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The Honorable Mazie Hirono
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hirono,

Thank you for joining with Senator Risch to lead a 24-senator amendment to cement the free association between the U.S. and Palau as much as a relationship between nations can be as well as to enable the U.S. associations with the Marshall Islands and Micronesia to last.

The U.S. has no closer relationship than its association with Palau. A U.S. military commander told me that we are “part of the homeland” because we let the U.S. have the land it needs for defense as well as control our sea and air borders adjacent to the Philippines and Indonesia. The commander also said that “Palau has never been more vital strategically” because of shipping lanes the PRC covets and the U.S.’ earliest Asia warning radars and missiles here.

Our Compact is also unique because it requires our governments to reconsider the relationship on its 30th anniversary. Some Members of Congress should understand that the joint Review it mandated was initiated by President Trump and produced the Agreement reflected in the Amendment, which has the text of legislation worked out by Chairmen Manchin and Cardin and Ranking Republicans Barrasso and Risch with your input and their bipartisan House counterparts. It would really make possible President Reagan’s goal for our nations to “always be family.”

As you know, the legislation would also effectively continue the U.S.’ borders for military purposes over an area larger than the 48 contiguous States west of Hawaii. A U.S. military expert testified that replacing this would cost \$100 billion. And, as you appreciate, my administration is a staunch ally of Taiwan.

As you also recognize, this is why the CCP is trying so hard to shift our alliances: First, crippling our economy as a pressure tactic and, since then, making seemingly very attractive economic offers to entice us and personally influencing some of our leaders – with an election in November.

The legislation is as important to the U.S.’ security and economy as it is to ours. Your efforts to pass it are crucial for both of our democracies and for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

On behalf of my U.S. as well as my Palauan roots and Palauans in the U.S.: Thank you.

Sincerely,

Surangel S. Whipps, Jr.
President of the Republic of Palau