



*The President*  
*Palikir, Pohnpei*  
*Federated States of Micronesia*

June 15, 2021

Dear President Biden,

Greetings from our beautiful islands in the Federated States of Micronesia, and my deepest respects to you and your office.

I would like to begin by reaffirming the Enduring Partnership between the Federated States of America and the United States of America; the United States is our first and foremost ally, and our special relationship exists nowhere else. We intend to keep it that way.

Mr. President, as you know, our more than 100,000 citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia join the U.S. Armed Forces at a higher rate per capita than any U.S. State. Our citizens' high rates of service is a demonstration of our mutual commitments to democracy and democratic principles, the principles of peace, unity, and liberty, and the importance of maintaining and strengthening a Free and Open Indo-Pacific.

The names and faces of our Micronesian brothers and sisters who have given the ultimate sacrifice adorn the walls of our airports. It was recently brought to my attention that Sergeant Raymond J. Hicks, from Pohnpei State, who passed away in 2010 in Arizona, is not among those hanging on our walls; if appropriate, I would solicit your assistance in passing along to T.H. Denis McDonough, Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, that our Government would appreciate a framed photo of Sergeant Hicks that we can place adjacent to the ten other Micronesian men and women who gave their lives for our mutual ideals.

Mr. President, the primary reason I write to you today is to humbly request your assistance on an item of significance to the People of the Federated States of Micronesia.

One of the keystone priorities for my administration is our Pave the Nation program to connect our islands and communities with climate-resilient roads. The practical reality is that the roads across the Federated States of Micronesia are often poor at best, and absent at worst; the practical effect, then, is that I have solicited support from other development partners to assist us in our endeavor to establish climate-resilient roads for our Pave the Nation project.

Mr. President, we have been blessed to have recently received \$40,000,000 from the World Bank for the purpose of our climate-resilient roads initiative. We have also solicited support from the People's Republic of China (China), and recently signed a technical and economic cooperation agreement for approximately \$16,000,000 in assistance, the bulk of which I would intend to augment our Pave the Nation project. Further, as I discussed with Prime Minister Morrison and confirmed in a recent a meeting with our Ambassador of Australia, I have learned that the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific (AIFFP) may be able to augment this project, too. Certainly, we put our own meager national resources into developing our roads as



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well, but too often we find that our funding means little when we're constantly facing typhoons, heavy rains, and other Climate Change-related scenarios that dilapidate our road infrastructure. Taken in isolation, the numerical value in the assistance I describe here is large compared to no assistance at all—but it is not nearly enough to fully implement our Pave the Nation program.

Mr. President, instead of other development partners taking credit for our Nation's infrastructure development and Pave the Nation programming, it would be my preference that the United States of America—our closest ally in the World—be the visible reflection of our Nation's infrastructure development, and that our Enduring Partnership be seen around the World as an exemplary model of cooperation for common prosperity.

While our Compact of Free Association, as Amended, is the codification of our Enduring Partnership—its existence of which lasts in perpetuity, and the extension of its economic provisions presently undergoing negotiations by our respective administrations—I would humbly submit that U.S. infrastructure assistance under the Compact needs to pivot in a more meaningful way towards economic infrastructure projects. I will leave the Compact negotiations proper to our Joint Committee on Compact Review & Planning (JCRP), but you can appreciate that our Nation's roads need development sooner rather than later, and expanded with more resources to ensure climate resiliency.

Simply as a snapshot of our situation, I will provide as an Appended Document a photo exchange I received from an FSM National Police Officer in the State of Chuuk, taken only last week.

Thus, Mr. President, I would like to propose to you an idea for your consideration. You will recall that the U.S. has a separate highway assistance program for U.S. Territories and Puerto Rico called the Territorial and Puerto Rico Highway Program. 23 U.S.C. § 165(c)(2) says that the funding is intended to "assist each government of a territory in the construction and improvement of a system of arterial and collector highways, and necessary inter-island connectors." Funds are used for the construction of highways, bridges, boats, terminal facilities, preventative maintenance, engineering and economic surveys, and more. We understand that approximately \$145,000,000 are scheduled per annum for the U.S. Territories and Puerto Rico under this program. Taking action to increase appropriations for the Territorial and Puerto Rico Highway Program, and to expand this program to the Freely Associated States, would go a long way to ensure that our young men and women fighting for our mutual ideals are not doing so in vain.



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Mr. President, purely in the interest of the Federated States of Micronesia and its citizens, I am confident that if our Nation can become eligible to receive this funding that it would go a long way towards improving U.S. visibility in our Nation's development and implementation of crucial infrastructure projects, and ensure the Pave the Nation program's success. Allowing our Nation, the Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, to receive this type of assistance would go a long way towards strengthening relations with the Freely Associated States.

I would go one step further, Mr. President, and suggest that it may be in the U.S.' overall long-term interest to increase the funding the program receives. I have a very close relationship with the Governors of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and while I do not speak on their behalf, I have every reason to believe that if they heard that I was requesting to you that their islands need more resources for road infrastructure, their Governments, their media organizations, and their citizens would jump with agreement.

I appreciate your attention and concern to this issue, Mr. President. Rest assured that the People and Government of the Federated States of Micronesia look forward to deepening our Enduring Partnership over the years and decades to come, and that we look forward to Building Back Better through our construction of climate-resilient roads.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David W. Panuelo". The signature is stylized and somewhat illegible due to the cursive and overlapping lines.

David W. Panuelo  
President

His Excellency Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

President

United States of America

Appended Document—Photographs of Chuuk State Roads

*Source: Facebook Messenger Direct Message to President Panuelo via FSM National Police*

Appended Document—Photographs of Chuuk State Roads

Source: Facebook Messenger Direct Message to President Panuelo via FSM National Police

our roads here are really bad mr president this is really bad. it is an embarrassing moment when you come



An important substation of our national police force is here as well.

I hope you can look into it

