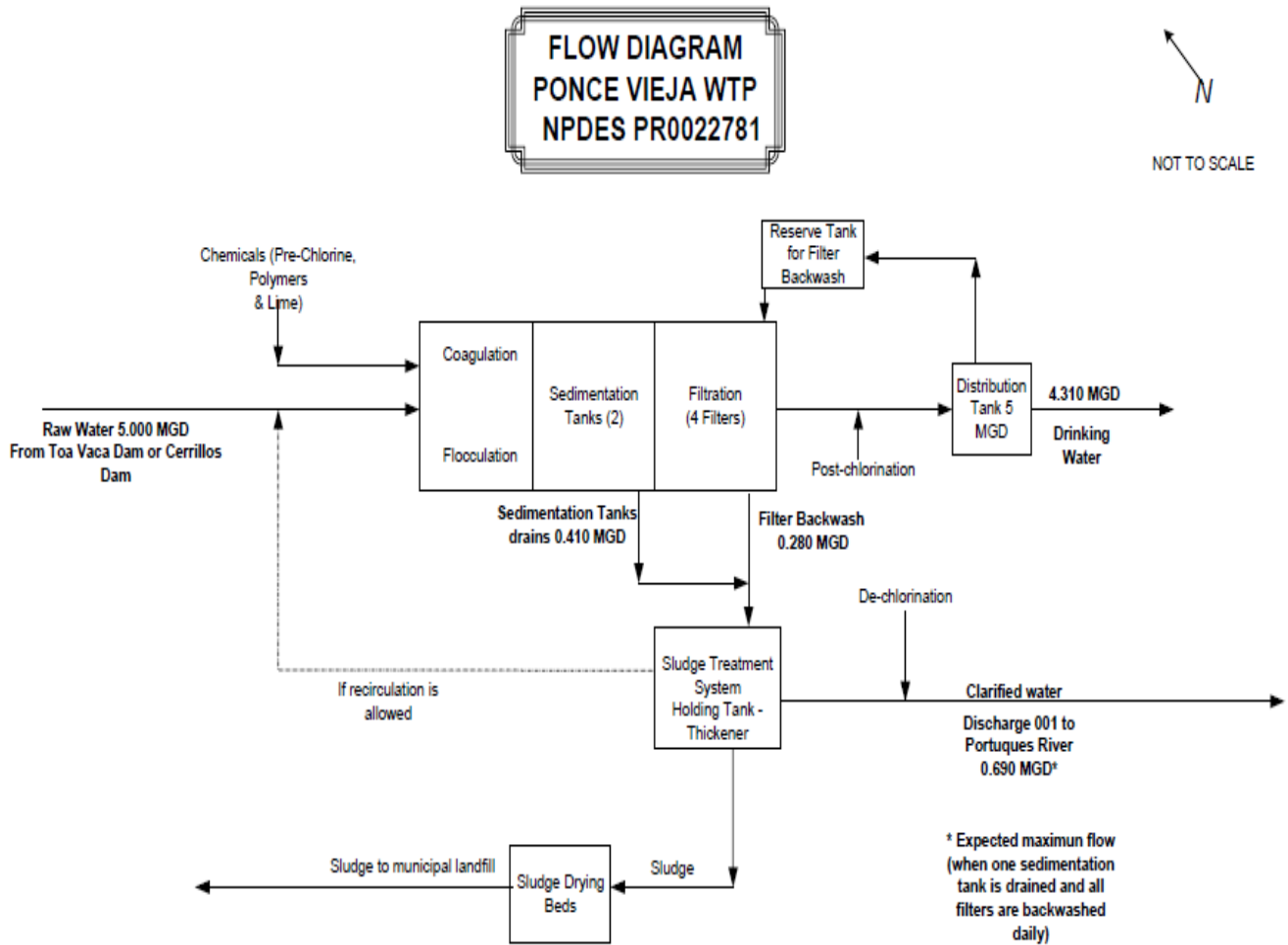
The procedures for reaching a final decision on the draft permit are set forth in 40 CFR Part 124 and are described in the public notice for the draft permit, which is published in *El Vocero*. Included in the public notice are requirements for the submission of comments by a specified date, procedures for requesting a hearing and the nature of the hearing, and other procedures for participation in the final agency decision. EPA will consider and respond in writing to all significant comments received during the public comment period in reaching a final decision on the draft permit. Requests for information or questions regarding the draft permit should be directed to

Carlos R. Villafañe-González
EPA Region 2, Caribbean Environmental Protection Division
Permit Writer Phone: 787-977-5858
Permit Writer Email: villafane.carlos@epa.gov

A copy of the draft permit is also available on EPA's website at www.epa.gov/region02/water/permits.html.

