



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Washington, D.C. 20230

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

November 29, 1979

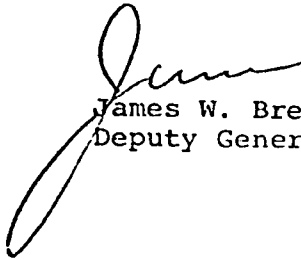
Bruce Rashkow, Esq.  
Chief, Marine Resources Section  
U.S. Department of Justice  
Land & Natural Resources Division  
Room 1258  
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Bruce:

Attached is a copy of a letter from Governor Camacho of NMI to the Secretary of Commerce. Since it relates to the pending litigation involving several agencies, a coordinated response is necessary.

I am tasked with preparing a response for the Secretary by December 11, 1979. I would appreciate you calling a meeting of the affected agencies as soon as possible to help develop a Department of Commerce response.

Sincerely,



James W. Brennan  
Deputy General Counsel

Enclosure

cc: Dave Wallace, w/Enc.  
Martin Hochman, w/Enc.  
Frances Liu, w/Enc.

JWBrennan:bf:11/29/79

GC Subj File, Read File, Chron File



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Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands  
Office of the Governor

Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

Cable Address:  
Gov. NMI Saipan

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The Secretary of Commerce  
Department of Commerce  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

During October 1979, Commonwealth representatives met in Washington, D.C. to attempt resolution of our current crisis in fishery development. During these meetings there were some very encouraging signs that a speedy resolution could be achieved. Nothing has happened since and no correspondence has been received by us to indicate any effort by federal officials to solve our differences. The Commonwealth, therefore, is prepared to assume its legal obligation to Northern Marianas citizens to protect and preserve its fishery resources. I have personally given local development of fishery resources high priority in my administration.

The Commonwealth Government desires very much to work in cooperation with the federal government, but our needs and repeated requests for cooperative assistance continue to go unnoticed in Washington. Meanwhile, federal officials have enforced coastwise laws which are made inapplicable here by the Covenant (48 USC 1681). The result is that our local fishery is at a stand still. Our fishing vessels remain at the dock and no relief from Washington is in sight.

From desperation and in disbelief that the federal government actually ignores its obligations here, the Commonwealth Government filed suit against the United States for Declaratory Relief. We stand firm in our conviction that our arguments in this action have merit. We are also convinced that an administrative solution to the problems is a better approach. I am advised by our Attorney General's staff that if federal officials will meet for negotiations on Saipan to work in good faith for resolving the fishery crisis, we will consider a voluntary dismissal without prejudice of the current suit.

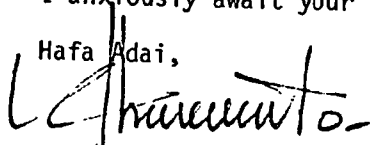
I officially request, therefore, that direct lines of communication between your staff and my officials be established immediately. Second, I request that a negotiating team with sufficient decision-making authority to reach a resolution of differences arrive on Saipan

The Secretary of Commerce  
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by mid-January 1980, to meet with my officials in continuous session for the purpose of ending our critical fishery problem. To demonstrate our good faith, and ensure open discussion, we will agree to dismiss, without prejudice, the pending law suit. In the alternative, should we receive no response on this proposal, I shall direct the Attorney General to proceed with the action and instruct our fisheries personnel to begin implementing our local management programs.

Again, I am offering a cooperative approach to reaching a decision on these matters. Cooperation, however, must come from both parties. I anxiously await your response.

Hafa Adai,



CARLOS S. CAMACHO  
Governor

cc: United States Attorney, Guam

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