



OFFICE OF SENATOR SABINA FLORES PEREZ

Chairperson

Committee on Environment, Revenue and Taxation, and Procurement

I MINA'TRENTAI SINGKO NA LIHESLATURAN GUAHAN

35TH GUAM LEGISLATURE

PRESS RELEASE

Senator Perez Convenes Council to Develop Climate Change Policies

Guam, October 4, 2019 – On Friday morning, Senator Sabina Perez convened and chaired the first meeting of the Guam Council on Climate Change Preparedness and Resiliency (C3PR). The Council is established to develop local policy recommendations to address the adverse effects of climate change.

The Council was established in June of 2017 by Public Law 34-17, authored by Speaker B.J. Cruz. “I sincerely thank Speaker Cruz for his foresight in creating this timely and crucial body,” said Senator Perez. However, in the two years since its creation, the Council had yet to hold its first meeting. “With the help of Governor Leon Guerrero and Speaker Muña Barnes, vacancies on the Council were filled this year, and we can now meet quorum,” explained Senator Perez. “It is imperative we now meet and develop local strategies to address the existential threat posed by climate change,” she added.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2018 Special Report Findings show that the effects of climate change are expected to worsen in the coming century, at rates worse than previously estimated. If mean surface temperatures rise more than 1.5 degrees by 2030, impacts will include widespread population displacement, rapid species extinction, and irreversible environmental damage. The resulting economic, societal, and environmental damage will be catastrophic. However, on a local level, these dangers may be mitigated if proper planning and investments are made.

“Climate change threatens nearly all aspects of life on earth and will require strong policy solutions to protect Guam’s environment and people,” said Senator Perez. “However, if we work together and craft smart, localized solutions, we may be able to find solutions that both benefit our community economically while protecting us from long-term climate change risks,” she added. The same 2018 IPCC report notes that proper planning and policies toward greenhouse gas reduction may also help eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development.

In recent years, the Federal Government under President Trump has rolled-back a number of important, climate change regulatory actions and reports. “In a time when our federal government is failing to stand up and address this crisis, it’s imperative that our local government takes action to fill the void in federal leadership,” said Senator Perez.

“Climate change poses significant risks to the environment and people of the Pacific,” said Senator Perez. Due to carbon emissions and greenhouse gases, the global mean surface temperatures have already increased by about 1 degree, resulting in sea level rise, an increase in frequency and intensity of storms, and potential shifting of seasons with implications to our



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food security. Ocean acidification and bleaching events also threaten fragile and complex coral reef ecosystems.

Per Public Law 34-17, C3PR is chaired by the Senator with oversight on the environment (Senator Sabina Perez), vice-chaired by the President of the University of Guam (Dr. Thomas W. Krise), and includes as members the Senator with oversight over appropriations (Senator San Agustin, represented Friday by Steve Guerrero), one majority Senator appointed by the Speaker (Senator Regine Biscoe Lee), one minority Senator appointed by the Speaker (Senator Telo Taitague), the chairperson of the Guam Climate Change Task Force (Vangie Lujan), one member of the Climate Change Advisory Committee (Dr. Rowena King, represented Friday by Marcel Higgs), the chairperson of the Consolidate Commission on Utilities (GWA General Manager Miguel Bordallo, representing CCU Chairperson Joseph Duenas), the Executive Director of the University of Guam Center for Island Sustainability (Dr. Austin Shelton). All Senators of the Guam Legislature as also ex-officio members of the Council per its enabling statute.

During Friday's meeting, which was open to the public, Senator Perez provided an overview of the Council's structure and mandates, and shared information about the climate change challenges facing Guam. She was joined by Senator Telo Taitague. Dr. Shelton then provided an overview of the Center for Island Sustainability's work on developing the Guam Green Growth Initiative to promote a green economy for the island.

Council members then discussed the Micronesia Challenge Initiative, an inter-governmental initiative to promote marine and forest resource conservation in the region, and the need for collaboration to avoid duplicated work. The possibility of adopting Sustainable Development Goals for Guam was also discussed, which are a collection of 17 global goals set by the United Nations to achieve by 2030. Guam's reliance on fossil fuels, including the associated impacts of imported goods and air travel, was also discussed at length. Council members expressed interest in exploring means to reduce energy use, and to collaborate with the Governor's climate change Task Forces.

The Council is to meet quarterly, at minimum, to create policy recommendations for the Guam Legislature on how the government of Guam may utilize its resources and position to prepare for the threat of climate change. Council members plan to meet more regularly, with the next meeting tentatively set for November.

"I look forward to collaborating with my colleagues to develop the policies we need to combat climate change," said Senator Perez. "Future generations will judge us by the actions we take today. We must protect our island and our community from the threat of climate change," she added.

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