



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

JUL 11 1975

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This responds to your request for the views of this Department on H.J. Res. 549, a bill "To approve the 'Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America,' and for other purposes."

We strongly recommend that the first section of H.J. Res. 549, which contains the Covenant and the Joint Resolution approving the Covenant, be enacted. We have not had sufficient time to arrive at an Administration position on sections 2 and 3 of the bill, and we are currently expediting that process. We hope that we will be able to advise the Committee of our views on these two sections by July 18, 1975.

On July 1, 1975, the President submitted to both Houses of Congress for their approval a "Joint Resolution Approving the 'Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America.'" The first section of H.J. Res. 549 is the Joint Resolution and the Covenant as transmitted by the President.

On June 17, 1975, the people of the Northern Mariana Islands voted in a plebiscite to approve the Commonwealth status as set forth in the Covenant. This plebiscite represented the capstone to more than twenty years of local efforts by the people of the Northern Mariana Islands to become a permanent part of the United States.

The Covenant Agreement in section 1 of H.J. Res. 549 was signed on February 15, 1975, by the Marianas Political Status Commission for the Northern Mariana Islands, and by Ambassador F. Haydn Williams for the United States. It is the result of more than two years of negotiations between the United States and a broadly representative delegation from the Northern Mariana Islands.



Favorable consideration of the Covenant by the Congress will represent one more important step toward fulfillment of the obligations which the United States undertook when the Congress approved by joint resolution the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement on July 18, 1947. Congressional approval of the freely expressed wish of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands will enable them to move toward their long sought goal of self-government in political union with the United States.

The Office of Management and Budget has advised that there is no objection to the presentation of this report from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

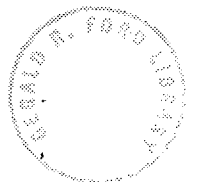
Sincerely yours,

*Rayston C. Hughes*

Assistant

Secretary of the Interior

Honorable James A. Haley  
Chairman, Committee on  
Interior and Insular Affairs  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C. 20515



[July 1975]

SUBCOMMITTEE  
on  
TERRITORIAL AND INSULAR AFFAIRS

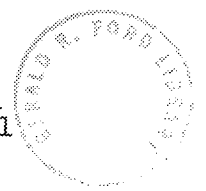
In Consideration of:

- |                      |                           |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| <u>H.J. Res. 547</u> | Mr. Skubitz, et al        |
| <u>H.J. Res. 549</u> | Mr. Phillip Burton, et al |
| <u>H.J. Res. 550</u> | Mr. Phillip Burton, et al |

"To approve the "Covenant To Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America", and for other purposes."

WITNESSES

- Honorable F. Haydn Williams, the President's Personal Representative
- Honorable Erwin D. Canham, Editor Emeritus, Christian Science Monitor and Plebiscite Commissioner
- Honorable Edward DLG. Pangelinan, Chairman, Marianas Political Status Commission
- Honorable Vicente N. Santos, President, Mariana Islands District Legislature
- Honorable Pedro Tenorio, Senator, Congress of Micronesia
- Honorable Joaquin Torres, Member, Saipan Municipal Council



Honorable Jose Cruz, Member, Tinian Municipal Council

Honorable Joannes Taimanao, Member, Rota Municipal Council

Honorable Francisco T. Palacios, President, Territorial  
Party

Honorable Herman O. Guerrero, President, Popular Party

Honorable Francisco C. Ada, District Administrator, Mariana  
Islands District

Accompanied by:

Honorable Manuel Sablan, Member, Mariana Political  
Status Commission

Honorable Juan Cabrera, Member, Mariana Islands  
District Legislature

Honorable Daniel Muna, Member, Saipan Municipal Council

Honorable Francisco Diaz, Member, Mariana Islands District  
Legislature

Honorable Larry Guerrero, Member, Mariana Islands District  
Legislature

Honorable Santiago Magofna, Member, Mariana Islands District  
Legislature

Honorable Vicente T. Camacho, Speaker, Saipan Municipal  
Council

Mr. William Nabors, Counsel, Mariana Islands District  
Legislature

