May 26, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Congratulations on the successful launch of your Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) initiative with our allies of Australia, Brunei, India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. Together with these partners, we make up 60% of the world’s population and over 60% of its GDP. I write today to strongly urge that our country’s gateways to the Indo-Pacific region, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, are duly included in all future trade agreements and particularly in the negotiations surrounding the IPEF.

As the centerpiece of America’s presence in the south Pacific and first introduction to the United States for many ASEAN countries, Guam and other U.S. Territories should be given the opportunity to import and export with the same ease as the fifty states. Over the past three years, I have worked diligently to highlight disparities faced by our Territories in the realm of United States foreign trade. One such case is the Korea-US Free Trade Agreement which has historically excluded Guam. We have seen first-hand the detriment that this exclusion has caused to not only our local economies and the families they support, but the economy of our greater United States and the allies we service. With approximately 90% of consumer goods and food products imported to Guam, and a unique vulnerability to supply chain disruptions, resource reliability, both directly and indirectly, dramatically change the quality of life for Americans in Guam. The ongoing pandemic has exacerbated these conditions; nevertheless Mr. President, we endeavor to build back better and opening up access to all available resources is paramount to achieving that.

The Indo-Pacific is projected to be the largest contributor to global growth over the next 30 years. Given Guam’s unique geographic location in the Indo-Pacific region, relative dateline, and time zone uniformity with our allies, the United States has prime access to a secured shoring hub that would bolster supply chains and improve economic resilience. Moreover, rising geopolitical tensions among trading partners heighten our nation’s risk and vulnerabilities to supply shortfalls. These are shortfalls that contribute to higher prices of goods, which in turn translate to higher costs of living, and ultimately higher rates of inflation that are harming our families today.

You shared that the IPEF is an economic vision that will deliver for all our peoples: “the vision for an Indo-Pacific that is free and open, connected, and prosperous, secure as well as resilient, sustainable, and inclusive.” Incorporating Guam and the Territories in all future US foreign trade agreements and the negotiations regarding the IPEF puts this vision into action. I appreciate your attention to this important matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Michael F.Q. San Nicolas
Member of Congress
Guam