

"This is the first that I am hearing about this proposed legislation. As you know we had an oversight hearing in April 2021 regarding the governor's failure to communicate with landowners her desire to lease the property from the military, and held a follow up oversight again in November 2021, and are having a hearing tomorrow to get the landowners input on the plans to lease their property from the military to build a hospital. When this was first brought up last year, the governor stated that these landowners had already been compensated and were not entitled to any compensation or return of land. Then the secretary of the Navy said that this was excess land, and he was going to add it to the list of lands to be returned. Then the governor had a private meeting with the director of the Missile Defense Agency and all of a sudden the land was no longer excess land, but they were in discussions for the Department of Defense to keep the land and lease it to the government of Guam for 99 years. Now, three weeks before the election and two months before the end of these legislative and gubernatorial terms, we are hearing a grand scheme of how we are going to compensate all landowners, whose land is currently held by the military which seems to let this governor and the next governor, whoever that is, off the hook for advocating for a return of these lands.

There's no better time to advocate for return of the land when the Department of Defense themselves deemed it to be excess land. I think we're losing a great opportunity, and this is a huge shift in policy that has been set in law for decades that we, the people of Guam want the land returned, and we, the people of Guam, in turn, will return that land to those who it was taken from originally.

I will of course review the proposed legislation and I am interested in hearing from the landowners whether they agree that the government of Guam should stop pushing for the return of excess land to its original landowners."