



GUAM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

March 24, 2020

THE HONORABLE TELO T. TAITAGUE
Minority Leader
I Mina'trentai Singko Na Liheslaturan Guåhan
Guam Congress Building
163 Chalan Santo Papa
Hagåtña, Guam 96910

RE: DRAFT LEGISLATION

Hafa Adai Senator Taitague,

Thank you for sharing with the Guam Chamber of Commerce draft legislation that will be introduced by yourself and Senators William Castro and Louise Muna. Our organization has always been a strong proponent of reducing the Business Privilege Tax (BPT). In a recent survey conducted with our membership, over 60% of respondents indicated that the reduction of the BPT would be the single most impactful factor that could help maintain employee hours and avoid potential layoffs. The second highest response was implementation of an amendment to the Dave Santos Exemption Act to increase both the qualifying and exemption thresholds. One thing is evident from the responses to our survey, the private sector needs assistance. We welcome any and all legislation that provides the relief needed to help keep people employed and sustain businesses past this immediate crisis. Your bill provides two key elements that will help.

While the Guam Chamber would like to see a permanent reduction of the BPT back to 4%, at this juncture the issue is about sustainability during this pandemic, therefore, even a temporary rollback would be beneficial to keeping businesses afloat. We support these two proposals in your recommended bill which provides relief until December 2020. We hope that we can discuss the long-term solutions for supporting the private sector after we come out of this crisis and work toward rebuilding our economy.

We also fully support the timely payments of tax refunds. This would certainly provide much needed funds for our people who have lost their jobs or had a reduction in their paycheck because of the crisis. This is the fastest way to help them buy food, medicine, gas, and other essential expenses. Now, more than ever, our community needs funds in their hands to help address priorities while we await federal assistance.

This is indeed a period of uncertainty, and we appreciate and welcome legislation that will help employees and businesses get through this crisis. We are counting on our elected leaders to put aside party politics and work collectively in a bi-partisan effort to provide relief to our people and their families. Our community needs help, and they need it now. We hope that you will get the support needed to move these measures into law.

Sincerely,

CHRISTINE BALETO
Chairwoman of the Board