



## COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

**Eloy S. Inos**  
Governor

**Ralph DLG. Torres**  
Lieutenant Governor

**02 OCT 2015**

The President  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to initiate Section 902 consultations pursuant to the Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America. As you are aware, this important avenue permits an on-going assessment of our important relationship as required not less frequently than every ten years.

I believe two sensitive and complicated matters affecting our covenant agreement are: (i) the approaching expiration of the CNMI-Only Transitional Worker (CW) visa classification; and (ii) the United States Department of Defense's desire and intentions to acquire new properties in the Northern Mariana Islands (and to alter the proposed use of land already under lease).

First, the Northern Mariana Islands economic growth and potential development will – given the fact that our total population is only slightly more than 50,000 people – remain heavily dependent upon foreign workers in the immediate short-term future. However, the U.S. Commonwealth Worker Program is presently set to expire in 2019. This program presently permits approximately 14,000 non-U.S. citizen workers to live in the Northern Mariana Islands and work in essential labor intensive and specialized industries such as in the construction and health care provider fields. The Northern Mariana Islands is currently undergoing significant developments, and we foresee no other way to abruptly replace these guest workers at this stage. For these reasons and in order for the business community to prepare for the future – I request consultation on this important matter.

Second, I believe Section 902 consultations appropriate under the present circumstances as the recently proposed Department of Defense activities in the Northern Mariana Islands will – if carried out as planned – radically impact the fragile marine and terrestrial ecosystems and the quality of life for the citizens and residents living here. Moreover, the Department of Defense's proposed projects will fundamentally alter existing land lease agreements entered into by the Northern Mariana Islands and the United States nearly forty years ago.

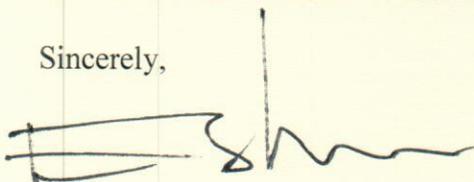
In sum, I do not believe that the environmental law process is the appropriate forum in which the Northern Mariana Islands should address or respond to the Department of Defense's efforts to, in effect, unilaterally amend existing land agreements or acquire new lands for additional

The President  
October 2, 2015  
Page -2-

defense related purposes. The acquisition and use of land in the Northern Mariana Islands by the military was the most important and contentious issues negotiated by F. Haydn Williams and the members of the Marianas Future Political Status Commission. The Department of Defense's present day intentions will in effect amend the Covenant and other technical documents. This is a serious issue ripe for consultations.

I look forward to beginning this process as soon as possible. In conclusion, I respectfully ask that you consider appointing a personal representative with a deep understanding and appreciation of the underlying historic developments and legal agreements, which ultimately resulted in the Northern Mariana Islands, joining the American political family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ELOY S. INOS', with a vertical line extending upwards from the top of the signature.

**ELOY S. INOS**