



OFFICE OF SENATOR SABINA FLORES PEREZ

Chairperson

Committee on Environment, Revenue and Taxation, Labor, Procurement,
and Statistics, Research, and Planning

I Mina'trentai Siette Na Liheslaturan Guåhan • 37th Guam Legislature

For Immediate Release

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Senator Perez's Statement on Forcing Bill 175-37 into Session, Breaks the Public Trust

Hagåtña, Guam - **Senator Sabina Flores Perez issued the following statement in response to several legislators forcing Bill 175-37 onto the session agenda without a complete committee report during today's COR meeting.**

“Despite the clear opposition from numerous agency leaders, scientists, and members of the community, I am disheartened to report that Senators Chris Dueñas, Tom Fisher, William Parkinson, Roy Quinata, Joe San Agustin, Dwayne San Nicolas, Amanda Shelton, and Vice Speaker Tina Muña Barnes have forced Bill 175-37 out of Committee and onto the session agenda, disregarding transparency and breaching the trust of the people of Guam. This is a clear and intentional move to undermine the legislative process that is meant to protect our community from passing laws that may be harmful to many while serving to benefit a select few.

During the Public Hearing for Bill 175-37, Senator Chris Dueñas listened to multiple agencies testify in opposition to Section 7 of this measure. Guam EPA stated multiple times that increasing the density of septic systems over the aquifer would not only be dangerous but outright irresponsible, due to the heightened risk of contamination to our main source of drinking water.

Bill 175-37 also serves to bail out irresponsible development of the past that did not comply with subdivision law, which requires infrastructure to be put in place, but at the expense of irreparably harming our precious aquifer.

As elected leaders, we have a responsibility to consider the highest standards of research and data available, and it is the Committee's responsibility to apply credible research, analysis, and the input of scientific experts, concerned agencies, and community members when discerning the environmental impacts of legislation.

Bill 175-37 is not exempt from this process, and it requires further analysis by the Committee given the compelling data and testimony provided by experts and citizens alike. **The protection of our aquifer is non-negotiable.** Two wrongs – non-compliance with Subdivision law and increasing density of septic systems – don't make a right. For Senators to force this Bill out of Committee despite these facts demonstrates not only a lack of concern for our aquifer, but a lack of concern for the health, safety, and future of our people.

As Senator, I have successfully worked towards solutions that protect our aquifer and support our people wanting to build homes by appropriating \$2 million for sewer connections. I have also sponsored and passed legislation, now Public Law 37-103, that provides more funding for replacing legacy sewer lines in response to a USEPA Partial Consent Decree.



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These are the types of holistic solutions we need to solve our island's longstanding problems. But what happened today sets a worrisome precedent for future bills, that it may become rational to ignore agency testimony, science, experts, and concerned citizens and bypass the Committee process to further harmful legislation. ``

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