

Port Partners with Maritime Administration to Lead Modernization Efforts

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The U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration will help the Port Authority of Guam in upgrading and modernizing the Port of Guam in anticipation of unprecedented cargo movement into the island.

Governor Felix P. Camacho recently has signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the Port Authority of Guam and Maritime Administration, naming Maritime Administration the lead agency for the Port Modernization Plan.

“I am excited about this partnership, which means more resources and greater opportunities to build port facilities that will sustain the economic future we envision for Guam,” Governor Camacho said. “This partnership understands the needs of the U.S. military in its build up effort, our people and how the seaport’s success will mean greater prosperity for our people.”

The MOU signals a major federal commitment to the buildup efforts in Guam directly affecting the civilian community. Among its responsibilities, Maritime Administration will coordinate with other federal agencies that receive annual Congressional appropriations and other funding that is identified for port modernization, assist the port on the NEPA process and expedite the modernization of the port by engaging professionals to perform environmental studies inclusive of overall engineering design of the port and construction activities.

“We are honored to be involved in this project,” Maritime Administrator Sean T. Connaughton said. “The Commercial Port of Guam is vital to our national security, not only because of its location, but also because of its ability to assist in deployment of defense assets.”

Maritime Administration will administer the implementation of the Port Modernization Plan when and if the Legislature adopts it. The agreement also is contingent on Senate passage of H.R. 6007, introduced May 8, 2008, by Congresswoman Bordallo, which authorizes Maritime Administration’s involvement. The agreement will be amended accordingly if the Senate does not approve H.R. 6007 by September 30, 2008.

“I want to thank Congresswoman Bordallo for her efforts to get this authorization through Congress and I encourage the US Senators to adopt the plan swiftly,” Governor Camacho said.

Maritime Administration previously has partnered with seaports in Alaska and Hawaii, modernizing the port facilities there.

The Port Modernization Plan calls for \$195 million in improvements to the entire port facilities to accommodate the import and transshipment of goods during the height of the Guam Buildup and to sustain Guam's economic growth beyond the next decade. Ten percent of the planned expenditures, or \$19.5 million, already has been identified. Parsons Brinkerhoff International, the contractor that updated the 1999 Port Master Plan, will provide the first draft of the Financial Feasibility Study in mid-June. This study will give clear financial direction as to how the \$195 million in improvements under the master plan will be funded.

For more information, please contact Bernadette S. Meno at 475-9303 or 687-8723. You may also visit the Governor's Web site at www.governor.guam.gov.