



**Arnold I. Palacios**  
Governor

**David M. Apatang**  
Lieutenant Governor

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS  
**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

March 13, 2023

GOV 2023-410

Janet Coit  
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East-West Highway  
Room 14636  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Ms. Coit:

In accordance with the Governors' Guidance for Nominations to Regional Fishery Management Councils, I am resubmitting this revised communication to nominate the following individuals below to fulfill the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) one (1) Obligatory Seat and one (1) At-Large Seat.

Each nominee for the obligatory seat resides in the CNMI and is knowledgeable about the conservation and management of commercial or recreational harvest of the fishery resources in the CNMI. Further, each nominee for the at-large seat resides in a state or territory of the Western Pacific Region and is knowledgeable about the conservation and management of commercial or recreational harvest of the fishery resources in the Region.

For your review and approval, I am submitting three (3) nominees for possible appointment to the CNMI's one (1) obligatory seat as follows:

**WPRFMC Obligatory Seat:**

1. Heinz Hofschneider
2. Joaquin Villagomez
3. Gene E. Weaver

**Mr. Heinz S. Hofschneider** is a resident of Saipan, attended Menlo College in Atherton, California then attended California State University at Los Angeles in which he majored in Health sciences. He has been fishing within the Commonwealth for over 30 years. He is also a former politician for the Northern Mariana Islands. Hofschneider served 16 years with the CNMI Legislature. As well as serving as the Speaker of the Northern Mariana Islands House of Representatives from 2002 to 2004. During his tenure within the House of Representative, he spearheaded the creation of the Managaha Island Sanctuary and became an advocate for conservation, creating marine protected areas and suspending the use of gillnets within the lagoon.

Prior to his political career, Hofschneider in the late 80's fished commercially for pelagic and bottom fish species, wholesaling to restaurants and hotels. He is one of the first fishers within the Commonwealth to use hydraulics for bottom fishing and greenstick fishing methods for large pelagic species. Also, as a recreational fisher, participating in numerous fishing tournaments successfully winning several record catches within the CNMI.

**Mr. Joaquin Villagomez** is a resident of Saipan, recreational fisher, and a U.S. Army veteran. Villagomez attended some college at the University of Guam and at the University Hawaii, Manoa. He started his career working as a Junior Clerk during the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Later became a Clerk for the Community Development Office for Marianas Island District. He further worked as a Legislative Clerk for the Congress of Micronesia. In the 70's he worked as a salesman for the Pacific Trading Company and later became a teacher for the Marianas Senior High School for Biology and Health. Villagomez also worked as the Manager for the Marianas District Fishing Authority for the CNMI Government from 1975 - 1977. As the office evolved into the Division of Marine Resources, he later became the Chief, until 1981. Then from 1982 - 1986 he joined the US Army under the 72G Automotive Communication, Signal Corps. After being honorably discharged from the US Army, from 1986-1990 he held the position of Legislative Assistant working for Rota and Tinian. After his service with the legislature, he became the Administrator for the Office of Coastal Resources and Management and retired from the CNMI Government in 1993. However, from 2002-2003 he served as a TSA Screener.

**Mr. Gene E. Weaver** is a long-time community volunteer and fishing tournament organizer for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The longest living President for the Saipan Fishermen's Association, over 13 years of service. Weaver is one of the founding members for the Tasi to Table, a 501c3 non-profit corporation registered in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Established in July of 2020, the program engages the youth through teaching fishing methodologies, boating safety, protecting, and safeguarding of our environment, and mental health. Their goal of passing along knowledge of fishing to future generations. Outside the numerous hours of helping the community, Weaver is also a full-time Building Superintendent for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Island Judiciary. Prior to the Courts, from 2004 to 2008 he served as the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Project Officer for the CNMI Office of the Lt. Governor. 2002-2004 he was the safety officer for Seafix Incorporated. Lastly, he was also the General Manager for Mid-Pac Micronesia from 1995-2002.

