



THE SENATE
TWENTIETH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 20-05

Introduced by: Senators Arnold I. Palacios, Justo S. Quitugua, Sixto K. Igisomar, , Francisco M. Borja, Francisco Q. Cruz, Jude U. Hofschneider, Steve K. Mesngon and Teresita A. Santos

A SENATE RESOLUTION

To respectfully request that Secretary Ryan Zinke, U.S. Department of the Interior and Secretary Wilbur Ross, U.S. Department of Commerce, restore fishing and mineral resource extraction rights to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) that were taken through the proclamation establishing the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument; to recommend that the fishery management within the Marianas Trench National Marine Monument be returned to the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council as authorized by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act while mineral resource extraction be treated as other submerged lands found in the CNMI; and to convey disapproval of the establishment of any National Marine Sanctuary in the CNMI.

1 **WHEREAS**, in December 2007, a member of the Pew Environment Group made a
2 presentation during an annual meeting of the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance (MINA) and
3 asked that the local non-government organization be the lead in assisting Pew in its campaign
4 to have a Marine National Monument established in the CNMI; and

5 **WHEREAS**, in early 2008, MINA declined Pew's offer to lead the environmental
6 campaign for establishing a Marine National Monument in the CNMI; and

7 **WHEREAS**, in the Spring of 2008, the Pew Environment Group created and financed
8 the "Friends of the Monument" group to manage Pew's campaign to establish a Marine
9 National Monument in the CNMI; and

10 **WHEREAS**, on 19 March 2008, Governor Benigno R. Fitial responded to a letter
11 from the Pew Global Ocean Legacy and informed it that the CNMI was "not prepared to
12 embrace the National Monument proposal" that Pew was advocating; and

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1 **WHEREAS**, on 29 April 2008, Governor Benigno R. Fitial wrote to then President
2 George W. Bush informing him that he does “not support Pew’s proposed creation of a
3 Marine National Monument in the Northern Mariana Islands”; and

4 **WHEREAS**, in the Spring of 2008, despite the opposition of a Marine National
5 Monument by Governor Benigno R. Fitial and most of the local stakeholders, the Pew
6 Environment Group chose to mount an intensive campaign to support the designation of a
7 Marine National Monument in the CNMI; and

8 **WHEREAS**, on 6 June 2008, Mayor of the Northern Mariana Islands Valentin I.
9 Taisakan requested then President George W. Bush “to allow us, the people of the
10 Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, ample time to seriously study the possible
11 effect of the proposed Marine National Monument with hope that you call for consultation
12 with the CNMI through the Covenant Section 902 Talk”; and

13 **WHEREAS**, on 9 June 2008, Saipan Mayor Juan Borja Tudela wrote to then
14 President George W. Bush informing him that he does not “support having a Marine National
15 Monument designated in the Northern Mariana Islands” and that the “existing resource
16 management authorities, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council and the
17 National Marine Fisheries Service” be allowed to continue managing marine resources; and

18 **WHEREAS**, on 12 June 2008, Tinian Mayor Jose P. San Nicolas wrote to then
19 President George W. Bush requesting that he “not designate any portion of the CNMI as a
20 Marine National Monument”; and

21 **WHEREAS**, on 15 July 2008, Rota Mayor Joseph S. Inos wrote to then President
22 George W. Bush informing him that he “does not support the designation of a Marianas
23 National Monument in the Mariana Islands as it conflicts with our traditional and sustainable
24 use of marine resources and completely bypasses public and stakeholder involvement”; and

25 **WHEREAS**, on 6 August 2008, Senate President Pete P. Reyes and Speaker of the
26 House Arnold I. Palacios wrote then President George W. Bush informing him of their
27 opposition to the proposed Marianas Trench Marine National Monument being advocated for
28 by the Pew Environment Group; and

29 **WHEREAS**, in September 2008, Senate Joint Resolution 16-04 informed then
30 President George W. Bush that the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana