

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**  
**OFFICE OF INSULAR AFFAIRS**

For Immediate Release: October 11, 2002

Contact: Keith A. Parsky  
202-208-4070

**JAMES J. BENEDETTO**  
**NAMED FEDERAL LABOR OMBUDSMAN**

(Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas and Washington, D.C.) Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Insular Affairs David B. Cohen announced today that James J. Benedetto was named Federal Labor Ombudsman on the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands. Benedetto is an experienced attorney with 12 years practicing law in Alaska and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.

Cohen praised the appointment today: **“As an attorney in private practice, Jim focused on Alaska Native law, as well as commercial law, both substantive areas with relevance to his new post as Labor Ombudsman,”** Cohen said, **“Jim served as an Adjunct Professor, a domestic relations master, as well as Assistant District Attorney and Assistant Attorney General. Jim can draw on his past legal experience to carry out the mandate of the Ombudsman's Office to assist foreign workers in the Commonwealth protect their rights under Federal and local laws.”**

Benedetto attended the University of Washington Law School in Seattle, Washington, from 1987-1990. From 1990-1992, he was an attorney at Bradbury, Bliss & Riordan in Anchorage, Alaska. From 1992 to 1995, Benedetto was a Magistrate with the Alaska Court system. Benedetto became an Assistant District Attorney in 1995, and he concentrated on criminal prosecutions until 1999 in both Kotzebue and Kenai, Alaska. In 1999, he came to the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands as Assistant Attorney General.

Office of Insular Affairs Director Nikolao Pula welcomed Benedetto to his new post: **“In his capacity as Labor Ombudsman, Jim brings to the office his deep concern for people. Jim came to the CNMI with a great mix of skills. While working in Saipan at the Attorney Generals' office, he really got to know the island's issues and people. The Department of the Interior as well as the CNMI will benefit with Jim as Federal Labor Ombudsman.”**

The Federal Labor Ombudsman's Office was established to assist foreign workers gain a better understanding of the laws and policies affecting them. The Ombudsman office works hand-in-hand with the CNMI's Department of Labor and Immigration, the U.S. Attorneys' Office and the Department of the Interior to ensure activities are properly coordinated and developed.

-DOI-