

Department of Justice
Washington, D.C. 20530

March 17, 1976

Honorable James T. Lynn
Director
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Mr. Lynn:

In compliance with your request, I have examined a facsimile of the enrolled bill H.J. Res. 549, 94th Cong., 2d Sess., 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.

Section 1 of the Joint Resolution would approve the Covenant to establish the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. This part of the Joint Resolution was introduced into Congress in response to President Ford's letters to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate of July 1, 1975, 11 Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents 695. At the time of the introduction of the Joint Resolution the Department of Justice commented in favor of the Joint Resolution not only because it was introduced at the request of the President but also in view of its own involvement in the drafting of the Covenant. Since then, in a letter dated January 19, 1976, addressed to Senator Percy, the Attorney General stated that the Department of Justice is satisfied that the Covenant "is consistent with our constitutional system and our international obligations, and, above all, that it deals fairly with the interests of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands."

The Joint Resolution as originally introduced in the House of Representatives, contained two additional sections. The Department of Justice deferred to the views of other directly involved agencies with respect to the first one and was opposed to the other one. Those two sections were deleted by the Senate.

The Senate added a new section 2 to the Joint Resolution which expresses the sense of Congress that it supports the consultation procedure contained in section 902 of the Covenant. We perceive no objection to that provision.

The Department of Justice recommends Executive approval of the bill.

Sincerely,



Michael M. Uhlmann
Assistant Attorney General
Office of Legislative Affairs