



OFFICE OF SENATOR SABINA FLORES PEREZ

Chairperson

Committee on Environment, Revenue and Taxation, and Procurement

I MINA'TRENTAI SINGKO NA LIHESLATURAN GUÁHAN

35TH GUAM LEGISLATURE

November 6, 2020

Transmitted via electronic mail

Patrick Lujan
State Historic Preservation Officer
Guam Historic Resources Division
Department of Parks and Recreation
P.O. Box 2950
Hagatña, Guam 96932

SUBJECT: Nãftan Mañaina-ta Shrine Public Comments

Dear SHPO Lujan,

While I support the intent of the shrine, to inter CHamoru ancestral remains which have been disturbed and inadequately stored for decades, I believe it should be the objective of our government to prevent the removal of ancestral bones and artifacts from their respective resting place.

As Indigenous peoples of the Marianas, CHamoru have a unique relationship with our natural environment grounded in responsibility and reciprocity. Our belief in *taotaomo'na* is illustrative of the perspective that our ancestors who have passed on continue to watch over our lands and waters. Yet, tragically, over decades we have witnessed the removal of over 2,000 ancestral remains due to overdevelopment, which are to be interred at this shrine.

The bones of our ancestors are sacred and, while this shrine is otherwise an attempt to impart a sense of dignity to the remains, I believe if we are to truly honor our ancestors we should take this opportunity to determine how we can more actively protect future remains from being extracted from their natural environments.

Further, our ancestors are one with our environment and to honor them, we as a people must be better stewards of the lands and waters they've left behind for us today. Knowing this, we must collectively work toward a more sustainable future, where the integrity of our limestone forests and marine habitats are protected.

Lastly, it is an affront to refer to Oka Point as the *only* site of CHamoru victory. Our people are alive today because our ancestors resisted and persevered through war and occupation. We are not separated from this legacy, we are inheritors of it.

Each day that we practice *inafa'maolek* by honoring our ancestors and our environment, and work towards creating a more sustainable future for our generations to come, is an act of victory and resurgence.

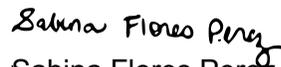
In closing, I have the following questions and concerns:

1. What protocol will be followed to ensure the remains are interred so as to preserve their integrity?

2. The design, while visually appealing, says nothing about the history of the remains (such as where the remains came from and why they were unearthed). Nor does the design acknowledge the struggle of the many community members over the decades to prevent the disturbance and removal of these remains.
3. Based on the virtual mock-up, there doesn't seem to be any facilitation of visitor engagement or interaction with the actual history of the remains. I would like to see more of an attempt to make the remains of our ancestors more tangible to visitors so they can better connect with the history of why the remains are enshrined there.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have further questions. I look forward to further dialogue.

Sincerely,


Sabina Flores Perez
Senator, 35th Guam Legislature

CC: Senator Therese Terlaje, 35th Guam Legislature