



## OFFICE OF SENATOR SABINA FLORES PEREZ

Chairperson

Committee on Environment, Revenue and Taxation, and Procurement  
*I MINA'TRENTAI SINGKO NA LIHESLATURAN GUÁHAN*  
35<sup>TH</sup> GUAM LEGISLATURE

### PRESS RELEASE

#### Senator Perez's Statement Following Covid-19 Emergency Procurement Oversight Hearing

Guam, May 22, 2020 – Senator Sabina Perez, Chair of the Committee on Procurement, issues the following statement following adjournment of Thursday night's oversight hearing on emergency procurement conducted during the COVID-19 health emergency:

*With little time to react, the pandemic has posed an unprecedented challenge for our people, and our institutional norms on all fronts — procurement included. Concerns were raised regarding the procurement of hotels for the quarantine, and the Committee on Procurement found it prudent to hold an oversight hearing to assess the process and ensure transparency.*

*I thank all for attending yesterday's oversight hearing, including the Governor's willingness to have her legal office present. To be clear, the Committee has received no complaints that the procurement of hotels was, itself, an unnecessary act. Quarantine facilities are a prudent and necessary means of combating this pandemic. The Governor and our public health officials made the right decision to act quickly, and thankfully, we have not had the triage and mass burials experienced by hard-hit regions such as Spain and Italy.*

*The overarching goal of yesterday's oversight hearing was to focus on the emergency procurement process itself, as used during the Covid19 pandemic, and ensure the Government of Guam is following protocols consistent with local and federal guidelines for the reimbursement of emergency services.*

*While I believe procurement efforts were undertaken in good faith, there is nevertheless a clear gap between procurement law and the Emergency Powers Act. The challenges brought to light during the oversight hearing elucidate these shortcomings. We must work to understand these mishaps and differences in legal interpretation, and use this knowledge to improve our efforts.*

*Moving forward, I ask all parties leading our pandemic response to coordinate their best efforts in following established emergency procurement procedures. I will also be introducing a series of bills to strengthen our procurement laws, beginning with legislation to expand and empanel the Guam Procurement Advisory Council.*

*Procurement reform is long overdue. While protests were avoided with the hotel contracting, the process is open to differing interpretations of the law. We must improve our regulations to have clear, prescribed procurement procedures that all parties agree upon. And, we must present a united front to address this ongoing threat to our island, the global coronavirus pandemic.*

*I look forward to working with the Administration and my legislative colleagues to modernize procurement law. At a time when so many of us are isolated from one another, we must do all we can to preserve transparency and maintain open lines of communication, so that we may sustain the public's trust and ensure our policies and decisions succeed in helping our island through this pandemic.*

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