



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
GOVERNOR'S COVID-19 TASK FORCE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 31, 2020

**United Airlines agrees to suspend all flights into and out of the CNMI
effective April 6, 2020**

At the request of Governor Ralph DLG. Torres, United Airlines has agreed to suspend all flights into and out of the CNMI from Guam from April 6 to 30, 2020.

This means that the CNMI will not have any inbound or outbound passenger flights for most of the month of April.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) made the news official in a public notice on Tuesday informing the CNMI of the flight suspension for April.

Additionally, CPA assured the CNMI that US Postal Services, air shipment of cargo to and from Guam, and medevac transport for health emergencies will not be disrupted by the temporary suspension of the Guam-Saipan United Airlines flights.

Daily transport of mail and cargo between the CNMI and Guam is serviced by Micronesian Air Cargo Services. Inter-island shipment services within the CNMI are handled by Star Marianas Air.

“We commend United Airlines for agreeing to suspend their flights for most of April, and I want to personally thank Dave Baker, his team, and the United Airlines leadership for being true partners in the CNMI’s fight against the spread of COVID-19. United has always been a true partner of the CNMI, and their support of our public health priorities is a testament to protecting our islands,” said Governor Torres.

CPA Board Chairwoman Kimberlyn King-Hinds noted that the Governor consulted with CPA since January to make requests to the Federal Government to suspend flights in the interest of preventing the spread of COVID-19.

“The Governor’s directive to CPA since January was to begin communicating with the airlines directly to consider suspending flights into and out of the CNMI to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. We have a strong partnership with United Airlines, and CPA has been relaying the CNMI’s concerns about continued flights, even before the outbreak in Guam. This latest appeal by the Governor was immediately addressed. We will continue to monitor the situation here on the ground, and I’m sure the Governor will request for an extended suspension as needed.”

In his March 30, 2020 letter to Dave Baker, Saipan Station Manager for United Airlines, Governor Torres requested United Airlines to suspend all inbound travel into the CNMI for a minimum of 30 days except for cargo, medical emergencies, and COVID-19 response-related travel.

“With two confirmed cases in the CNMI, continued inbound arrivals, however, limited, diverts desperately needed resources away from addressing our immediate need to contain the further spread of COVID-19 in our community. We ask for your cooperation and partnership to allow the CNMI to focus on our immediate COVID-19 response efforts to prevent the further spread of this deadly contagion in our community,” wrote Governor Torres in his letter.

In his response to the Governor and CNMI officials on Tuesday, Baker said “in support of the CNMI request” United Airlines agreed to suspend flying into and out of Saipan from April 6 to April 30, 2020. In addition, the Thursday, April 2, 2020 flight has been cancelled.

Baker added that the Sunday, April 5, 2020 flight will proceed as scheduled.

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