

(AIR MIKE ASKS CANCELLATION)

SAIPAN, FEB. 25 (MNS)---AIR MICRONESIA HAS FILED A REQUEST WITH THE U.S. CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD TO ALLOW THE AIRLINE TO SUSPEND ITS ONCE-A-WEEK SERVICE BETWEEN SAIPAN AND OKINAWA. ACCORDING TO AIR MICRONESIA GENERAL MANAGER BARRIE DUGGAN, THE REQUEST AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS WERE FILED WITH THE CAB ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22.

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DUGGAN SAYS THAT THE AIRLINE'S REQUEST CITES TWO MAJOR FACTORS IN THE DECISION: FIRST, A NEED FOR FUEL CONSERVATION IN THE CURRENT ENERGY CRISIS; AND SECOND, AN EXTREMELY POOR LOAD FACTOR. AIR MIKE REPORTS THAT ITS 77-PASSENGER PLANE OPERATED AT ONLY FOURTEEN PERCENT CAPACITY IN JULY OF LAST YEAR AND AT TWELVE PERCENT CAPACITY IN AUGUST--THOSE TWO MONTHS ARE NORMALLY THE BEST ONES FOR THE OKINAWA SERVICE. THAT MEANS ONLY EIGHT TO TEN PASSENGERS PER FLIGHT TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE AIR MIKE ROUTE.

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IN ANNOUNCING THE REQUESTED SUSPENSION OF SERVICE TO OKINAWA, DUGGAN INDICATED THAT THE LAST SAIPAN-OKINAWA FLIGHT WOULD BE SCHEDULED ON FRIDAY, MARCH 1. HE ADDED, "WE HAVE ELECTED TO FILE FOR SUSPENSION OF SERVICE AND MAINTAIN A GOOD SERVICE PACKAGE WITHIN THE TRUST TERRITORY."

(PRICE CONTROLS PROPOSED FOR THE MARIANAS)

SAIPAN, FEB. 25 (MNS)---ACCORDING TO THE FEBRUARY 22ND ISSUE OF THE MARIANAS VARIETY, A BILL WHICH WOULD ESTABLISH PRICE CONTROLS ON IMPORTED GOODS SOLD IN THE MARIANAS DISTRICT WAS INTRODUCED BY FELIPE A. SALAS DURING THE CURRENT SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE.

IT WAS REPORTED THAT THE BILL WOULD ALSO ESTABLISH A PRICE CONTROL COMMISSION; PROVIDE FOR CIVIL AND CRIMINAL PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE LAW, AND AUTHORIZE THE APPROPRIATION OF \$5,000 TO BE EXPENDED AND ADMINISTERED BY THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR TO CARRY OUT THE PROVISIONS OF THE ACT.

ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE BILL IS TO PROTECT THE CONSUMER FROM PRICES WHICH OFTEN RISE TO MANY TIMES THE IMPORTED COST OF AN ITEM, ESPECIALLY IN TIMES OF SHORTAGES CAUSED BY IRREGULARITIES OF SHIPPING AND THE LACK OF SUPPLY SOURCES.

UNDER PROVISIONS OF THE BILL, THE CONSUMER WOULD BE PROTECTED FROM SUCH EXPLOITATION BY "IMPOSING PRICE CONTROL ON THE SALE OF IMPORT ITEMS IN THE MARIANAS DISTRICT AND SIMULTANEOUSLY PROVIDING FOR ENFORCEMENT OF THE PRICE CONTROLS."

THE BILL WOULD APPLY TO ALL IMPORTED ITEMS AND WOULD ALLOW THE SELLER TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN HIS PRICE TO THE BUYER: COST OF GOODS; ACTUAL CHARGES FOR INLAND AND OVERSEAS FREIGHT; INSURANCE; AND IMPORT TAXES OR DUTIES--ALL OF THIS TO BE A SUM NOT GREATER THAN A FIFTY PERCENT OF THE COST OF THE GOODS.