ATTACHMENT A — FACILITY MAP AND FLOW SCHEMATIC

The facility map and flow schematic are attached as provided by the discharger in the application.



**FLOW DIAGRAM
 PONCE VIEJA WTP
 NPDES PR0022781**

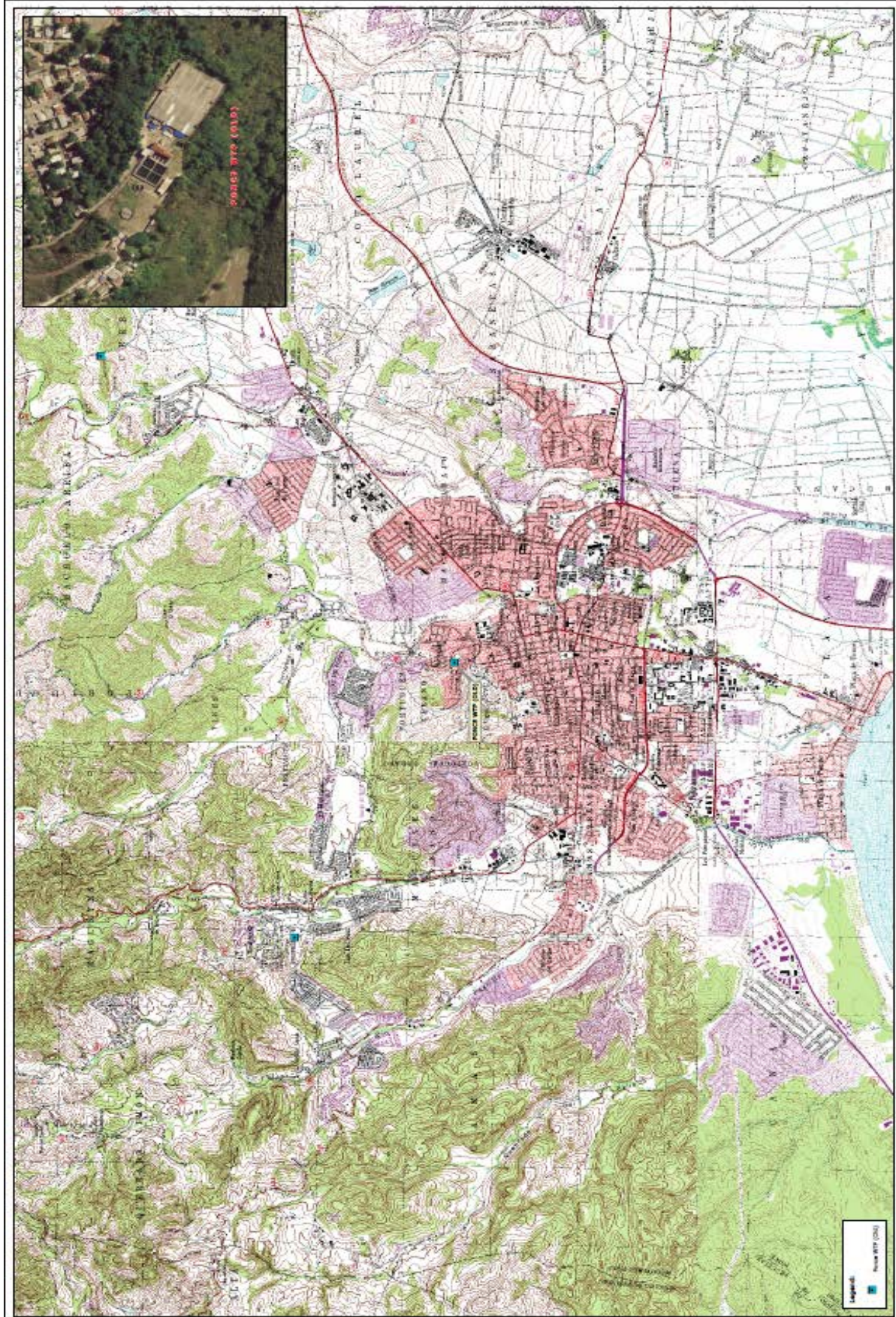


NOT TO SCALE

Notes:
 -Flows are estimated
 -Based on day of expected max flow

* Expected maximum flow
 (when one sedimentation
 tank is drained and all
 filters are backwashed
 daily)

Updated by A.
 Maldonado
 Sept 2018



Site Location Map - Ponce Water Treatment Plant (Old)

INFRASTRUCTURE








STRATEGIC PLANNING