



February 15, 2024

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Jeffries:

We write as the presidents of the three nations freely associated with the United States regarding the need for prompt passage of the legislation that would strengthen our associations and enable them to endure. As you know, the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2023 has been strongly supported by the Biden Administration and cleared on a bipartisan basis by all congressional committees of jurisdiction.

Our free associations effectively expand the United States for defense purposes to cover an expanse of the Pacific larger than the 48 contiguous United States, stretching from west of Hawaii to the Philippines and Indonesia. Our partnerships also enable the U.S. to base missiles and its earliest warning radars trained on Asia in Palau and include a facility that the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff says is the world's premier range for ICBM testing and military space operations support in the Marshall Islands. This partnership also makes it possible for the U.S. to conduct military exercises in the Federated States of Micronesia.

The legislation was developed through a process that President Trump personally initiated in a meeting with the presidents of our nations and was concluded by President Biden's Special Presidential Envoy. Its provisions are vital to all four of our nations and to a free and open Indo-Pacific.

The agreements that this legislation would approve were to take effect last fall. Although we understand the reasons for the delay in its approval, the delay has generated uncertainty among our peoples. As much as they identify with and appreciate the United States, which formerly governed our islands, the delay has resulted in undesirable opportunities for economic exploitation by competitive political actors active in the Pacific.

We are very pleased by the tremendous bipartisan efforts on the legislation to date and cannot overstate the importance of final approval by the U.S. Congress to all four of our nations.

In solidarity with the United States, we are,


Surangel S. Whipps, Jr.
President
Republic of Palau


Wesley W. Sirina
President
Federated States of Micronesia


Nilda C. Heine
President
Republic of the Marshall Islands

cc: The Honorable Kathrine Clark
Democratic Whip

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Ranking Democrat
Committee on Natural Resources

The Honorable Gregory Meeks
Ranking Democrat
Committee on Foreign Affairs

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Democrat
Committee on Armed Services

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Democrat
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Raja Krishnamoorthi
Ranking Democrat
Select Committee on the Strategic Competition between the United States
and the Chinese Communist Party

The Honorable Teresa Leger-Fernandez
Ranking Democrat
Natural Resources Committee Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs

The Honorable Ami Bera
Ranking Democrat
Foreign Affairs Committee Subcommittee on the Indo-Pacific

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
Ranking Democrat
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations

The Honorable Barbara Lee
Ranking Democrat
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Ranking Democrat
Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations

The Honorable John Garamendi
Ranking Democrat
Armed Services Committee Readiness Subcommittee

The Honorable Gregorio Sablan
Co-Chair
Natural Resources Committee Indo-Pacific Task Force and Pacific Islands Caucus

The Honorable Ed Case
Co-Chair
Pacific Islands Caucus

The Honorable Brad Sherman
Co-Chair
Pacific Islands Caucus

The Honorable Judy Chu
Chair
Asian Pacific American Caucus

The Honorable Jill Tokuda

The Honorable Katie Porter

The Honorable Dina Titus

The Honorable Ted Lieu

The Honorable Grace Meng

The Honorable Mark Takano

The Honorable Richie Torres

The Honorable Ruben Gallego