



Office of the Speaker **THERESE M. TERLAJE**

I Mina'trentai Sais na Liheslaturan Guåhan | 36th Guam Legislature
Committee on Health, Land, Justice and Culture

Speaker's Bill to Remove Caps on EPA Fines En Route to Adelup

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (October 4, 2021 – Hagåtña, Guam) With 13 votes in favor and 2 Excused, Speaker Therese Terlaje's Bill 165-36 (COR) received majority support today at the Guam Legislature and will be prepared for transmittal for action by the Governor.

Bill 165-36 (COR) was introduced to remove language in Guam Environmental Protection Agency's current rules and regulations that sets a \$125,000 cap on civil penalties. The issue was brought to the forefront in the aftermath of the irreparable damage at Marbo Cave, one of Guam's freshwater sites that was enjoyed by our community but was devastated by carelessness and negligence.

"We must act to hold those accountable for blatant disregard of our environmental laws responsible for their actions. These laws are in place for the protection of the health and safety of our future generations here on Guam." stated Speaker Terlaje.

In addition, the removal of the cap would continue to give the Guam EPA Administrator discretion in many areas including the determination of the amount of any penalty assessed to take into account the nature, circumstances, extent, and gravity of the violation with respect to the violator, the ability to pay any prior history of violations, the degree of culpability, economic benefit, or savings resulting from the violation and any such other matters as justice may require.

"I want to thank my colleagues for expanding Guam EPA's enforcement tools especially when they are dealing with multimillion dollar companies as the violators. Proportionate enforcement is necessary so that best decisions and best practices are in place on the front end of these projects instead of passing on environmental damage to Guam residents to mitigate on the back end," stated Speaker Terlaje.

Bill 165-36 (COR) was co-sponsored by Senators Sabina Perez, Clynt Ridgell, Joanne Brown and Telo Taitague.

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