While all three nominees are well qualified for this vacancy, I respectfully request that **Mr. Hofschneider be appointed to the obligatory seat.** I am confident that Mr. Hofschneider meets the qualifications listed in the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Furthermore, for your review and approval, I am submitting three (3) nominees for possible appointment to one (1) of the At-Large seats as follows:

**WPRFMC (1) At-Large Seat:**

1. Pedro I. Itibus
2. Wayne V. Pangelinan
3. Cecilio Raiukiulipiy

**Pedro I. Itibus** is one of the longest recreational and subsistence fishers on Saipan. Itibus is a strong supporter of traditional fishing and sustaining and protecting marine sources. He follows traditional fishing beliefs of taking only what is needed. Itibus, who is retired now from the CNMI Government, started his career in 1971 as a Police Officer and later becoming a detective for the Investigation Unit. After 16 years of service with the police force, he became an assistant clerk of the Commonwealth Clerk of Court from 1987 to 1999. From 1999-2016 he became the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Public Lands. During his years of public service, he also served as Board Member for the CNMI Board of Parole and Board member for the Commonwealth Development Authority (CDA)

**Wayne V. Pangelinan** works for the Commonwealth Public School System as the Environmental Health & Facilities Manager. He is an avid recreational and subsistence fisher on Saipan. He has volunteered numerous hours helping local non-profit organizations. He believes that CNMI needs to speak out more with regard to marine resources, protecting the marine environment and educating the community. Under his work experience, Pangelinan has been working for the Public since 2015. His main rule is the implantation and coordination of programs that provide high quality, safe and conducive learning and working environments. Prior to PSS he ran his own business with regard media relations, called Bson Relations and even opened a barbeque grilling establishment call Charcoal BBQ establishment from 2009-2013. From 2002 - 2007 he was the Marketing Manager for the Marianas Visitors Authority, were he assisted in developing marketing strategies, campaigns and CNMI wide events. He also worked for eight months with the Dickerson & Quinn. Ltd. Saipan as a Senior Sales Executive on Saipan.

**Cecilio Raiukiulipiy** is a traditional navigator and the captain of Okeanos Marianas. Born and raised on the Micronesian island of Satawal, Cecilio shares how the Vaka Motu can help Pacific Islanders live their culture while safely meeting their ocean transportation needs. Raiukiulipiy has been sailing for over 35 years learning the traditional method under the guidance of grand master navigator Mau Pailug in Satawal in Yap State in the Federated States of Micronesia. His traditional voyaging methods have brought him to Hawaii, the CNMI, Japan, Australia, Guam, and the Philippines. In addition, Mr. Raiukiulipiy is also a certified water distribution operator and water treatment operator for 32 years. His professional skills include mechanical and electrical work. He is also a contractor for the US Military bases on Guam, Diego Garcia, CNMI and the Palau government. Lastly, he is a certified NCCER Instructor for electrical and plumbing.

While all three nominees are well qualified for this vacancy, I respectfully request the appointment of **Mr. Pedro I. Itibus to the At-large seat**. I am confident that Mr. Itibus more than meets the qualifications listed in the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Lt. Governor Apatang and I have consulted with the CNMI Fishery Advisory Panel, and Sylvan O. Igisomar Acting Secretary of the CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources, as well as others in the fishing community, and we are comfortable with our nominations.

My staff and I look forward to continued collaboration with the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council and we assure you of our strong support of the goals and objectives of the organization.

Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (670) 237- 2200 or via email at [arnold.palacios@gov.mp](mailto:arnold.palacios@gov.mp).

Respectfully,

  
**ARNOLD I. PALACIOS**  
Governor

cc: Kitty Simonds, Executive Director, WPRFMC  
Sylvan O. Igisomar, Secretary, CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources  
Floyd R. Masga, Special Advisor to DLNR



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA

March 14, 2023

Ms. Janet Coit  
NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries  
1315 East West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Assistant Administrator Coit:

I have selected the following Hawai'i residents to serve on the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) At-Large seats as they have all met the required criteria:

**Pelika Andrade ("other" sector)**

**John Kaneko ("other" sector)**

**Frederick McGrew Rice (recreational sector)**

**Ed Watamura (recreational sector)**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Josh Green".

Josh Green, M.D.  
Governor, State of Hawai'i

cc: Dawn N.S. Chang, Chairperson, State of Hawai'i Board of Land & Natural Resources  
David Sakoda, Div. of Aquatic Resources, State of Hawai'i Dept. of Land & Natural Resources



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March 14, 2023

Ms. Janet Coit  
NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries  
1315 East West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Assistant Administrator Coit:

I have selected the following Hawai'i residents to serve on the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WesPac) as they have all met the required criteria:

