



GUAM HOUSING AND URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY

For Immediate Release

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AG OPINION REGARDING EXECUTIVE PAY RAISES

Sinajaña, GU (November 26, 2021) – Attorney General Leevin T. Camacho recently opined that Guam law prohibits retroactive pay or pay raises and provided guidance on Guam law when agencies administer employee pay raises. GHURA very much respects the AG’s authority to ensure adherence to our laws. The Housing Authority is a one-of-a-kind agency, created through the ORGANIC ACT, and we commit to ensuring proper stewardship and the highest standards for its Public Housing, Urban Renewal, and Community Development Mission. We are fully federally funded and highly regulated and are expected to achieve nothing less.

We also very much respect the Office of Public Accountability and its utmost efforts to ensure fiscal responsibility and transparency. We wish to make clear that we had previously suspended the executive and deputy directors’ salary increments for CY2020 and CY2021 because of concerns expressed by the OPA and because we knew that the AG was working to clarify the law.

To attain the highest levels of compliance, GHURA shall undertake a comprehensive review of all laws and regulations which govern our expenditures, as well as the policies, procedures and controls that we operate under. The ORGANIC ACT and our enabling act, which instruct us to do all things necessary to achieve our Mission, also commands that we do nothing less. We respect local laws that specifically apply to GHURA but are required to ensure that they do not conflict with the federal laws that govern the expenditures we make, in pursuit of our Mission. This is the balance we strive to achieve.

In July 2019, GHURA approved supplemental expenditures for procurement of vehicles and equipment, increases in payments to Sec. 8 landlords, and increases in pay for its staff. Because of an on-island visit from HUD officials, we were made aware of a risk to our funding levels and believed these supplemental expenditures were necessary to avoid a permanent decrease in those levels. These supplemental expenditures, therefore, were critical to our Mission, so we tasked our staff with planning for and programming them. We are proud to now say that, because of their efforts, we were able to avoid permanently decreased funding levels. In fact, our funding levels have increased substantially, and the Housing Authority is now at all-time highs in funding. GHURA will nonetheless remain committed to proper stewardship over federal dollars, compliance with local law, fiscal responsibility and transparency.