



## OFFICE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

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### **Public Auditor Responds to Guam Daily Post Editorial on Audit Timing**

*Report Clearly Outlines Audit Activities*

July 18, 2020

As Public Auditor, I am compelled to respond to the Guam Daily Post editorial on July 17<sup>th</sup> on the timing of our recently issued audit on the Port Authority of Guam unclassified employees' pay raises. It casts a perception that this independent office is using its resources for political motives. Our office fully rejects the notion OPA is out to get certain political parties or candidates with our audits. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The author of this editorial either did not read the entire audit or does not have access to the archives of the Guam Daily Post. We even state it in the introductory paragraph of the report the reason why this particular audit focused on PAG. In June 2019, OPA analyzed the staffing patterns of 16 autonomous agencies and identified the top four agencies with the highest number of salary adjustments – Guam Power Authority, Guam Waterworks Authority, Port Authority of Guam, and the Guam Housing and Urban Renewal Authority – and determined to focus our limited resources on them. Due to the complexity and uniqueness of each agency and its actions, OPA decided to issue a series of audits to detail what transpired.

In November 2019, the OPA and the Office of the Attorney General teamed up to tackle the misuse of government funds and uphold the rule of law. In a joint press release, our offices specifically stated we “will review the practices of government agencies to determine if they are following the laws on paying government officials.” The issue and legality of certain pay raises and bonuses in the Government of Guam, whether at GPA, GWA, or PAG, have been brewing for years, and the people of Guam are fed up.

In December 2019, OPA issued Report No. 19-09, *Guam Power Authority and Guam Waterworks Authority Unclassified Employees' Pay Raises and Bonuses*. In that report, OPA found the Consolidated Commission on Utilities did not comply with the Open Government Law when it discussed and decided the employees' salaries and bonuses during its executive meetings. The Guam Daily Post covered this report in great detail and even named it the #2 Top Story of 2019. It is stated in this report that a subsequent audit will be issued for the other agencies.

The PAG unclassified employees' pay raises and bonuses audit was the second in the series. The timing of our audit release and a certain political candidate being the subject of the audit is purely coincidental. This audit initially began in June 2019 and the political candidate only filed for candidacy in June 2020. For the record, GHURA will be the third and final report and will be issued before the end of the fiscal year.



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OPA takes extraordinary measures with every audit issued. Every word and number in our audits must be supported with evidence. We have a quality control reviewer, independent of the audit, come in and scrutinize the audit to ensure all the evidence is supported and no stone is left unturned.

While we respect this opinion on doing a broad audit to encapsulate the issues and reporting them all in one report, doing that does a disservice to each respective agency as their issues with the Open Government Law may be similar, their circumstances are not. An auditor's responsibility is to do an independent examination and assess whether the entity is achieving economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in the use of those resources. To put it simply, the devil is in the details and further prosecutorial action from the OAG, if necessary, would require each circumstance to be outlined.

OPA remains committed to auditing for good governance.

Thank you for your time.

Benjamin J.F. Cruz, Public Auditor