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Assistant Secretary Kia'aina to Make First Official Visit to the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam; Deliver Keynote Remarks at GEDA Symposium

Kia'aina to underscore OIA's role in improving the quality of life, supporting programs that create economic opportunity, and promoting government efficiency.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Beginning this week, Interior Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Esther Kia'aina will make her first official visit to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and Guam, where she will meet with government officials, private sector leaders, and community leaders and deliver keynote remarks at the Guam Economic Development Authority (GEDA) Economic Symposium.

Her discussions with island leaders and community members will cover a wide variety of issues to include climate change, economic and energy development, labor and immigration, the Guam-CNMI visa-waiver programs, the Department of Defense Buildup, and Compact Impact. Assistant Secretary Kia'aina will also tour various projects and programs being implemented and administered through grants from the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA), including Capital Improvement Projects.

From October 13 to 17, the Assistant Secretary will be in the Northern Mariana Islands, where she will meet with CNMI Lieutenant Governor Jude Hofschneider and legislative leaders from both the House and Senate. She will also meet with members of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, visit the Northern Marianas College, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation, the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation, the Department of Land and Natural Resources, and tour American Memorial Park, among other activities. She will also fly to Tinian to meet with Mayor Ray Dela Cruz to learn first-hand the issues important to the Tinian community.

The Assistant Secretary's visit to Guam will be from October 20 to 24. She will begin her visit by meeting with Guam Governor Eddie Calvo, Guam Legislature leadership, and officials from Joint Region Marianas. She will also participate in a luncheon hosted by the Guam Women's Chamber of Commerce, and meet with members of the Guam Chamber of Commerce, and

officials from Guam Energy and Natural Resources. The Assistant Secretary will also visit the Guam Memorial Hospital, the University of Guam, and the Guahan Academy Charter School, among other activities.

Assistant Secretary Kia'aina will deliver a keynote address at the GEDA Economic Symposium on Thursday, October 23, when she will underscore the importance of the Federal relationship with Guam and the Office of Insular Affairs' role in improving the quality of life on Guam, supporting programs and initiatives that create economic opportunity, and promoting government efficiency.

The Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas carries out the administrative responsibilities of the Secretary of the Interior in coordinating federal policy for 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 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 Assistant Secretary executes these responsibilities through the Office of Insular Affairs.

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