



RALPH DLG. TORRES
Governor

VICTOR B. HOCOG
Lieutenant Governor

COMMONWEALTH of the NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Chris Oliver
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway, Room 14636
Silver Spring, MD, 20910
(Attention: Hannah Hafey)

Re: At-Large Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council Recommendation for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Date: August 31, 2018

Dear Assistant Administrator Oliver,

Hafa Adai and Tirow! In accordance with the Governors' Guidance for Nominations to the Regional Fishery Management Council, it is with great pleasure that I nominate the following three applicants to fill the At-Large Seat on behalf of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) to the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council:

1. Mr. Benigno Sablan
2. Mr. Felixberto Reyes, and
3. Mr. Frederick M. Rice

All three of the aforementioned candidates presently reside in a territory or state of the Western Pacific Region and possess the extensive knowledge and experience required for the position listed in accordance with Section 302(b)(2)(A) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act regarding the conservation and management, commercial, and recreational harvest of fishery resources within the Council's geographic region. Because of their capabilities and understanding of our islands' unique and critical ties to fisheries, I am confident in their abilities to serve in the best interests of the CNMI people as well as those of our brothers and sisters of our neighboring pacific islands within their jurisdiction.

I recommend that Mr. Benigno Sablan represent the CNMI on this prestigious Council in recognition of his praiseworthy background as the former Secretary of the CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources, his three-term membership in the Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council, his service as a three-term CNMI Legislator where he has actively advocated for our Fisheries, and his decades-long career as a master diver. On top of his career experiences, Mr. Sablan has the educational background necessary to serve on this council as he has earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Fisheries Science from Oregon State University.

Likewise, I recommend Mr. Felixberto Reyes who is also a master diver and who has obtained a degree in Management with a concentration on Tourism from the University of Guam. Mr. Reyes

CNMI Office of the Governor | Juan A. Sablan Memorial Building | Capitol Hill, Saipan
Caller Box 10007 | Saipan, MP 96950 | Telephone: (670) 237-2200 | Facsimile: (670) 664-2211 | www.gov.mp

Ralph DLG. Torres | CNMI Office of the Governor

is the sitting Chair of the WESTPAC Guam Advisory Panel and is also an avid fisherman trained in fishery creel surveys and data collection, fishermen data, turtle-nesting data, and fish identification. Further, Mr. Reyes is currently sharing his training, experience, and knowledge of these traits with the U.S. Military active and dependent members on Guam who are a part of the Andersen Air Force Base Marine Patrol Program for which has been the Team Leader for the past fourteen years.

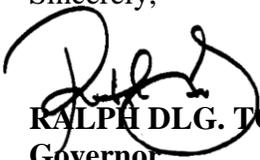
Lastly, I recommend Mr. Frederick M. Rice who has been a fisherman for over five decades. He studied Agriculture in college and has traveled all across the Pacific including Australia and New Zealand on various fishing expeditions. Mr. Rice has trained his three sons to become experienced fishermen as well. He has proudly served on the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council for six years and is a part of the U.S. Delegations to the Western Central Pacific Fishery Commission. Mr. Rice is also presently the Vice Chair of the Advisory Panel for the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council as well as a member of the Pacific Advisory Council for the WCPFC commission.

Over the past couple of months, Lt. Governor Victor B. Hocog and I have consulted with the Saipan Fishermen Association, the Marianas Apnea Spearfishing Club, Anthony Benavente, who is the Secretary of the CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources, and other members of our islands' fishing communities regarding potential nominations. In light of our correspondences, we are confident with the three nominees we have chosen to represent us on the Council.

Moreover, we are also pleased to acknowledge that in our efforts to consider qualified women and/or minority candidates to fill the Council's vacancy, we were successful in finding two capable minority candidates; these candidates are Mr. Benigno Sablan and Mr. Felixberto Reyes. In addition, and for this reason, while I am sure that all three nominees would excel in the delegated responsibilities as a member of the Council, I respectfully recommend the appointment of Mr. Benigno Sablan to the obligatory seat as I am confident that Mr. Sablan's wide-ranging experience and knowledge would be an invaluable source to the council.

I thank you for allowing me to share my recommendations. Accordingly, my staff and I look forward to our continued partnership with the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council and offer the Council and its objectives our strong support.

Sincerely,



RALPH DLG. TORRES
Governor



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

August 20, 2018

Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
National Marine Fisheries Service
Attention: Hannah Hafey
1315 East-West Highway, Room 14636
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Dear Administrator:

Thank you for NOAA's letter regarding the upcoming vacancy of an At-Large seat on the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (Council). I am nominating the following individuals in order of priority: Roy Vitousek, Ernest Clayton, Matthew Ramsey, Trisha Watson, and Julie Leialoha.

