

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH

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(202) 543-4313

DAVID BROWER, *President*

Comm Cong -
Senate

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September 15, 1975

Dear Senator:

Friends of the Earth, an international organization dedicated to the rational use and preservation of the earth, is seriously concerned at the apparent unseemly haste to enact legislation granting U.S. Commonwealth status to the Northern Marianas islands of Micronesia (S.J. Res. 107).

As you may know, the Congress of Micronesia have repeatedly expressed their opposition to separate Commonwealth status for the Marianas. While there are many cultural and political differences among island leaders, there is substantial agreement that it is in Micronesia's long range best interests to stay together and not be divided. We question the Congressional procedure that would create a new Commonwealth on the basis of 70% of the Marianas people voting "yes" in a questionable plebiscite, when 95% of all the Micronesian people have had no opportunity to vote at all on their dismemberment.

The Commonwealth Resolution is still in the Senate Interior Committee. There is still time to explore the possible adverse consequences of this legislation should the Senate decide to keep open the opportunities for discussion. We are not aware that opposing views have been fully considered, for no opposition testimony from Micronesia has been included in the House or Senate Interior hearings transcripts, despite the desire of many opposing Micronesians to testify. No hearings have been held in Micronesia.

We, therefore, strongly urge that Senate Interior Committee hearings on Commonwealth status for the Northern Marianas be held in every major island group and district before proceeding further with this important and significant legislation. We further ask that the present Resolution be amended to provide that all environmental laws enacted by Congress be specifically included by name to be applicable in the proposed Commonwealth, to enable the Micronesian people to also receive the same protection for their land and environment enjoyed by citizens of the United States.

As you may know, implementation of any Commonwealth legislation will not occur until 1981, so there is ample time to hold additional hearings to provide opportunity for all the Micronesian people to testify in their own behalf and help insure enactment of legislation that will lend prestige and credit to Congressional democratic procedures.

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We are not convinced that separate Commonwealth status for the Northern Marianas is clearly in the best interest of the Marianas people or the vast majority of Micronesians not living in the Marianas; nor, perhaps, even in the best interests of our own nation. It does not appear that dismemberment of Micronesia and creation of the first U.S. colony in 75 years is the most appropriate way to celebrate our Bicentennial.

It is important that further debate and exchange of information be initiated by the Senate. Your help is appreciated.

Hafa Adai,



Robert Wenkam
Pacific Representative

enclosure: list of environmental
laws important to S.J. Res. 107

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DAVID BROWER, *President*

September 15, 1975

To: Members of the Senate and their Staff

From: Robert Wenkam and Anne Wickham
Friends of the Earth

Re: Amendment to S.J. Res. 107

Friends of the Earth would like to suggest amendatory language for Section 502 of S.J. Res. 107:

A new subsection (2) or the institution of a subsection (4) should specifically include as laws in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas the major pieces of environmental legislation passed by the U.S. Congress in recent years in order to protect our atmosphere, oceans, lands and waterways. At present, the Northern Marianas are in great need of such laws.

A few of the laws that we find potentially valuable in protecting the Northern Marianas --and incidentally, the rest of Micronesia are:

Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451-1464)
Deepwater Port Act (33 U.S.C. 1501-1524)
Intervention on the High Seas Act--Oil (33 U.S.C. 1471-1487)
Ocean Dumping (33 U.S.C. 1401-1444)
Oil Pollution Act of 1961 (33 U.S.C. 1001-1016)
Air Pollution, Prevention and Control (42 U.S.C. 1857-1857f)
National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321-4347)
Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131-1136)
Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543)
Importation of Wild Mammals and Birds (19 U.S.C. 152)
Marine Mammal Act (16 U.S.C. 1361, 1362, 1371-1384)
Fisheries Zone Contiguous to Territorial Sea of the U.S. (16 U.S.C. 1091-1094)
Fishermen's Protective Act (22 U.S.C. 1971-1979)
Basic Water and Sewer Facilities (42 U.S.C. 3101-3108)
Pollution Control in Navigable Water (33 U.S.C. 1251-1376)

We are concerned with generating discussion on which laws would be best to include in the final legislation, should there be a separation of the Northern Marianas from the rest of Micronesia. These are only a draft sampling of laws that we may want to incorporate into S.J. Res. 107.

Awaiting feedback..... 14978