

GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES,
WILDLIFE, OCEANS AND INSULAR AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION, ENERGY, AND FORESTRY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NUTRITION AND HORTICULTURE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

423 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
(202) 225-2646
TOLL FREE: 1 (877) 446-3465
P.O. BOX 504879
SAIPAN, MP 96950
(670) 323-2647/8
P.O. BOX 1361
ROTA, MP 96951
(670) 532-2647
GENERAL DELIVERY
TINIAN, MP 96952
(670) 433-2647
www.Sablan.house.gov
kilili@mail.house.gov

February 12, 2010

The Honorable Benigno R. Fitial
Governor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Caller Box 10007
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Governor Fitial:

Now that you have signed into law the Grants Management Act, Public Law 16-48, I would like you to know that I look forward to working with your new Office of Grants Management to ensure that it is as successful as possible in increasing the flow of federal funds to the Commonwealth.

Many of the duties of the new office are either the same as work regularly done by the Congressional office or work that could be supported by my office. So it is my hope that your Grants Management Office will not hesitate to provide its recommendations to me or to ask for my assistance whenever needed.

For example, my office is already engaged in reviewing federal grant formulae at the time of the reauthorization or creation of federal programs to ensure that the Commonwealth receives the maximum amount possible, as Public Law 16-48 directs the Office of Grants Management to do. In addition, my office reviews pending legislation to ensure that the Commonwealth is not excluded outright from such programs. This is sometimes the case because the Northern Mariana Islands was never before represented in Congress or sometimes because of simple oversight. To address this latter problem I recently requested the Office of Legislative Counsel, which is responsible for drafting all legislation that comes before the House of Representatives, to initiate a policy of automatically including the Northern Mariana Islands and all the other U.S. territories in the scope of coverage for new bills, unless the author of a bill specifically asks for limits to coverage. Even if the Legislative Counsel adopts this as a general policy, however, discrepancies may still arise. Having your Office of Grants Management also on the alert for problems of coverage can only increase our effectiveness and I welcome the partnership.

With respect to the duty of your new office to assist potential recipients in identifying federal grant opportunities, I would like you to know that several months ago my office did discover a lack of functionality in the website of the *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* that obscured grant opportunities for the Commonwealth. I brought this problem to the attention of the General Services Administration, which maintains the website. As a result GSA is now reprogramming its site to remove the barrier and allow people from the Northern Marianas to find grant opportunities from the federal government more easily. Your Office of Grants

The Honorable Benigno R. Fitial
February 12, 2010
Page 2

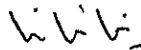
Management may discover similar anomalies. I want you to know that federal agencies can be very responsive to congressional offices and that your new office should not hesitate to enlist my help to get such problems fixed.

Lastly, I would like to remind your new Office of Grants Management that Members of Congress will often provide letters of support for grants, once applied for. Many applicants may not know that this means of reinforcing grant applications is available – again, because the Northern Marianas has never before had a Member of Congress to turn to. I am, however, already providing such letters. In October of last year at the request of your Department of Public Health, for instance, I wrote in support of its Health Information Technology Regional Extension Center grant. I want you to know that you can request similar support from me for projects and grant applications coming through your new office.

Governor Fitial, a CNMI Office of Grants Management is an idea that has been a long time in coming to reality. So, again, I congratulate you and the Legislature for the enactment of Public Law 16-48.

Now, I look forward to helping to make this office as successful as possible in partnership with you for the benefit of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Sincerely,



GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Froilan C. Tenorio, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Paul A. Manglona, President of the Senate