**Roger Dang (commercial sector)**

**John Kaneko ("other" sector)**

**Eric Kingma ("other" sector)**

Sincerely,

Josh Green, M.D.  
Governor, State of Hawai'i

cc: Dawn N.S. Chang, Chairperson, State of Hawai'i Board of Land & Natural Resources  
David Sakoda, Div. of Aquatic Resources, State of Hawai'i Dept. of Land & Natural Resources

## **State of Hawaii's Nominations to the WesPac Council**

(In alphabetic order, by last name)

**Pelika Andrade** is a native Hawaiian community member, fisherperson, sailor, hoā'āina, researcher, and contributor to marine management. She has 15 years of experience conducting research in the intertidal zone, co-developing a management plan for the 'opihi fishery, facilitating community outreach and information sharing, and advocating for resource sustainability and productivity. Her work in Hawaii's nearshore areas directly aligns with the Council's goals to manage the nation's fishery resources and specifically, within the Western Pacific Region, to make decisions based on science and informed by traditional knowledge and practices of the local users for the benefit of our island communities and the nation.

**Roger Dang** is a member of the Hawaii Longline Association Board of Directors and has held a seat on the Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council since 2019. He would like to continue his membership on the Council to share the perspectives and experiences that he has had as a lifelong member of the Hawaii commercial fishing community. Roger believes living marine resources are critical to the food security of our islands, and that by working with the best available science and data we can improve management policies that will help ensure the continuity of sustainable resources for this and the next generation of fishing families.

**John Kaneko** is the Program Director for the Hawaii Seafood Council, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting Hawaii's responsible fisheries and safe and sustainable seafood with credible information through outreach, education, training, and research. He has been involved in the Hawaii seafood industry since 1988 and is especially knowledgeable about the purse seine, longline, and troll fisheries for canned fish in American Samoa as well as the pelagic longline fisheries in Hawaii for tuna and swordfish for the fresh market. John believes that wild seafood is a renewable food resource if properly managed and that proper management includes a combination of high-quality data, meaningful regulatory actions, consistent enforcement, and monitoring/assessments for fine-tuning management actions.

**Eric Kingma** is the Executive Director of the Hawaii Longline Association, a position he has held since 2019. Eric earned his PhD at the Australia Center for Ocean Research and Security, University of Wollongong, in 2018 and a Masters of Public Administration with a focus on Marine Policy at the University of Hawaii at Manoa in 2003. He believes that fisheries can be sustainable through the utilization of the best scientific information available and the application of comprehensive management measures and monitoring tools. Eric also believes that each jurisdiction in the Pacific Islands region is different culturally, geographically, and politically, so fisheries management objectives should be adaptive and vary by region. Eric will strive to work collaboratively within the Council to contribute to the development and implementation of comprehensive fisheries management measures and policies that will provide long-term sustainability to the fisheries of the U.S. Pacific islands.

**Frederick McGrew Rice** is a Charter Boat Captain and owner of Hooked on Kona Sportfishing. He is seeking reappointment to the Council. Captain McGrew Rice has deep roots in Hawai'i as he is the descendant of missionaries that arrived in 1838. Captain McGrew Rice has been involved in fishing all his life as his father bought his first charter boat in 1968. He became captain upon his father's retirement in 1991. He has made a lifelong commitment to preserving our fishery to ensure that it remains sustainable and bountiful for future generations. Captain McGrew Rice continues to further his education on the industry by partnering with scientists and researchers from around the Pacific so that they can share their knowledge and experiences with each other.

**Ed Watamura** has been fishing in Hawaii his entire life, both for recreation and sustenance, and was one of the founding members of the Hawaii Fishermen's Alliance for Conservation and Tradition (HFACT), a non-profit organization that advocates for the fishers of Hawaii. Ed has been involved in fisheries management for over 20 years, and his ultimate goal is to be able to pass down sustainable marine resources that can help feed and nourish the people of Hawaii for generations to come. He believes in a holistic approach to fisheries management that takes into account the health of the fisheries and the environment they live in. Global warming, soil runoff, and other anthropogenic threats are all connected to the health of marine ecosystems, and his holistic approach takes these all into account. Ed is also the President of the Waialua Boat Club, the oldest boat club in Hawaii, and the Club's members have volunteered time to assist with community events involving fishing, such as the Hawaii Fishing and Seafood Festival, the Fishing For Hawaii's Hungry Tournament, Haleiwa Harbor clean-up events, the Annual Boy Scout Makahiki, and participated in a tournament that donated over 700 pounds of fish to Lanakila Meals on Wheels.