All the nominees have expressed a desire to serve on the Council. All nominees have knowledge of or experience in the conservation and management of marine resources, commercial or recreational harvest of fishery resources, or habitat and ecosystem approaches to resource management. My list reflects qualified women and minority candidates.

As we understand it you already have the required documents of these nominees from previous nominations. If further information is needed, please contact Ms. Sharon Ibarra, Director of Boards and Commissions, Office of the Governor (808-586-0295), or Ms. Suzanne Case, Chairperson of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (808-587-0401).

Sincerely,

DAVID K. IGE
Governor, State of Hawaii

WESTERN PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NOMINATION RATIONALE

The following nominees are individuals who, due to their occupation, experience, scientific expertise, training, or interest, are knowledgeable of Hawaii's fishery resources.

(In alphabetic order, by last name)

Ernest Clayton has been a recreational fisherman for the past 54 years. Currently, he is retired. He previously served as the director of environment, safety, and programs for the Boeing Company. Mr. Clayton wishes to tap his career and fishing experience to further the protection and sustainability of the regions fisheries. He believes in responsible fisheries management. To him fisheries management is especially important to the islands of the Pacific because they depend so heavily on the ocean's resources. His concerns includes sustainable fisheries, pollution, and the influence of land based management on water quality and nearshore fisheries. Mr. Clayton is a member of several fishing clubs and has attended numerous fisheries meetings and public hearings.

Although not an incumbent, **Julie Leialoha** has served for two terms on the WesPac Council in previous years. She continues to keep abreast on Council activities. She believes that the WesPac Council is weighted towards representation of the fishing industry and there is a need for balance on the Council. She is a native Hawaiian that works to ensure resource perpetuity for generations through proper management, conservation practices, and education. Throughout her adult life she has passionately working for the conservation of natural resources. Granted that she has been involved in conservation efforts, she still values use of natural resources and has been a recreation fisherwoman for 30 years. Ms. Leialoha is currently a program coordinator responsible for managing an array of conservation projects in partnership with federal agencies.

Matthew Ramsey is a lifelong recreational fisherman. He currently serves as Director for Conservation International's Hawaii program. Prior to his current appointment, he served as the Hawaii fisheries extension agent for NOAA, NMFS. Throughout the past six years he has worked closely with Council staff and appreciates the challenges the Council faces in creating fisheries management measures. He believes that a connection between the resources and people needs to be established to bring positive change to natural resource management. Mr. Ramsey sees both science and traditional knowledge being equally fundamental to management decision-making. He recognizes opposing views often develop when fisheries management measures are considered, but believes that mutually beneficial results can be attained when both sides truly listen to each other.

Roy Vitousek is a third-generation recreational fisherman who has 60 years of experience fishing in Hawaiian waters and elsewhere in the Pacific. Although he is a boat owner and has held a commercial fishing license for 30 years, he is a non-commercial fisherman who usually trolls for mahmahi, ahi and ono and often uses live bait. His personal interest is in the protection, preservation and restoration of marine resources through science-based regulation, education, and especially through cooperation between and among regulators, the scientific community, public and private funding sources and the people who make their living on the ocean. He believes that the protection and preservation of threatened natural and native

ecosystems outweighs interests in simply maximizing commercial and recreational harvest. Professionally, he is a practicing lawyer and the resident partner at Cades Schulte's Hawaii Island office, where he represents clients on land use, environmental and other legal matters. Mr. Vitousek has worked with people from diverse backgrounds, from native gatherers to billionaires. He also has had professional experience working in the Marshall Islands, FSM, and the Trust Territories of the Pacific.

Trisha Watson holds a doctor of philosophy in American studies and a juris doctor law degree. Both degrees are from the University of Hawaii at Manoa (UHM). She has authored numerous documents pertaining to cultural, traditional knowledge, archaeological, social, and economic matters as it relates to the management of natural resources. She is the owner and president of Honua Consulting. She is also an adjunct faculty member at the Hawaii Pacific University where she teaches natural resource management classes in the context of culture, sustainability, and social ecology. She has also served as a lecture at UHM. As a conservationist, Dr. Watson has a background in sustainable fisheries and realizes the need to balance conservation with local economic needs. She strongly believes in traditional fishing practices and doesn't support no-take actions unless absolutely necessary.