



*Nago City*  
*Office of the Mayor*

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January 31, 2018

The Honorable James N. Mattis  
Secretary of Defense  
Washington DC  
U.S.A. 20301-3010

Lt. Gen. Jerry P. Martinez  
Commander, U.S. Forces Japan and 5th Air Force  
Yokota Air Base, Kanagawa, Japan

Lt. Gen. Lawrence D. Nicholson  
Commander, U.S. Marines Japan and III Marine Expeditionary Force  
Camp Foster, Okinawa, Japan

**Letter of Request for Permission to Conduct Inspection at Henoko-Oura Bay**

Dear Secretary Mattis, Lt. Gen. Martinez, and Lt. Gen. Nicholson:

I write on behalf of the City of Nago to request the U.S. Department of Defense's cooperation to help the City assess the environmental impacts of construction work for a replacement facility for USMC Futenma Air Base (FRF) at Henoko-Oura Bay in Nago City, Okinawa. I make this request in light of the August 2017 ruling of the U.S. Appeals Court on the "Dugong case" under the U.S. National Historical Preservation Act (NHPA).

Since construction work began in July 2014, various serious environmental changes have been reported although only less than one percent of land reclamation work has been undertaken and the FRF construction is far from completion.

One particular situation deeply concerns the City of Nago and, I believe, the U.S. DoD. According to survey reports by the Okinawa Defense Bureau, the body which has been undertaking construction work, no dugong has been sighted in Oura Bay since January 2015 although in the past dugongs had been sighted here. Moreover, the individual dugong known as Dugong C, which had been frequently sighted along the coastal areas of northern Okinawa Island including Oura Bay before then, has not been sighted since June 2015. The Bureau has not been able to sight dugongs in Oura Bay and has not been able to locate Dugong C.

This situation is not consistent with the "no adverse effect" predictions made by the Okinawa Defense Bureau's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (2012) and the U.S. DoD *Findings* (2014). It is however what many experts and organizations/institutions including the City of Nago had predicted, in their comments to the EIA and court

testimonies.

Meanwhile, in August 2017, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit reversed the San Francisco Federal District Court's decision on the Dugong case and remanded it to the Federal District Court where the case is currently proceeding.

It is my understanding that, to "take into account" under Section 402 NHPA the impact of FRF construction on the dugong, the U.S. DoD needs to consult experts, organizations/institutions, and other stakeholders. It is also my understanding that, as a stakeholder, the City of Nago should be consulted because FRF construction takes place in the City.

The City of Nago would welcome the opportunity of consultation since the City has never been consulted by the DoD. The City would like to provide it with its own information, assessments, and recommendations regarding the dugong.

To do so, however, the City of Nago needs to understand and evaluate the current state of FRF construction works and the environmental impact such works might have caused to the dugong and its Henoko-Oura Bay habitat.

Thus, as a stakeholder, the City of Nago would like to make the following requests:

1) The U.S. DoD permits the City to conduct an inspection at the construction site, especially at the following two particular locations:

a) the Oura Bay side of Cape Henoko where the Okinawa Defense Bureau discovered over 70 dugong feeding trails in seagrass beds during its surveys (April to July 2014) and where construction of K-9 seawall is currently under way.

b) the Henoko side of Cape Henoko where the largest area of seagrass beds in Okinawa is located and where construction of K-1, N-5, and N-4 seawalls is currently under way.

2) The U.S. DoD provides the City with information it has gathered on the dugong and other dugong related environmental and cultural issues in Okinawa.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely yours,



Susumu Inamine  
Mayor of the City of Nago

cc: Mr. John M. Fowler, Executive Director  
The U.S. Advisory Council on Historical Preservation

Dr. Peter O. Thomas, Executive Director  
The U.S. Marine Mammal Commission