



OFFICE OF INSULAR AFFAIRS

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas

**\$12 Million in Infrastructure Funding Released to Commonwealth
of the Northern Mariana Islands**

To Complete Power Plant Oil Pipeline and Puerto Rico Dump Closure Projects

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Interior Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Esther Kia’aina released this week over \$12 million in grant funding under the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) Capital Improvement Project (CIP) program for completion of the Power Plant Oil Pipeline and Puerto Rico Dump Closure infrastructure projects in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

“These funds will help the CNMI address federal environmental and public health compliance issues for two important projects while improving quality of life for the people of the Northern Marianas,” said Assistant Secretary Kia’aina. “Both projects have received prior year monies and we are very pleased that this final round of grants bring both to completion.”

The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) received \$2.8 million in grant funding for completion of the Power Plant Oil Pipeline, a project required by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through U.S. District Court Stipulated Order II (SO2). The SO2 required CUC and the CNMI to be in compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act.

The CNMI Department of Public Works received \$9.8 million in grant funding for completion of the Puerto Rico Dump (PRD) Closure project. The PRD, the biggest CIP project ever funded in the CNMI by the Office of Insular Affairs, has been in use since World War II and was closed in 2003 due to environmental and public health threats. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) required an approved final closure design and construction project in compliance with an

EPA Administrative Order on Consent. The closure design plans include completion of a park to be more community friendly.

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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