

## COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

**Benigno R. Fitial**

Governor

**Eloy S. Inos**

Lt. Governor

SEP 09 2010

Mr. Chris E. Ostrander, Director  
Pacific Islands Ocean Observing System (PacIOOS)  
1680 East-West Road  
c/o CMMED, POST 105  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

Dear Director Ostrander:

On behalf of the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, this is to express my support of the proposal of the Pacific Islands Ocean Observing System (PacIOOS), empowered under the NOAA Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) research initiative, to enhance and expand the research presence of PacIOOS in the Northern Mariana Archipelago and the surrounding Pacific islands community. We welcome PacIOOS efforts to optimize the benefits inherent in complex ocean processes and mitigate the risks associated with myriad interactive ocean variables.

As an island people, we know intuitively that oceans are the fundamental life support system for the planet; that ocean systems are central to the quality of both ocean and terrestrial life; and, that the systems of the ocean change rapidly and heretofore unpredictably. To really "know" the ocean it must be studied pragmatically. PacIOOS does this, and thereby increases our capacity to interact more intelligently with the ocean.

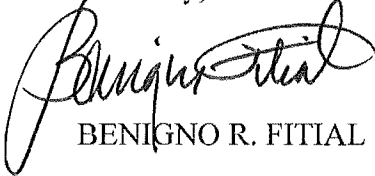
I have been told that as one of the most recent and boldest scientific approaches to ocean study, discovery and understanding, PacIOOS uses interactive telepresence to gather real-time data that are revolutionizing the perceptions and management of climate change, ocean acidification, coastal upwelling, seismic activity, dissolved oxygen, and bathymetric forcing, strengthening our efforts to promote a safe, healthy, productive ocean and a sustainable and resilient coastal zone. PacIOOS proposes to expand that real-time capability by deploying robotic techniques and employing new technologies of digital imaging, ecogenomics, and grid/cloud computing.

In my opinion, the new mind set of discovery launched by PacIOOS will enhance conservation of protected species, unique habitats, and biological diversity. It posits making available a potential wealth of information about what might be termed the earth's next and newest rain forest in terms of seeing in a new way the vast reservoirs of

ocean activity, including the biomass of microbes living deep below the sea floor, a possibility which we have only just discovered and have heretofore had no way to study.

My support of the commitment and mission of PacIOOS was signified earlier this year when I appointed my Senior Policy Advisor to represent me and the people of the CNMI on the PacIOOS Governing Council. I wholeheartedly support the vision of the NOAA IOOS and strongly recommend favorable consideration of the PacIOOS proposal for continued and sustained funding.

Sincerely,



BENIGNO R. FITIAL