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COUNCIL

American Samoa Synopsis
159th Council Meeting
Fiesta Resort, Saipan
Tuesday, March 18th, 2014

Synopsis of Information and Issues for the American Samoa Archipelago

A. Motu Lipoti

The American Samoa Council Members will provide updates to the Council on their respective fishery activities and issues occurring in the American Samoa archipelago since the 158th meeting held in October 2013 in Hawaii.

B. Fono Report

The American Samoa Council Members will report the following legislative news from the Territory of American Samoa, regarding issues that occurred since the 158th meeting held in October 2013 in Hawaii.

- 1. American Samoa opposes a provision of the Consolidated Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2014** – The Act states that 90 days after the bill is enacted into law, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture shall revise the USDA Marketing Service Master Solicitation and Supplement specification for the purchase of canned tuna to require that not less than 75% of the value of such tuna be produced in the US or its territories. American Samoa Congressman Faleomavaega Eni Hunkin voiced his concern that this would by undermine the 100% USDA Buy America requirements, and jeopardize the economic well-being of American Samoa. Along with Congressman George Miller, ranking member on the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, he submitted a detailed letter to USDA outlining concerns for potentially weakening the Buy American requirement.

Support from the territory has grown. The American Samoa Government has made its support of Congressman Faleomavaega's efforts clear. The Fono (American Samoa Legislature) and the Governor have signed a joint concurrent resolution, showing their support for the Congressman's efforts. The communities of American Samoa have also stepped up to make their voices heard as a petition. Former governor, Togiola Tulafono has joined local longline owners to begin a petition to gather community support in opposition of the USDA's required reporting language.

- 2. President Obama's minimum wage increase proposal will not adversely affect American Samoa economy** – There was worry in the territory that the President's proposal to increase the minimum wage would present problems for American Samoa

as the ripple effects of the Chicken of the Sea canning facility closing are still being felt. Congressman Faleomavaega Eni Hunkin provided clarification to the upcoming Executive Order, pointing out that the wage increase will only apply to federal contractors and not to local government or the private sector. There is a bill pending which would raise American Samoa's minimum wage by 2015. The Congressman will be working with the President to find the best minimum wage solution, taking into account GAO findings and still be fair for local workers and industries.

3. **Rosie Fuala'au Tago Lancaster announces plans to run for Congress again** – For the third time, Rosie Lancaster will be running for the Congressional delegate seat from American Samoa in the upcoming election. She also ran in the 2008 and 2012 elections, losing to the current Congressman Faleomavaega Eni Hunkin, and finishing behind Aumua Amata Radewagen. Lancaster is a retired US Army veteran.
4. **House of Representatives co-sponsors resolution calling for Executive Branch to begin planning for the construction of a Pago Harbor boardwalk** – With the goal of economic growth, seven faipule of the Fono's House of Representatives co-sponsored a resolution calling for the governor construct a boardwalk in the Pago harbor area complete with supporting structures for business development. The resolution has Public Works and DOC preparing plans for this project immediately to make American Samoa the first island in the region to have a boardwalk. This plan would supposedly attract tourists and stimulate the economy. This plan calls for construction of a seawall which would be built under the boardwalk. The plan is for the construction site to be from the shoreline behind the Fono building in Fagatogo all the way toward the canneries in the village of Satala (near the shipyard slipway and Starkist plant). The report talks about billions of dollars the recreational boating and maritime industry contribute to global economies and how the project would also solve the territory's docking space issues. The resolution calls for the governor to utilize FEMA mitigation funds from the '09 tsunami and from block grant funds to complete this project. It seems that they have been looking at the 20 year old harbor master plan. There has been no official response from the governor yet on the resolution.
5. **Senate Committee for Communications and Fisheries questions Shipyard Services Chairman and Board Members about cost-cutting plan submitted to the Governor** – Senator Afoa Lutu called a hearing of the Fono's Communications and Fisheries Committee, calling in the board for the shipyard services to explain cost saving measures submitted to the governor's office including the removal of an employee who was recommended by the governor, and shrinking the number of board members from its current 9 to 5 which would save about \$20K/year (stipends of \$5 and \$6K are given annually to board members). Afoa called the hearing after learning that five employees were laid off by the shipyard services chairman David Robinson. The committee was also questioned the hiring of an ASG retiree who earns a high salary while rarely being at work. Robinson stated that the moves were part of the cost cutting measures and that there isn't enough repair work coming in to justify the amount of employees. The shipyard also lost its engineer who returned to New Zealand (\$75K/year salary). Robinson said little money is made from longline repairs and the

