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December 9, 2013

The Hon. Eloy S. Inos  
Governor  
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands  
Office of the Governor  
P.O. Box 10000 CHRB  
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Governor Inos:

We are writing this letter to express the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance's (MINA) strong opposition to the military's proposed activities on the northern island of Pagan.

The Mariana Islands Nature Alliance is a 501(c)(3) organization and is the leading conservation nonprofit organization in the Mariana Islands. We work to promote a vision that the people of the Northern Marianas, through community engagement and responsible stewardship, will thrive in a healthy, natural environment that supports a vibrant island economy fostered by cultural values, traditions, and principles. To do this, our organization has launched many projects that are aimed at preserving our limited resources, especially those that serve as natural habitats for various species indigenous to our islands.

The proposed military activities on Pagan, which have been reported in the media to include live fire training that will involve bombing and the use of other explosive weapons, will cause irreparable harm to Pagan, its fragile coral reef, and the possibility of the island's repopulation by those who have claimed land rights there. In fact, those who are currently living on the island will stand to lose their homes.

Other grave consequences are inevitable if bombing activities are allowed to occur: the proposed military activities will eliminate any potential Pagan may have to grow an environmentally-sustainable ecotourism industry. There will also be great loss of endemic and native species. As has happened in many other places that have been used for military purposes, toxic and radioactive materials may also be released, potentially leaving the island and surrounding waters uninhabitable. In fact, the newly created Marianas Monument and associated opportunities for research, learning, and sharing may be severely curtailed.



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Further, the proximity of Pagan to the other inhabited islands of the CNMI provides spectacular opportunities for those of us who call the Marianas our home, as well as to guests, to experience and enjoy the land and waters of these unique and pristine islands.

For these reasons, Mr. Governor, we urge you to resist any movement by the military to exploit the beautiful island of Pagan for military purposes. If there is anything that we can do to assist you in this effort, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Furey  
Interim Executive Director