



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 Says Significance of Historical Sites Should Be Determined By People of Guam

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (October 12, 2021 – Hagåtña, Guam) At the 9th annual Programmatic Agreement Workshop that took place on August 10-11, 2021, Joint Regions Marianas (JRM) promised to fulfill Speaker Therese Terlaje and members of the public's request to be provided information regarding the location and status of human remains and archaeological site discoveries found at all Undertaking projects, but most especially Camp Blaz, where the destruction of *Mågua'* and *Sabanan Fadang* took place.

To fulfill their commitment, JRM reached out to Speaker Terlaje on September 3, 2021 to schedule a meeting. In response to JRM's scheduling request, Speaker Terlaje requested that the following take place:

1. that the meeting be televised so that the community can hear firsthand as to the findings and status of historic properties and human remains from experts from JRM;
2. attendance from the State Historic Preservation Officer and State Archeologists; and
3. attendance from the senators of the 36th Guam Legislature so that they can have an opportunity to hear the information and ask questions.

JRM denied Speaker Terlaje's request to have the meeting televised for the public, citing Section 9 of the Archeological Resource Protection Act of 1979 as an impediment to providing the community with this important information regarding *CHamoru* history. Ironically, JRM said "The issue is; once the information is public it is public to everyone, including those who have access to the areas in question and who may not have a historic lineage to these human remains."

JRM allowed senators and representatives from the State Historic Preservation Office and the Department of Chamorro Affairs to attend. The Executive Director of the Governor's Community Defense Liaison Office and the Chief Advisor on Military and Regional Affairs were also invited but did not attend.

On what took place in today's meeting, Speaker Terlaje stated the following: "Joint Region told us what we already knew: they are finding a significant number of archaeological sites and human remains near areas already known to be of historic importance, yet not necessarily avoiding them. The full context of these areas will be lost to future generations."

JRM admitted that they were aware of maps dating 100 years back which show that some of their construction sites included under the Programmatic Agreement, were ancient *CHamoru* villages or adjacent to known areas of habitation. These include *Mågua'* and *Sabanan Fadang* which were affected by construction of Camp Blaz. Similarly, the construction in Andy South includes *Mogfog*, and the

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construction of the Live-Fire Training Complex includes *Tailålo* and is adjacent to an entire coastline of latte villages.

JRM made no promise to increase preservation-in-place or avoidance for archeological sites that are discovered. Construction at the *Tailålo*, Andy South, and Camp Blaz have resulted in the removal of majority of the artifacts from these massive project areas. For example, in Camp Blaz, 26 sites containing human remains were found, but only one, in *Sabanan Fadang*, was preserved in place which had four graves with multiple burials in them. In Andy South, or *Mogfog*, there were 18 archaeological areas discovered since construction, including eight human remains sites. Of the eight, one human remains site was preserved-in-place and believed to be *CHamoru* because of the context in which it was found, which included 90 ceramic sherds, two slingstones, one ground stone fragment, two fire pit-type features, and some animal bone fragments.

The maps reinforced that P-715 or the Live-Fire Training Complex at *Tailålo* sits among several latte sites and on the cliff line of continuous coastal latte villages and fishing grounds, including *Litekyan*. 70 sites eligible for the National Register of Historic Properties were known prior to construction. Thus far, seven additional archaeological sites covering multiple acres, and nine human remains sites were discovered during construction of the live-fire training range.

During the meeting, Speaker Terlaje requested that she keep certain maps or that the maps be released to the public, stating that there is no risk of harm to the resources or sites because the maps did not indicate the location of the sites that were preserved-in-place within the firing range complex but clearly showed the location of archaeological discoveries and human remains that were subsequently cleared. Maps presented were of sites located inside military gates. JRM denied this request again, stating Section 9 of the Archeological Resource Protection Act of 1979 as an impediment.

According to Speaker Terlaje, “The *CHamoru* people should have the opportunity to know what has been discovered, especially in significant areas within or adjacent to ancient villages. The details of these discoveries are not something they should only learn about years from now through archaeological interpretations or formal reports. It is for those whose heritage it is, to know what is found and when human remains are disturbed, and to decide the significance of the area in our history.”

Other senators in attendance were Sabina Perez, Telo Taitague, Clynt Ridgell, Joe San Agustin, and Joanne Brown.

For more information, please contact Speaker Therese M. Terlaje’s office at (671) 472-3586 or via e-mail at senatorterlajeguam@gmail.com.

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