

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 22-08

RE: C.R. NO. 22-22/R&D

SUBJECT: TO CONFIRM MRS. ELINA PAUL AKINAGA TO SERVE
AS THE SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL
GOVERNMENT

JULY 20, 2021

The Honorable Wesley W. Simina
Speaker, Twenty-Second Congress
Federated States of Micronesia
First Special Session, 2021

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee on Resources and Development, to which was
referred C.R. No. 22-22, entitled:

“TO CONFIRM THE NOMINATION OF MRS. ELINA PAUL AKINAGA
TO SERVE AS THE SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
RESOURCRS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE FEDERATED STATES OF
MICRONESIA.”,

begs leave to report as follows:

The intent and purpose of this resolution are expressed in
its title.

Congressional Resolution No. 22-22 was transmitted to
Congress on May 31, 2021, through Presidential
Communication No. 22-29, and the nominee’s bio data was
enclosed with the said communication. Your Committee
conducted a public hearing on Congressional Resolution No.
22-22 on Friday, June 25, 2021, at 11:00 a.m. at the
Congress hearing room.

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Chairman Dion G. Neth chaired the hearing. Members of the Committee who zoomed in and participated included Vice Chairman Aren B. Palik, who Zoomed in from Kosrae State, members Victor V. Gouland and Tiwiter Aritos who Zoomed in from Chuuk State.

Those in attendance at the confirmation hearing included: the nominee, acting Secretary FJ Yatilman, staff from the department; the Secretary of DECEM, Mr. Andrew Yatilman; FSM Public Auditor, Mr. Henrick Haser; and a few interested members of the public.

Chairman Neth opened the hearing and yielded the floor to the nominee to comment on her nomination. The nominee conveyed her respect to the Chairman and members of the Committee on Resources and Development. She indicated that she is a people's person, a people oriented and family oriented person. She further shared her educational background and work experiences as summarized in her bio data.

On her experience in public service, she explained that she started with the FSM Public Auditor's Office under the leadership of Public Auditor Haser Heinrich. She began to appreciate how government operates through her work on performance auditing. She was able to look at issues and identifying findings on those issues. Thus, her exposure on the understanding of the findings on how the three branches of government operate gave her a good picture on how our government operates.

She further explained that she was previously employed with the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management (DECCEM). At DECCEM, she learned to appreciate the importance of our environment, and that is where she

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learned how to develop plans, policies and procedures whereas from an auditor's perspective she was just reviewing them. She also learned disaster cycles, and was able to work alongside the states and municipalities on how to mitigate climate change impact or effects.

Finally, she moved to the FSM Department of Resources and Development where she oversees the Tourism Division under the department, and that is where she is today. During the time the former Secretary of the Department, the late Marion Henry, was referred off island, he had designated her to be the Acting Secretary. According to the nominee, she has been in the acting capacity for a while and was really appreciative of the support she received from the staff of the department.

The Chairman thanked the nominee for her candid explanation of her education background and work experience, and turn the floor to members if they had any questions.

Chairman Victor V. Gouland echoed had his full support and also the support from the Chuuk delegation for the nominee.

Vice Chairman Aren B. Palik inquired of the nominee of her view on how to take the nation forward with respect to the tourism sector during this COVID-19 situation. The nominee generally explained the importance on looking at a recovery plan and the areas to look into and ways to bring people to this country. On this, cooperation with the states and the national government is important so we can better develop our products or existing products and highlight these products digitally. She mentioned that each state has significant tourism attractions, and we at the national government must coordinate with the states on a recovery plan on how to advertise our products digitally. She also commented that the national government needs to coordinate

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every grants received from regional donors with the states because the activities are at the states level and not the national government. So better coordination at all level is a must.

Your Committee also learned that the nominee served from November 2016 as an alternative member for the Micronesian Region Pacific Resilience Partnership Task Force, and wanted the nominee to comment on this. The nominee explained that she was serving on that Task Force when she was employed at DECCEM, and she stated that it is an oversight on her part, and the post should be given to staff of the DECCEM.

An opportunity was given to the witnesses to comment on the nomination. The Acting Secretary FJ Yatilman indicated full support for the nominee. Public Auditor Haser Heinrich also echoed full support for the nominee. He stated that the nominee used to stay in the U.S. Mainland. This was eleven years ago, and he had offered the nominee to work for the FSM Public Auditor's office. He indicated that when the nominee started with the office, she served in a lower capacity, and when she left the Office she was a senior public auditor. He personally gives his full support for the nominee. Secretary Andrew Yatilman also echoed his full support for the nominee.

Your Committee heard from the witnesses and how they all echoed full support for the nominee. Absent any contrary indication, your Committee believes that the nominee should be confirmed, and so recommends Mrs. Elina Paul Akinaga be confirmed Secretary of the Department of Resources and Development of the National Government.

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Your Committee on Resources and Development is in accord with the intent and purpose of C.R. No. 22-22, and recommends its adoption in the form attached hereto.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Dion G. Neth
Dion G. Neth, chairman

/s/ Aren B. Palik
Aren B. Palik, vice chairman

/s/ Tiwiter Aritos
Tiwiter Aritos, member

/s/ Derensio S. Konman
Derensio S. Konman, member

Peter M. Christian, member

Isaac V. Figir, member

/s/ Victor V. Gouland
Victor V. Gouland, member