

GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN  
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, WILDLIFE, OCEANS  
AND INSULAR AFFAIRS  
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(202) 225-2646  
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[kilili@mail.house.gov](mailto:kilili@mail.house.gov)

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

January 16, 2014

The Honorable Sally Jewell  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C St. NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell,

Now that the President has exercised his authority pursuant to Public Law 113-34 to withhold temporarily the transfer of some submerged lands in the Northern Mariana Islands, one more provision of that law needs to be addressed. 48 USC §1705(d) requires the Secretary of the Interior to convey to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands “all right, title, and interest of the United States in deposits of oil, gas, and other minerals in the submerged lands” that were conveyed by Public Law 113-34. I write today to request that you fulfill this responsibility.

48 USC §1705(d) provides also that the conveyance of mineral rights in the submerged lands, now owned by the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, shall be subject to any lease, permit, or interest previously granted by the United States and that all rentals, royalties, or fees derived therefrom shall be payable to the Commonwealth. Although I am not aware of any such leases or grants, I would appreciate a list of any that may have been entered into by the United States and, if such arrangements do exist, your confirmation that the proceeds, as they accrue, will now be conveyed to the Commonwealth.

I would also like to share with you my letter to the President of January 15, asking that he direct the Departments of the Interior and Commerce to work promptly to reach agreement with the Commonwealth government on management of the Islands Unit of the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument. I have made the same request to Governor Eloy Inos. Completion of an agreement will allow for the submerged lands around the islands of Maug, Uracas, and Asuncion to be conveyed to the Commonwealth.

May I suggest that completion of an agreement might provide you with a specific reason to visit the Northern Mariana Islands and, perhaps, explore the Monument yourself.

Sincerely,



GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN  
Member of Congress

Enc: as noted

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The President  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Your Proclamation of this date withholds conveyance of certain submerged lands in the Northern Marian Islands, pursuant to your authority under U.S. Public Law 113-34.

The Proclamation does, however, provide for subsequent conveyance of the submerged lands around Farallon de Pajaros, Maug, and Asuncion, when the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior have entered into an agreement with the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands for coordination of management in these areas that ensures the protection of the resources of the surrounding Marianas Trench Marine National Monument.

Similarly, the Proclamation provides for subsequent conveyance of the submerged lands around Tinian and Farallon de Medinilla, when the Secretary of the Navy has entered into an agreement with the Commonwealth that ensures protection of military training within these areas.

I write, first, to thank you for your decision to withhold conveyance of these lands only temporarily. The people of the Northern Mariana Islands believe these lands have always been theirs. Thank you for respecting their view by not making federal ownership permanent.

I write, also, to ask that you direct the respective Secretaries to work expeditiously to achieve the necessary agreements with the Commonwealth and to report to you within a specified period of time on their progress towards that goal. I have written this day to the Governor of the Commonwealth encouraging him, likewise, to work quickly towards agreement, so that the submerged lands around all of the Northern Mariana Islands can soon be transferred to the ownership of the people I represent.

Thank you, again, for your decision; and thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN  
Member of Congress