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### Resolution opposing destructive military training advances

Extension to 30-day comment period sought

By Iva Maurin | Posted on Jun 18 2020

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As the U.S. Navy waits for public comments to their plan to continue training and testing activities on Farallon de Medinilla and the CNMI, activist groups are doing their own lobbying, not only to call for an extension to the 30-day comment period, but also to oppose any increase in destructive military training in the Northern Islands.

Members of the group, Our Common Wealth 670, has worked with Rep. Sheila Babauta (D-Saipan), in drafting House Joint Resolution 21-008, a request for Gov. Ralph DLG Torres to oppose any increase in destructive military training in the CNMI, including all proposed military use of the Northern Islands.

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The joint resolution was unanimously passed by the members of the House Committee on Federal and Foreign Affairs last Tuesday.

Introduced last March, the resolution maintains that the people of the Marianas, in the past two decades, have been presented with expanding and compounding plans for military training and testing, many of which involve "irreparable damage" to the land, sea, air, and biological systems of the Marianas. The resolution also notes that increased militarization poses a threat to the Marianas' terrestrial and marine species, its natural habitat, and its people.

"I am very pleased with the passage of H.J.R. 21-008, and even more grateful for the healthy dialogue that took place in the FFA Committee meeting," said Babauta. "It is important that we help educate one another, listen to the concerns of our community members, and clarify our intentions when voting on a resolution that involves the federal government."

Babauta also gave credit to the Our Common Wealth 670 team, led by chair Isa Arriola, adding, "We are committed to educating our people on the impact of militarization in the Marianas and hope to spark discussion at every table."

In line with this, Arriola, in a separate interview, said that they are working to get more of the community involved in the commenting process. "We want them to be aware of the new impacts that are being assessed in this supplemental, particularly the irreparable damage that's going to be caused on marine mammal environments, and with the use of active sonar for example and the new training and testing," she said. "We're concerned that people might not understand the ramifications of these

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#### TAGA PLUS



#### ERRATUM

new studies and the kind of damage that's going to result from this training and testing that they're continuing on FDM and at the at-sea portions of the study area."

According to Arriola, they have been compiling comments from the community via their email ourcommonwealth670@gmail.com. Aside from with the comments on the report, she said they have also been getting questions on the language, with the report being technical, as well as requests for extensions to the comment period.

"A lot of people have shared that they feel like their comments don't matter but they do. They inform a really important public record for the community and help showcase people's stance about these documents, even though they're they are very technical and tough to get through," she said.

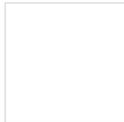
At the House session, Arriola also said that they completely support the governor's call for an extension on the commenting period to the military's proposal.

"We have been in communication with [[Special Assistant for Military Affairs] Glenna Reyes and it's our understanding that the governor is also is requesting an extension to this EIS commenting period. We completely support that extension because that's a huge concern right now," she said.



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Iva Maurin | Author

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Saipan Northern Mariana Islands

July 23, 2020, 12:02 PM



Partly sunny

32°C

real feel: 38°C

current pressure: 1010 mb

humidity: 69%

wind speed: 6 m/s E

wind gusts: 6 m/s

UV-Index: 12

sunrise: 5:57 AM

sunset: 6:50 PM

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