

LOURDES A. LEON GUERRERO
GOVERNOR



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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR OF GUAM

April 24, 2023

The Honorable Debra A. Haaland
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

RE: Request for Continuation of Annual \$30 Million Appropriation for COFA Impact

Håfa Adai Secretary Haaland,

With the Compacts of Free Association (COFA) before you now, I hope you can understand my grave concern that the annual \$30 million appropriation to the Department of Interior for Compact Impact costs has been removed from the administration's budget request. The government of Guam receives \$12-\$14 million yearly, of which \$5.7 million pays for the lease-back program that funded the construction, collateral equipment, and maintenance of four (4) schools in Guam. This funding has helped alleviate the impact of migration by citizens of the Freely Associated States (FAS) on our local school system.

While Guam remains supportive of a prosperous and mutually beneficial US-FAS relationship, it is crucial to recognize that eliminating the \$30 million appropriation would hinder the government of Guam's ability to maintain payments for our school lease obligations and other social services. The appropriation was the only means that offered partial relief to affected state and territorial governments.

Last week I called Ambassador Joseph Yun, who negotiated the COFAs for the State Department, regarding the status of the appropriation. He stated that he will raise the issue with the Department of Interior. I hope you can rectify the uncertainty and ensure the appropriation will be added into the State or Interior Department's budget, even though the sum is still woefully insufficient to cover COFA migrant costs.

I have consistently advocated for five policy positions to be included in the renegotiated COFAs outlined in my numerous congressional testimonies and letters to the Administration and members of Congress. I have attached my 2023 Interagency Group on Insular Affairs (IGIA) Presentation, which I presented to you in March and elaborates on those policy positions.

The government of Guam has also taken on the task of tackling impact methodology concerns that have prevented full reimbursement for costs expended. Once our report is finalized and

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To: Secretary Haaland
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submitted to the Department of Interior and/or the Department of State, we expect to receive full reimbursement.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and I look forward to your consideration. If you have any questions, my office remains available to you.

Senseramente,



LOURDES A. LEON GUERRERO
Maga'hågan Guåhan
Governor of Guam

Enclosures: 2023 Interagency Group on Insular Affairs (IGIA) Presentation
Letter to Congressman Ed Case November 7, 2022
Letter to Secretary Blinken April 15, 2022
Impact of the Compact of Free Association on Guam FY 2004-2017