AT A HEARING BEFORE THE LEGISLATURE'S ECONOMIC COMMITTEE, SAIPAN MERCHANTS HAVE EXPRESSED THE GENERAL FEELING THAT THE ACT "WOULD BE UNWORKABLE IN THAT OVERHEAD COSTS VARY FROM ITEM TO ITEM AND IF HELD TO A STRICT FIFTY PER CENT MARKUP TO COVER THEIR OVERHEAD, THEY WOULD BE FORCED TO DROP MANY ITEMS IN HIGH PUBLIC DEMAND FROM THEIR INVENTORIES BECAUSE IT WOULD COST THEM MORE TO CARRY THE ITEMS THAN THE COULD CHARGE."

IT WAS NOTED THAT A GOOD EXAMPLE WOULD BE "PERISHABLE FOOD STUFFS AND OTHER SIMILAR COMMODITIES WHICH OFTEN SPOIL IN TRANSIT. THE MERCHANTS, IT WAS REPORTED, FELT THAT THE FREE-ENTERPRISE SYSTEM WOULD KEEP DOWN EXORBITANT PRICES.

THE BILL IS NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE ECONOMIC COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATURE.

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(SHODA REPLACES DELA CRUZ)

SAIPAN, FEB. 25 (MNS)---CARLOS A. SHODA, RECENTLY APPOINTED BY SAIPAN MAYOR VICENTE D. SABLAN TO FILL A VACANT SEAT IN THE MARIANAS DISTRICT LEGISLATURE, WAS SWORN INTO OFFICE LAST WEEK BY PRESIDENT VICENTE N. SANTOS, ACCORDING TO AN ARTICLE IN THE MARIANAS VARIETY.

SHODA, A FORMER MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA, WAS SELECTED TO REPLACE IGNACIO T. DELA CRUZ. DELA CRUZ RESIGNED HIS SEAT IN FEBRUARY TO ACCEPT A SCHOLARSHIP TO STUDY VETERINARY MEDICINE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI.

IN MAKING THE APPOINTMENT, MAYOR SABLAN INDICATED THAT SHODA WAS CHOSEN BECAUSE OF "HIS PAST EXPERIENCE IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND HIS PUBLIC SPIRIT IN THE WELFARE OF ALL THE PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY."

(TEAM SURVEYS FARALLON DE MEDINILLA)

SAIPAN, FEB. 25 (MNS)---A FIVE-MEMBER U.S. NAVY SURVEY TEAM WAS TRANSPORTED BY NAVY HELICOPTER TO FARALLON DE MEDINILLA ISLAND IN THE NORTHERN MARIANAS LAST FRIDAY (FEB. 22) FOR THE PURPOSE OF SURVEYING THE ISLAND. ACCORDING TO LT. CDR. ALAN R. PENDLETON, CINCPAC REPRESENTATIVE FOR GUAM AND THE TT, SENATOR OLYMPIO T. BORJA, REPRESENTING THE MARIANAS STATUS COMMISSION, ACCOMPANIED THE GROUP.

AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE GROUP, WHICH WAS HEADED BY LT. CDR. W.R. NIEMEIR FROM THE NAVY PUBLIC WORKS ON GUAM, STUDIED FLORA AND FAUNA AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE UNINHABITED ISLAND. THE ISLAND IS ABOUT 80 MILES NORTH OF SAIPAN, AND IS UNDER STUDY BECAUSE THE U.S. DELEGATION TO THE MARIANAS STATUS TALKS HAS INDICATED THAT THE U.S. WISHES TO LEASE THE ISLAND FOR CONTINUED USE A TARGET RANGE.

THE TEAM WILL COMPILE A REPORT ON "ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT" ON THE ISLAND AND COPIES WILL BE SENT TO THE MARIANAS STATUS COMMISSION AS WELL AS TO THE MICRONESIAN STATUS NEGOTIATION OFFICE HEADED BY AMBASSADOR FRANKLIN HAYDN WILLIAMS.