



CNMI INTER-ISLAND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT TASKFORCE (ISWMT)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EPA Awards Over \$32 Million to CNMI Office of Planning and Development for Solid Waste and Recycling Infrastructure

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (August 25, 2026) – On August 12, 2026, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded more than \$32 million to the CNMI Office of Planning and Development (OPD) for priority solid waste and recycling infrastructure projects.

The first award, \$31,595,325 through the Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act (ASADRA), will improve solid waste infrastructure and management CNMI-wide by upgrading and expanding facilities, increasing staff and training, purchasing equipment, boosting compliance among CNMI Department of Public Works (DPW)-operated facilities, and leading islandwide education and outreach. Expected outcomes include tons of waste collected, recycled, composted, or otherwise managed in compliance with CNMI regulations; materials shipped off island; increased facility processing capacity; and new jobs.

The second award, \$709,047 through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) via EPA's Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWIFR) grant program, supports long-term planning and data collection toward the National Recycling Goal and Food Loss and Waste Reduction Goal, and advances a circular economy for materials. It will fund equipment procurement and rehabilitation on Saipan and Tinian, and the design and construction of a Community Reuse Drop-off Facility on Tinian.

CNMI OPD Acting Director Elizabeth S. Balajadia, P.E., expressed gratitude to the EPA, Governor David M. Apatang, Lt. Governor Dennis James C. Mendiola, the Planning and Development Advisory Council (PDAC), and the CNMI Inter-Island Solid Waste Management Taskforce (ISWMT) for their continued support of solid waste management in the CNMI.

“Solid waste management is a shared responsibility, and this progress reflects the strength of collaboration across the CNMI government, federal partners, and the community. We remain committed to working with everyone involved to keep moving forward,” said Balajadia.

CNMI OPD and PDAC were established under CNMI Public Law 20-20 in 2017 to lead sustainable, coordinated planning for the CNMI. The ISWMT, established in 2002 and revived in 2020, operates under the CNMI Office of the Governor with guidance from the EPA and includes OPD, DPW, the CNMI Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality (BECQ), the CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources (DLNR), and the Offices of the Mayors of the Northern Islands, Saipan, Tinian and Aguiguan, and Rota. The ISWMT strengthens CNMI's solid



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waste infrastructure through interagency coordination, public-private partnerships, and public outreach.

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