



U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20416

April 19, 2011

The Honorable Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Sablan:

Administrator Mills has asked me to respond to your letter regarding the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) Pilot Grant Program.

Based on your letter, you are concerned that Northern Mariana Islands are not eligible to participate in the STEP Program since they were not specifically named in the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010. The SBA's definition of State can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), 2 CFR Part 225 (OMB Circular A-87), Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments. State means any of the several States of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, any territory or possession of the United States, or any agency or instrumentality of a State exclusive of local Governments.

Since the Northern Mariana Islands fit well within the meaning of State, there is no need to modify the program announcement to make them eligible to apply. SBA's Office of International Trade extends an invitation to the Northern Mariana Islands and encourages them to submit an application for the STEP Program. The STEP application closing date is May 10, 2011.

We appreciate your support of the Northern Mariana Islands small business community. If you and your staff have any questions, please contact the SBA Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs at (202) 205-6700.

Sincerely,

Luz A. Hopewell
Acting Associate Administrator
Office of International Trade

cc: Sally Murrell, STEP Program Coordinator