big money is in purse seiner repairs. He also reported that TriMarine has committed to using the shipyard to service and repair its purse seiner fleet, a move that would generate quite a bit of money for the territory. The shipyard is an important piece of our local fishery infrastructure and we should monitor the updates as they could directly affect our plans to develop fisheries in the territory.

C. Enforcement Issues

The Enforcement Report which is generated quarterly by DMWR, provides information collected by the department on international shipping monitoring, international flight monitoring, patrols and store inspections, outreach and awareness efforts, after hours response, and any citations or violations recorded in the Territory. The report also covers the department's combined efforts with the NMFS activities in the Territory with both foreign and domestic vessels.

Also detailed in this report are updates on technical assistance through inter-agency training, enforcement of the Governor's moratorium on sea cucumbers, and meetings with the USCG to discuss priority infrastructure needs for American Samoa.

D. Community Activities and Issues

The Council will hear reports on fishery growth activities and community developments in American Samoa.

- 1. Update on Community Fisheries Development** – News and updates provided to the Council regarding Tutuila and Manu'a development. This portion of the report will include updates on the fishermen's cooperative facilities in Manu'a and the plans for their future oversight. Also included in this report will be information regarding the issue of fuel cost relief for the fishermen of Ofu, Ta'u and Olosega and the survey conducted by the Council's Fishery Development Coordinator for American Samoa, Mr. Ueta Fa'asili. This report will also inform the Council about Manu'a fishermen's need for cold storage facilities.

Tutuila updates will include ASG's new plan to resolve docking space issues in Pago Pago Harbor, as well as the government's plans to assist fishermen and boat owners in the Territory. Council will be given updates on plans in American Samoa to renovate the fish market in town, investigations into potential bottomfish exportation markets for local fishermen, and the development of foreign seafood importation policies. The Council has been assisting ASG with developing a lending scheme to finance vessel repairs and purchases. This portion of the report will provide information on the progress of a lending scheme development, as well the search for a new, multiplatform fishing vessel for American Samoa and possible training programs to support the fishing community.

This portion of the report will detail ASG's plan for establishing a fisheries development division for the Executive Branch of government. Additionally, the Council will hear new information on the Tri Marine facilities plan for a small vessel

loading dock, and a partnership between the Council, the American Samoa Department of Commerce and the American Samoa Chamber of Commerce to provide seafood safety and handling training to local markets in the Territory.

2. **Seafood Safety and Handling Training for American Samoa Markets** – John Kaneko, Hawaii Seafood Council Program Manager is assisting the Council in coordinating a three day seafood safety and handling training workshop for any interested businesses that sell fresh seafood to consumers in American Samoa. This workshop is tentatively planned for May, 2014. The Council is partnering with the American Samoa Department of Commerce and the American Samoa Chamber of Commerce to offer this workshop to local businesses.

E. Education and Outreach Initiatives

1. **Lunar Tides Calendar** – Public and private school students in American Samoa from pre-school to 12th grade submitted artwork for the Calendar Art Contest. A panel of three local judges selected the top submissions which were printed on the 2014-2015 Council Lunar Tide Calendar. The winning 15 students will receive prizes and certificates from the Council. A total of 368 posters were submitted by local students for judging. Judges were Alexander Zodiacal – ASCC Art Professor, Mark Ashley Faulkner – Owner of M. Ashley Art Studios, and Tilani Ilaoa, Administrator for the Native American Samoa Advisory Council (NASAC).
2. **Photo Essay Contest** – The deadline for the photo essay contest will be March 31st. The contest was open to high school students from local public and private schools. Three submissions have been dropped off to Council coordinator as of February 25, 2014.

F. SSC Recommendations

The Council will review the SSC's recommendations regarding the American Samoa Archipelago issues.