

Statement of the
Honorable Pedro A. Tenorio

Before the Subcommittee
On Insular Affairs

July 17, 2008

Madam Chairwoman, members of the Committee. I remember with great anticipation the signing of the Executive Order that created the Interagency Group on Insular Areas. I was hoping that IGIA would move the territories from the realm of forgotten stepchild into the mainstream where we would finally have powerful advocates on our side.

But that was not to be. I am sure everyone here remembers the Territorial Bond Bank, developed under the auspices of IGIA, only to be cut down in its prime by OMB.

At the direction of Congress IGIA did form a working group to update the Army Corps of Engineers report on the Water Infrastructure Development Plans for the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota. The CNMI is America's only jurisdiction where the residents are unable to drink the water. The working group did an excellent job, unfortunately there was no follow through, and we have yet another report sitting on a shelf gathering dust.

The CNMI has real problems and unless our governor becomes a superhero, they are not going to be resolved anytime soon. Whether it is the nature of the bureaucratic beast or not, the problems facing the CNMI and the other territories must be resolved. I am not just talking about money, which does come in handy, but also expertise.