



OFFICE OF INSULAR AFFAIRS

**U.S. Department
of the Interior**

www.doi.gov/oia
News Release

Date: September 30, 2015

Contact: Tanya Harris Joshua 202-208-6008

Tanya_Joshua@ios.doi.gov

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas

**Interior Provides \$584,000 to Assist Northern Mariana
Islands Typhoon Recovery Effort**

*Assistant Secretary Insular Areas to Survey Typhoon Soudelor Relief Efforts and
Discuss Natural Disaster Mitigation Plans with Leadership*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (September 30, 2015) - Interior Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Esther Kia'aina has approved \$584,000 for the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) as the community continues to recover from Typhoon Soudelor which hit the CNMI on August 2nd. The Assistant Secretary will also visit Saipan and Tinian in the Commonwealth next week to survey relief efforts in the aftermath of the typhoon and discuss hazard mitigation plans with CNMI leadership.

While the territory is eligible for disaster assistance from FEMA and other federal agencies under Presidential Disaster Declaration (DR-4235), funding is still necessary to help the CNMI resume normal operations and cover unmet needs not specifically eligible for assistance under federal disaster programs.

“We are pleased to support the work of our federal partners on the ground as we work together to support Governor Eloy Inos and the people of the Northern Marianas,” said Assistant Secretary Kia'aina. “FEMA, in partnership with the Governor’s Office, has done a great job of coordinating federal relief efforts during this difficult time. I appreciate and commend FEMA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Coast Guard, Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Education, Energy, EPA, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Labor, the Small Business Administration, and Transportation agencies, as well as the

many non-government organizations, including the Red Cross, and neighboring island governments who have lent generous assistance.”

While in the territory next week, the Assistant Secretary will be briefed by FEMA and the Governor’s Emergency Management team on the status of typhoon recovery, hazard mitigation efforts and planning, including hardening of public infrastructure. She will also meet with various CNMI leaders including the Governor, and members of the Legislature. Lastly, she will survey some of the hardest hit residential areas including public facilities most affected such as the utilities, the hospital, schools and the College of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Assistant Secretary will also travel to Tinian to meet with Mayor Joey P. San Nicolas and survey capital improvement projects and infrastructure on Tinian.

All ports and the hospital in Saipan are in full operation; however, efforts to bring back full power and water distribution to all households in Saipan are still ongoing.

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.

####