

July 30, 2007

Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Christensen and Members of the Subcommittee on Insular Affairs,

I am Mayor Melissa B. Savares, Mayor of Dededo and President of the Mayors' Council of Guam. As Mayor of the most populated village on the island, I welcome the arrival of the Marines to our community.

There are several villages that will be affected by the movement of Marine to our island. However, Dededo will see the most activity with the NCTS, South Finegayan Housing and Northwest Field areas located directly in the municipality. With this there are several concerns that I will address.

The increase of vehicle traffic throughout the island on the major roadways is definitely a concern by all motorists. The daily morning and afternoon commute to and from work for most residents is on Marine Corps Drive from Naval Station to Andersen Air Force Base. Alternative routes must be designated to alleviate this traffic congestion on our islands roadways. The Department of Public Works is working with the federal government to use federal highway funding to open other routes to address this traffic problem.

The utility services provided to current residents are being upgraded to better serve our growing communities. Will the increase of military personnel use the existing utility services provided by the Government of Guam or will they be dependent on the services now provided by ComNavMar? I would like for the military to use the same utility services that we, the residents of Guam use daily in our homes.

Exercises done by the Marines often take place in the Northwest Field, Andersen Air Force Base and Andersen South Housing areas. Residents in this northern area of our island are concern about the time of these exercises and if they will be disruptive during all hours of the day. The concerns are of the helicopters and jets flying over the residential areas in the late evening hours. I was part of a delegation that traveled to

Okinawa in July 2006 to meet with local leaders to hear the concerns that they had in their communities. One thing that I was concern about was the noise from the helicopters and airplanes flying over the residential areas in the late hours of the night. Exercises such as this should be restricted and not be allowed between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

The families that have access to return federal lands that have been developed by original land owners has been opened to regular traffic for several years. Will this access be closed to original landowners and businesses within the area? The area of concern is the Northwest Field area also known as Route 3A. Before the return of federal lands, there was a guarded sentry for landowners to request for access to their properties. The restriction of access to Route 3A should be allowed from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

It is evident that we will also see an increase of foot traffic around all military bases. Would there be sidewalks constructed around all bases to assure the safety of all personnel, their families and others accessing these facilities? The concern is around the Naval Hospital and NCTS areas. The close proximity of areas such as schools, stores and recreational facilities will allow for more people to walk to and from places.

As the President of the Mayors' Council of Guam, I welcome the Marines to our island community. I know that our island and our families will benefit tremendously with the investment that the military will make to Guam. I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Committee on Natural Resources for allowing me to testify on behalf of the people of our community.

Sincerely,

Melissa B. Savares
President, Mayors' Council of Guam
Mayor of Dededo