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United States Department of the Interior

FILE COPY
SURNAME :

Rice

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

OCT 14 1975

Dear Commissioner Acree:

Thank you for your good letter of August 21, 1975, in which you discuss the "Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas in Political Union with the United States of America." This Department is particularly appreciative of the offer by the Customs Service of any technical assistance and advice which would be useful in the final preparations for Commonwealth political status.

As you know, the Commonwealth Covenant, in the form of Senate Resolution No. 107, is presently before the Senate of the United States, having been passed by the House on July 21, 1975. Only after full Congressional approval would there commence in the Mariana Islands an already agreed transition program designed to move that district toward the assumption of self-governing Commonwealth political status. While there will likely be a need for technical assistance in one or more of the areas mentioned in your letter, we feel that the acceptance of your offer should be deferred since the determination of such need will best be made at a later date. I have asked my Director of Territorial Affairs, Mr. Fred M. Zeder, to retain your letter in his files for reference once the Marianas transition program begins.

You have the appreciation of this Department for your kind offer and for your interest in United States territories.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ KENT FRIZZELL

Acting Secretary of the Interior

Honorable Vernon D. Acree
Commissioner of Customs
U.S. Customs Service
Washington, D.C. 20220

cc: Secy file
Secy R.F. (2)
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