

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Old Executive Office Building  
Room 373  
Washington, D.C. 20506

January 15, 1976

The Honorable Thomas S. Kleppe  
Secretary of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Kleppe:

As you know, we are approaching the final votes in the Senate on the Marianas Covenant. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Armed Services Committee have until January 27, 1976 to mark-up and submit their reports on HJR 549, as amended. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has scheduled its mark-up for next Tuesday, January 20 and the Armed Services Committee is also likely to act next week.

The outcome of the vote in these two mark-up sessions remains uncertain but is sure to be close in both committees. In the Foreign Relations Committee the opposition is being led by Senator Pell who is determined to defeat the Marianas Commonwealth Covenant outright, and by Senator Percy who continues to champion deferring approval action until an agreement or agreements have been reached with the entire Trust Territory. Senators Byrd (Va) and Hart (Colo) remain the most vocal opponents of the legislation in the Armed Services Committee.

The present line-up in the two Committees is as follows:

ARMED SERVICES

YES

JACKSON  
TOWER  
GOLDWATER  
THURMOND  
CANNON

NO

BYRD (VA)  
HART (COLO)  
SCOTT (VA)  
CULVER  
LEAHY

UNCERTAIN

STENNIS  
SYMINGTON  
MC INTYRE  
NUNN  
BARTLETT  
TAFT

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FOREIGN RELATIONS

<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>UNCERTAIN</u>
SPARKMAN	PELL	SYMINGTON
CHURCH	CLARK	MC GOVERN
MC GEE	BIDEN	JAVITS
HUMPHREY	CASE	PEARSON
SCOTT (PA)	PERCY	
GRIFFIN	MANSFIELD	

There have been several developments affecting the Covenant during the current Congressional recess: Senator Bennett Johnston of the Interior Committee visited Saipan January 1, and was followed on January 5 by a delegation of four Senators; at our suggestion the Marianas leadership has corresponded with Senator Percy inviting him to Saipan and urging his support for early Covenant approval; and Peter Poole, of Senator Percy's staff, is now in Saipan.

In the event Senator Jackson is unable to, Senator Johnston is likely to be the floor leader for the Covenant legislation when it reaches the full Senate. He is an outspoken Champion of the Covenant and his visit to the Northern Marianas was helpful in bolstering the morale of the leadership on Saipan and preparing them for the visit of Senators Hollings, Griffin, Culver and Baker. The latter visit appears to have improved prospects for passage of the Covenant by eliminating reservations held by Senators Hollings and Baker and strengthening Griffin's resolve to support early approval of HJR 549, as amended. Senator Culver reportedly mellowed in his opposition during the visit and now recognizes complexities of which he was not previously aware.

While on Saipan, the Senators met Senator Lazarus Salii and Representative Luke Tman of the Congress of Micronesia, who reaffirmed that the Congress of Micronesia was not opposed to the Covenant and had accepted the decision of the Marianas people to join in political union with the United States and to separate from the other districts as soon as possible.

All members of both Committees or their staffs have been briefed on the substance of the Covenant and made aware of the Administration position, but it is important

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to take immediate follow-up steps to show our continuing concern and to renew their interest. I have personally briefed both Chairmen and Senators Jackson, Byrd (Va), Hart (Colo), Thurmond, Tower, Bartlett, Pell, McGee, Case, Javits, Percy and Griffin.


With only a few days left and faced with a close vote or tie in both Committees, I believe we should make one last push before the mark-up sessions. We will be trying to contact as many Committee members and their Administrative Assistants as possible in the next few days, urging them to be present and to cast favorable votes, or to give the Chairman their favorable proxy. I have requested the President to write to the Chairmen and I have asked the Departments of State and Defense to contact key Senators on each Committee.

I appreciate the support and assistance I have received from you and others in the Department of Interior. Your letters to the two Committee Chairmen urging early passage of the Covenant and Mr. Frizzell's letter to Senator Pearson have been helpful, as has been the assistance of Mr. John Kyl and Fred Zeder and their staffs. I would appreciate it if you could make one last effort with Senator Bartlett, who is a member of both the Interior and Armed Services Committees. He objects to the tax provisions of the Covenant and a follow-up from you on an earlier effort by the Office of Territorial Affairs to overcome these objections might make an important difference. It would also be helpful if you or Mr. Frizzell could speak to Senator Pearson in a follow-up action on Mr. Frizzell's December 9 letter to the Senator. We need his support in the January 20 Foreign Relations Committee mark-up.

Any other assistance you or others in the Department can provide, or any suggestions as to additional things we or the White House might usefully do, would be very helpful I am sure.

With warmest best wishes,

Sincerely yours,



Ambassador F. Haydn Williams  
The President's Personal Representative  
for Micronesian Status Negotiations

FHW:kkc

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