



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Mayor
The Northern Islands Municipality

P.O. Box 502859 CK
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 234-7392 or 6720
Fax: (670) 233-6466
E-mail: mayor@northernislands.net
Website: www.northernislands.net

VALENTIN I. TAISAKAN
Mayor of the Northern Islands

June 6, 2008

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N W
Washington, D. C. 20500

RE: Designation of a Marine National Monument
in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Dear President Bush:

I am Valentin I. Taisakan, Mayor of the islands north of Saipan (Northern Islands). I am writing to convey my concern over the proposed National Marine Monument that the Pew Charitable Trust (PEW) is actively promoting for its establishment in the waters of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

It is my understanding through PEW's presentation that you, Mr. President, by the power and authority given to you by the American Antiquities Act of 1909, can designate the waters surrounding the islands of Uraeus, Muag and Asuncion as a National Marine Monument (NMM); and without the need of consultation with the people of the CNMI. The propose site of the NMM covers an area over 115,000 square miles of our northern-most part of the islands north of Saipan. It is expected that by the end of your term in office, you will declare and designate these waters as a National Marine Monument. Mr. President, it took the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument about six (6) years for it to be declared a Marine National Monument; and that was the time period given the people of the State of Hawaii and the native Hawaiians to be educated about that project. As I understand it, a referendum was not conducted to show whether the majority of the people of the State of Hawaii and/or the native Hawaiians supported the establishment of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument. However, the fact of the matter is that the people of the State of Hawaii and the native Hawaiians were given six (6) years to be educated and the opportunity to know and understand more about the project.

Mr. President, it is only fair that you allow and give the people of the Northern Mariana Islands the same time period given the people of the State of Hawaii to study the negative and positive effect of having to designate a permanent National Marine Monument within the CNMI waters. It is very important for us to clearly understand how this project will affect our fisheries and ocean resources, tourism and other economic opportunities; and the culture values and tradition of person of Northern Marianas Descent.

Mr. President, the economy, needs and priority of the people of the State of Hawaii and the native Hawaiian are different from that of the CNMI. Their economy and livelihood are much better; and their standard of living meets that of the U.S. mainland. We are not. The CNMI's economy has for the longest time at its worst; and has yet to hit the bottom floor of our Marianas' Trench - the deepest ocean in the world. Unlike the State of Hawaii, the U. S. mainland and other territories, the CNMI have a long way in meeting the U.S. standard of living. The proposed site representing an area of about 115,000 square miles of CNMI's waters can provide the revenue resources the CNMI needs to support and enhance the livelihood of our people, and hopefully, we may be able to meet the U. S. standard of living.

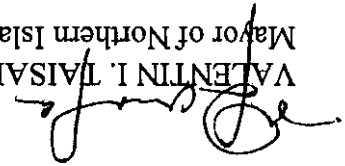
Mr. President, we respect the power and authority given to you by the American Antiquities Act of 1906, however, to declare and designate a National Marine Monument, which covers an area over 115,000 square miles of waters surrounding the islands of Uracus, Maug and Asuncion in the northern-most part of the islands north of Saipan, without consultation with the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands is not in good standing and spirit of the Covenant.

The Covenant to establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in political union with the United States of America has provisions that govern that relationship. For example, under the Article I, Section 105 of the Covenant, it reads in part as follow: "In order to respect the right of self-government guaranteed by this Covenant the United States agrees to limit the exercise of that authority so that the fundamental provisions of this Covenant, namely Article I, II and III and Sections 501 and 805, may be modified only with the consent of the Government of the United States and the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands." The American Antiquities Act of 1909 is not known to us but only recently through "PEW." It is only fair that the United States honored that provision (Section 105) and allow for consultation on this important issue through Section 902 of Article IX of the Covenant.

Mr. President, on behalf of the people of the Northern Islands and the Commonwealth, I humbly ask and beg for your understanding and consideration to allow us, the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Islands, ample time to seriously study the possible effect of the propose National Marine Monument with hope that you call for consultation with the CNMI through the Covenant Section 902 Talk.

Thank you, Si Ynus Mase and Olomwaay Mr. President.

Sincerely,


VALENTIN I. JAISAKAN
Mayor of Northern Islands

cc: Carlos M. Gutierrez, Secretary of Commerce

Dirk Kempthorne, Secretary of Interior

Benigno R. Fitial, Governor, CNMI

Pete P. Reyes, President, CNMI Senate

Arnold I. Palacios, Speaker, CNMI House of Representative

Juan B. Tudela, Mayor of Saipan

Joseph S. Inos, Mayor of Rota

Jose San Nicolas, Mayor of Tinian

Ramon I. Tebuteb, Chairman, Saipan & Northern Islands Legislative Delegation

Antonia E. Tudela, Chairperson, Saipan & Northern Islands Municipal Council

Joshua Reichart, Pew Charitable Trusts