



CONGRESS OF THE
FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

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SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 23-11

RE: COMMITTEE TO WAIT ON THE PRESIDENT

NOVEMBER 13, 2024

The Honorable Esmond B. Moses
Speaker, Twenty-Third Congress
Federated States of Micronesia
Fourth Special Session, 2024

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee to Wait on the President was duly appointed on November 12, 2024, consisting of the following members: Floor Leader Quincy Lawrence, Fabian S. Nimea, Yoslyn G. Sigrah, and Joseph J. Urusemal. Floor Leader Lawrence was designated as the Committee Chair.

The Committee met with President Wesley W. Simina on November 12, 2024, at 1:00 p.m., in the President's Conference Room. The President was accompanied by Vice President Aren B. Palik, along with members of the President's cabinet and staff. Your Committee was provided a short agenda for the meeting. Following an opening prayer, the President commenced the meeting by welcoming your Committee members and all attendees. Chair Lawrence, in turn, also thanked the President, Vice President, and all attendees. Chair Lawrence reported that Congress was in session and ready to transact business.

The first substantive topic of the meeting centered on the Emergency Declaration for Kosrae State, which is set to expire at the end of this month. The President noted that a report on the Emergency Declaration had recently been submitted to Congress, and he indicated that an updated report would be forthcoming around November 15. Chair Lawrence asked multiple questions related to whether the

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Emergency Declaration should be extended. The President shared that the Executive has not made a final determination on this matter. The President stated that he will be drawing on anticipated input from the Department of Environment, Climate Change, and Emergency Management (DECCEM), as well as formal communications from the Kosrae State government, in evaluating the need for an extension.

The second substantive topic of the meeting focused on Public Law No. 23-122, which funds public projects for FY 2024, but was not signed into law until after FY 2024 had ended. The President indicated that, based on the advice of his cabinet, he believes that funds can still legally be disbursed under P.L. 23-122; however, he also indicated that he would support a decision by Congress to de-appropriate the funding for items under this legislation and re-appropriate funding for those same items in a new bill for FY 2025.

The next topic of the meeting related to the most recent revenue projection from the Department of Finance and Administration. This revenue projection shows approximately \$5 million in new Compact Infrastructure funds available for appropriation. Chair Lawrence asked how this revenue projection could show new Compact Infrastructure funds, given that Congress has not received any notice of award for these funds. The Secretary of Finance and Administration reported that she would need to consult with her staff before providing a response. However, the Executive indicated that it believed new JEMCO grants would be forthcoming soon.

The fourth topic of the meeting focused on the distribution formula for Compact funds. Members of your Committee questioned the Executive on how it determined the distribution formula for the state governments' share of Compact funds. The Executive responded that it believes the formula is set by statute under Public Law No. 23-30. President Simina also shared that the Executive has received certain communications from the Pohnpei State government, indicating that the Pohnpei State government is having substantial difficulties with accessing its funds.

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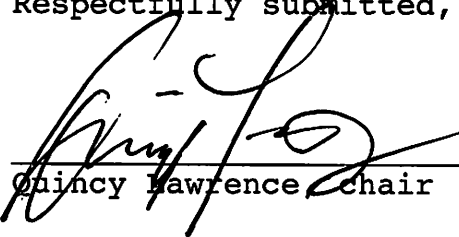
The final major substantive topic of the meeting focused on certain presidential pledges to provide assistance to state and local governments. The President stated that certain pledged funds from China are currently being used to fund a variety of projects, all of which are currently in-progress. Chair Lawrence asked about a timeline for when these projects might be finished. The Executive indicated that progress is being made relatively quickly, but that individual timelines will vary by project.


The President concluded the meeting by noting that a supplemental budget bill would be forthcoming within the next few days. He requested that Congress take action on that bill, as well as on a variety of recently transmitted grants and nominations, including a \$2.5 million grant for the FSM East Micronesia Cable (EMC) project from the United States government. The President also indicated that certain treaty items had been transmitted to Congress for approval.

Chair Lawrence thanked the President, Vice President, and the cabinet members and staff for their time. He stated that the Committee would share details from the meeting with the remainder of the Congress.

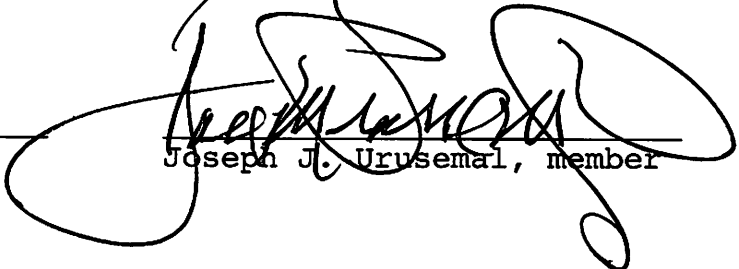
The meeting ended with mutual agreement to move forward on the above issues in a timely and cooperative manner.

Respectfully submitted,


Quincy Lawrence, chair


Fabian S. Nimea, member

Yoslyn G. Sigrah, member


Joseph J. Urusemal, member