



Office of Planning and Development

Office of the Governor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands



Responsiveness Summary for Public Outreach Activities Related to the development of the CNMI Comprehensive Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan (CNMI CISWMP)—

Public hearing conducted in Rota on November 9, 2023

This responsiveness summary was prepared in accordance with [40 CFR 256.60\(a\)\(3\)](#) and [40 CFR 25.8](#).

Summary of Public Participation Activity Conducted:

This event was a one-hour public hearing at the Office of the Mayor of Rota to inform the community of what is proposed for Rota within the CNMI Comprehensive Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan (CISWMP) and to collect questions, comments, and concerns from the attendees regarding the CISWMP. The questions, comments, and concerns that were received during the public hearing will be captured here in this Responsiveness Summary and incorporated into the CISWMP.

Summary of Matters on Which the Public was Consulted:

Attendees of the public hearing were presented and consulted on:

- The results of a waste characterization study conducted on Rota on March 2023
- Details of the proposed new facilities, programs, and activities for Rota that are incorporated into the CISWMP

Summary of Public Outlook on the Matters Presented and Summary of Comments Received:

Public hearing attendees expressed enthusiasm for the development, submission, and approval of the plan so that the Rota Municipality could avail of much-needed federal funding for its solid waste management activities. Concerns raised by the public hearing attendees included the growing piles of trash at Rota's open dump and how much funding Rota has received and/or will receive to fund solid waste management investments and activities. Comments and questions received included the crucial need to expedite the timeline for the development and submission of the CISWMP to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and whether or not incinerating solid waste is a possibility for Rota.

Comments, Criticisms, Suggestions, Etc. Received:

Comments, criticisms, suggestions, questions received during Q-and-A portion of the public hearing:



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- Concern: “ We need to take care of the dump right now. Is there a way that [the Office of Planning and Development (OPD) and/or the Inter-Island Solid Waste Management Taskforce (ISWMT)] can help us take care of the mountain of trash that we have right now?”
 - o Response: Yes— the ISWMT applied for a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) grant in December 2022, which was awarded in October 2023. This funding will be used to fund solid waste operator training for personnel on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. Through this solid waste operator training, staff will be taught industry-accepted standards for building landfill cells and covering garbage. Furthermore, the CNMI applied for and was awarded ~\$614,000 in grant funding from the EPA through its Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWIFR) Grant Program, of which Rota will receive ~\$200,000 to go towards repairing Rota’s excavator, purchase a baler for metal recycling, and build a building that will house this new baler.

- Suggestion: Look into residential routed garbage collection for Rota.

- Question: Do you know of any appropriated funds for solid waste for Rota coming from the office of Delegate Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan? If yes, how much is Rota’s “share”?
 - o Response: In June 2019 through the signing of the Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act (ASADRA), 2019, the CNMI was appropriated a total of \$56 million to support critical solid waste infrastructure projects. The full dispersal of these funds, which is administered to the CNMI by the EPA, is reliant on the CNMI’s submission of an approved state solid waste plan to the EPA and subsequent approved work plans to support project implementation. The CNMI Comprehensive Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan (CISWMP) is in development. Furthermore, the ISWMT continues to search and apply for relevant and appropriate grant funding for future solid waste infrastructure investments.

- Question: Can [the ISWMT] expedite the CISWMP development process?
 - o Response: Yes— the timeline for plan drafting, receiving public comments, and submitting the CISWMP for review and approval is aggressive.

- Question: A public hearing attendee wanted to learn more about what is in the CISWMP regarding establishing a permitted, compliant landfill on Rota.
 - o Response: Closing the open dumps on Rota and Tinian, and replacing these open dumps with permitted and compliant landfills, are a priority within the CISWMP. A



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design for a new landfill on Rota exists. Work is ongoing to optimize the cost of constructing this new landfill.

- Question: Is there a possibility of having an incinerator on Rota? Thoughts on incineration?
 - o Response: Incineration is possible, but is not currently included in the CISWMP. Air pollution as a result of incinerating solid waste will always be in question.

Comments received through post-outreach evaluation forms:

- “We need to recycle. There is a lot of wasted things in the dump, especially iceboxes, tires, etc.”
- “I am glad that this outreach happens here in Rota to learn more about landfill and the equipment that is going to use to make a better landfill for the island of Rota.”
- “No comment.”