



Marianas Resource Conservation & Development Council

EXECUTIVE BOARD:

PRESIDENT
VICE PRESIDENT
TREASURER
SECRETARY
MEMBER AT LARGE
MEMBER AT LARGE

ROLAND QUITUGUA
IGNACIO V. CABRERA
SAM PALACIOS
LAWRENCE DUPONCHEEL
Vacant
Vacant

D.Y. Building Beach Road, South Garapan, Saipan
P. O. Box 505149, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: 670-236-0894 or 671-735-4118
FAX: 670-236-0889
www.marianasrcd.org

Date: April 17, 2008

To: Honorable Benigno Fitial,
Governor, CNMI

From: Ignacio V. Cabrera
Vice President, Marianas Resource Conservation & Development Council

Subject: Letter of Support for "**The Marianas Trench Marine Monument**"

Dear Honorable Governor Fitial:

As you know, I am a local indigenous fisherman and a former Director of the Division of Environmental Quality, where I worked for over 20 years until my retirement. I am currently the Vice-President of the Marianas Resource Conservation & Development Council (RC&D).

The RC&D helps people and communities care for and preserve their natural resources. We effectively develop partnerships with government, non-government and private organizations, such as our partners within the Beautify CNMI coalition. These alliances provide the necessary tools and resources that allow us to accomplish our goals and objectives. We help people work together and carry out their projects, making the Mariana Islands a better place to live.

I would like to formally announce that the RC&D executive board has voted to support the establishment of the Marianas Trench Marine Monument in the far northern islands of Asuncion, Maug, and Farallon de Pajaros. There are many excellent reasons why this endeavor is good for the CNMI, but primarily, the economics of creating this, what would be one of the largest marine protected areas in the world, are astonishing. Each year the CNMI's economy will benefit from millions of dollars in Federal funds; the creation of over 30 well paying jobs; the building of a visitor's center; the prospects of tourism to the far Northern Islands; the protection of an area of ocean, located near one of the highest human impacted areas of the world; and, finally, positive global recognition for the most spectacular topographically and geologically exciting region of the world: The Mariana Trench.

The Marianas Trench Marine Monument would be modeled after the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands marine reserve, but we could build on what they have learned and manage our area even better. This new paradigm in ocean conservation is being led by Ocean Legacy, a program of the Pew Environment Group, whose goal is to create large ecosystem-sized marine reserves to protect the continuous degradation of our marine ecosystems, and preserve for the future, for ourselves, and our children, a global marine heritage.

The Marianas Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council, Inc. prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. The Marianas RC&D Council is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

I encourage you to look into this worthwhile project, which will be an integral part of the worldwide effort by Ocean Legacy to protect our marine environment so that we have fish to catch and eat for generations to come. It will also help the CNMI meet and possibly exceed our commitment to the Micronesia Challenge.

On a personal note, I would also like to see our local economy improve through this global effort.

Respectfully submitted,



Ignacio V. Cabrera, Vice President
Marianas Resource Conservation & Development Council

CC: President George W. Bush
Senate President Pete Reyes
Speaker Arnold Palacios
Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne
Chairman of CEQ James Connaughton
Undersecretary of Commerce VADM Conrad C. Lautenbacher,
Pew CEO Rebecca Rimel
Angelo Villagomez