



OFFICE OF INSULAR AFFAIRS

**U.S. Department  
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## **News Release**

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### **Office of the Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas**

## **Retired Army Colonel Joins Interior's Insular Affairs Team as Field Representative in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands**

Washington, D.C. – The Department of the Interior's Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Esther Kia'aina today announced the selection of retired U.S. Army Colonel Harry Camacho Blanco, who was born and raised in the Northern Marianas Islands, to serve as the Office of Insular Affairs Field Representative in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Colonel Blanco is the first person from the Northern Marianas to achieve the rank of Colonel in the U.S. Army, and was the CNMI's highest-ranking Army officer.

“Colonel Blanco will work on a wide range of issues and projects in the Northern Mariana Islands, including federal efforts to strengthen the federal-CNMI relationship, working with government officials on government efficiency and labor and immigration issues, implementation of capital improvement projects, and assisting the Office of Insular Affairs with military expansion proposals and climate change and natural resources management initiatives,” said Assistant Secretary Kia'aina. “These are complex issues requiring someone who is knowledgeable of local customs, federal laws, rules, regulations and procedures. Colonel Blanco brings a wealth of experience during his tenure with the U.S. Army and CNMI government on project management, program operations and communications that will well serve our current Office of Insular Affairs team and the people of the Northern Marianas.”

The Department of the Interior is responsible for coordinating federal policy with respect to the territories of American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and administering and overseeing U.S. federal assistance provided to the Freely Associated States of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau under the Compacts of Free Association. The Office of

Insular Affairs mission is to foster economic opportunities, promote government efficiency, and improve the quality of life for the people of the insular areas.

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