



GUAM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

May 19, 2021

THE HONORABLE CLYNTON E. RIDGELL
Chairperson, Committee on Economic Development,
Agriculture, Power and Energy Utilities, and the Arts
I Mina' Trentai Sais Na Liheslaturan Guåhan
Guam Congress Building
163 Chalan Santo Papa
Hagåtña, Guam 96910

RE: BILL NO. 66-36. AN ACT TO AMEND § 58206 FROM ARTICLE 2 OF CHAPTER 58, TITLE 12, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO MODIFYING THE SUNSET PROVISION OF THE “SPECIAL QUALIFYING CERTIFICATE; 1,600 HOTEL ROOMS DEVELOPMENT” PROGRAM.

Hafa Adai Chairman Ridgell and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments on Bill No. 66-36. The Guam Chamber of Commerce wholeheartedly supports this measure, just as we supported the original legislation which became Public Law 32-233 several years ago. We are optimistic that as our island slowly recovers from this pandemic, we will someday soon be able to return to the visitor arrival numbers we experienced in 2019. The road to recovery will be a long one; however, now is the time for us to roll up our sleeves and work cooperatively as a community toward developing our island as a premier destination. This means sprucing up our facilities and infrastructure as well as planning for hotel development and upgrades.

There are ongoing discussions with investors looking at either renovations of existing hotels (with an expansion of their hotel room inventory) or new resort developments. This process does not materialize overnight, therefore it is vital to extend the deadline of the program pursuant to PL 32-233 by an additional 3 years, to assure there are incentives in place to attract such investments. While it is unfortunate that the objectives outlined in the “*Special Qualifying Certificate; 1,600 Hotel Rooms Development*” program were not achieved in the allotted five-year timeframe under the law, we understand that there have been many challenges with attaining the much-needed manpower to construct new hotel rooms during this time. As we are all well aware, Guam continues to experience a skilled construction workforce challenge for private and public construction projects, which we hope to see resolved with the support of the recent passing of the FY 2021 NDAA and the cooperation of USCIS.

The current global pandemic has only exacerbated the workforce shortage situation with closed borders as the entire world manages COVID-19 outbreaks in their respective countries. As Guam and the rest of the world struggles to recover, acting to further extend the sunset provision of the Special Qualifying Certificate will provide much-needed incentives for investors to consider Guam as a good choice to establish, foster and grow their investment. Any new development or renovation spearheaded by this Special Qualifying Certificate would result in the creation of new jobs and other forms of economic activity. We appreciate the work of the Guam Economic Development Authority (GEDA) and its efforts to attract investment to Guam. With your help in passing this measure into law, we are optimistic that as we move forward into recovery, GEDA’s efforts will be fruitful, and that investors will see the value of bringing their investments to our shores.

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Understanding that the road to economic recovery will go beyond 2021, extending the Special QC sunset provision would be a much-welcomed necessity for our island. We encourage you, your committee members and all of the 36th Guam Legislature to support Bill 66-36. We would like to extend our appreciation to the authors of the measure for its introduction and support of the economic potential this provision will have on our island and the quality of life for our residents. We appreciate your consideration of our support of the passage of this bill and as always, our organization is open to a discussion on this or other pieces of legislation. Si Yu'os Ma'ase.

Sincerely,


CATHERINE CASTRO
President