



The President
Palikir, Pohnpei
Federated States of Micronesia

September 25, 2020

The Honorable Kate Brown
Governor
State of Oregon

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor
State of California

The Honorable Jay Inslee
Governor
State of Washington

Dear Governors Brown, Newsom, and Inslee,

Greetings from the Federated States of Micronesia. I write to you today to share what I hope is unambiguously good news in a time that seems to be in urgent need of such.

The preamble of our Nation's Constitution makes clear that we extend to all nations and peoples that which we seek: peace, friendship, cooperation, and love in our common humanity. In times of peace as well as times of calamity, it behooves us all to be mindful that all human life matters, and that empathy is strength—not weakness. Oregonians, Californians, Washingtonians, and, indeed, all Americans, are our friends, allies, partners, and neighbors. We extend love to you and we care for you as family.

Thus, I am proud to share with you that through the exemplary leadership shown by my esteemed colleague, the Honorable Wesley W. Simina, Speaker of the 21st FSM Congress, and the Senators of the 21st FSM Congress, our Nation has passed Congressional Act 20-188, which appropriated \$100,000 each to the State of California, the State of Oregon, and the State of Washington respectively, in relief funding during the recent (and, at the time of this writing, ongoing) wildfires. I have asked our Consul General in Portland, the Honorable Joe Enlet, to communicate with your staff on the mechanical aspects of transferring this relief funding. While the dollar amount may be small, it represents our enduring commitment to our American brothers and sisters.

Governors Brown, Newsom, and Inslee, I believe it would be an accurate observation if I were to humbly suggest that this past year in particular has been acutely difficult in the challenges it has set forth. One issue that I frequently hear my citizens reflecting upon is an increasing sense of disquiet, stress, and general unease throughout the United States as of late, whether due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, racial tensions, Climate Change-induced wildfires, and/or arguably theatrical argumentation between adults in the news and entertainment media.



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If we, as public servants, can make it clear to our citizens, and most especially our children, that feelings are mentionable—and also manageable—then I believe we will have done a tremendous service for the mental health of our people. As you know, one of the first things that a child in a healthy family learns is trust. I want you to know that, as President of the Federated States of Micronesia, I trust that you have been attentive to the needs of Pacific Islanders in your communities, which represent some of the largest Micronesian populations in the United States, and I appreciate your care and concern very much.

Distinguished Governors, I believe it will be meaningful to my Nation's citizens who call the States of Oregon, California, and Washington home if you could find the means and the time to address them, to make it a point that they are always valued members of the community, and to emphasize that this year's turmoil, like all crises, shall pass—and that we shall pass them together, united in our Enduring Partnership.

With respect to the State of Oregon, our Government, through our Consulate in Portland, has been working in close partnership with the COFA Alliance National Network (CANN), members of the Oregon Legislature, members of the Governor's policy team, and the Oregon Commission on API Affairs to pass legislation that will offer oral healthcare coverage for COFA islanders in Oregon. There is further proposed legislation to offer in-state tuition benefits to COFA islanders in Oregon. Governor Brown, I want to extend my personal appreciation to you and your Government for your efforts in supporting citizens from the Freely Associated States.

Governors Brown, Newsom, and Inslee: thank you so much for being good hosts to Micronesians in the States of Oregon, California, and Washington.

Thank you all very much for your continued dedication to public service. It is my hope that, when the COVID-19 Pandemic is a memory of a challenge overcome, that I can invite the three of you to visit the Federated States of Micronesia as my personal guests.

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