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FM HICOMTERPACIS SAIPAN MARIANAS ISLANDS

TO ZEN/ALDISTADS TERPACIS

ZEN/TT LNO GUAM MARIANAS ISLANDS

RUHNBAA/TT LNO KWAJALEIN MARSHALL ISLANDS

RUHNSAA/COMNAV MARIANAS GUAM MARIANAS ISLANDS

RUHNSAA/CINCPACREP GUAM/TTPI GUAM MARIANAS ISLANDS

RUHQHQA/CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

RUHQHQA/INTELLIGENCE CENTER PACIFIC (IPAC)

RUHJPBA/NAVINSERVO GUAM MARIANAS ISLANDS

RUWJAJA/COMTWELVE SAN FRANCISCO CA

RUEHC /SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

RUEKJCS/JCS WASHINGTON DC

RUENAAA/CNO WASHINGTON DC

RHHMBRA/CINCPACFLT MAKALAPA HI

RUHVAAA/CINCPACAF HICKAM AFB HI

RUHQHQA/CGFMFPAC CAMP H M SMITH HI

RHHMRBD/COMCBPAC PEARL HARBOR HI

RULSSAA/COMNAVFACENGCOM ALEXANDRIA VA

RHHMRBD/PACNAVFACENGCOM PEARL HARBOR HI

RUHHLHA/TT LNO HONOLULU HI

RUWJSLC/SAMTEC VANDENBERG AFB CA

RUWMHAC/FCDNA-LGA KIRTLAND AFB NM

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SECSTATE PASS TO DEPT INT/SEC INTERIOR/DOIA OSN
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA FOR PAC. ISL. MONTHLY
TTPI NO. 745

(NOTE TO COMMSTATIONS: ALL DISTRICT COMMUNICATIONS PLEASE
NOTIFY BROADCAST STATIONS TO PICK UP THEIR COPIES FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE)

(MORTON ISSUES SECRETARIAL ORDER TO RETURN TRUST TERRITORY
PUBLIC LANDS TO MICRONESIANS) ||

WASHINGTON, D.C. DECEMBER 28 (MNS)---SECRETARY OF THE
INTERIOR ROGERS C.B. MORTON ANNOUNCED FRIDAY (DEC. 27 WASHINGTON
TIME) THE ISSUANCE OF A SECRETARIAL ORDER WHICH WILL RETURN ALL
UNUSED PUBLIC LANDS IN THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC
ISLANDS TO LOCAL MICRONESIAN OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL. THE
SECRETARY'S ORDER, WHICH WILL BE MADE PART OF THE TRUST
TERRITORY CODE, PROVIDES THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR EACH DISTRICT
OF MICRONESIA TO REQUEST AND RECEIVE TITLE TO APPLICABLE
PUBLIC LANDS WITHIN ITS JURISDICTION.

THE GOAL OF THE SECRETARIAL ORDER IS TO FULFILL REPEATED
MICRONESIAN REQUEST THAT TRUST TERRITORY GOVERNMENT PUBLIC
LAND (ABOUT 60 PERCENT OF THE LAND AREA OF MICRONESIA) BE
FINALLY RELEGATED TO DISTRICT OWNERSHIP AND THE SECRETARIAL
ORDER WAS ISSUED AFTER CONSULTATIONS WITH MICRONESIAN
REPRESENTATIVES GOING BACK OVER A YEAR AND A HALF. THE
SECRETARIAL ORDER CALLS FOR EACH DISTRICT LEGISLATURE TO SET
UP A LOCALLY CONSTITUTED "LEGAL ENTITY" OR LAND BOARD TO HOLD
TITLE.

THE PURPOSE OF THE ORDER IS TO IMPLEMENT THE PROVISIONS
OF THE UNITED STATES POLICY STATEMENT OF NOVEMBER 4, 1973, TO
AUTHORIZE AND EMPOWER EACH OF THE DISTRICT LEGISLATURES TO
CREATE OR THE DESIGNATE A LEGAL ENTITY WITHIN ITS DISTRICT TO
HOLD TITLE TO PUBLIC LANDS WITHIN THAT DISTRICT IN TRUST FOR
THE PEOPLE THEREOF AND TO MANAGE OR DISPOSE OF THE SAME,
TO AUTHORIZE AND EMPOWER EACH DISTRICT LEGISLATURE TO ENACT
LAWS PROVIDING FOR THE EXERCISE OF THE POWER OF EMINENT
DOMAIN AND TO ESTABLISH ADJUDICATORY BODIES WHICH MAY UTILIZE
TRADITIONAL MEANS, WHEN APPROPRIATE, FOR SETTLEMENT OF CLAIMS
TO TITLE OF RIGHTS IN THE LANDS TRANSFERRED, AND TO AUTHORIZE
THE HIGH COMMISSIONER, UPON A FORMAL REQUEST BY A DISTRICT
LEGISLATURE, TO CONVEY CERTAIN PUBLIC LANDS TO SUCH A LEGAL
ENTITY WITHIN EACH DISTRICT. ||

THE DISTRICT LAND BOARDS WILL ALSO BE REQUIRED TO ABIDE BY
CERTAIN SAFEGUARDS AND LIMITATIONS INCLUDED IN THE SECRETARIAL
ORDER AND DESIGNED PRIMARILY TO FACILITATE ADMINISTRATION. ONCE

PAGE 2

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THE PUBLIC LANDS ARE TRANSFERRED TO DISTRICT LAND BOARDS, REVENUES RECEIVED FROM THOSE PUBLIC LANDS WILL ACCRUE TO THE DISTRICT LEGISLATURES.

WITH THE ISSUANCE OF THE SECRETARIAL ORDER, WHICH IS NUMBER 2969, THE NEXT STEP IN THE PROCESS OF THE PUBLIC LAND RETURN IS FOR ANY DISTRICT DESIRING TRANSFER OF PUBLIC LANDS TO SO INFORM THE HIGH COMMISSIONER THROUGH A RESOLUTION OF ITS DISTRICT LEGISLATURE. THE LEGISLATURE MUST CREATE A "LEGAL ENTITY" OR LAND BOARD WHICH COMPLIES WITH THE SPECIFICATIONS OF THE SECRETARIAL ORDER TO RECEIVE TITLE AND CONTROL. THE DISTRICTS MAY ALSO ESTABLISH A LOCAL ADJUDICATORY BODY TO DECIDE UPON THE FINAL RIGHTFUL OWNERSHIP OF THE LANDS IN QUESTION.

SECRETARY MORTON ANNOUNCED THE NEW ORDER IN A LETTER TO THE SPEAKER AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA. THE TEXT OF THE SECRETARY'S LETTER WAS ALSO MADE PUBLIC TODAY.

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PAGE 3

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