

May 23, 1977

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Last year, at this Department's suggestion, a Committee of Interagency Territorial Assistance was chartered for the purpose of providing policy dissemination and coordination of federal assistance and services to the territories for which the Department of the Interior has primary responsibility. The areas of concern are American Samoa, Guam, the U. S. Virgin Islands and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

Although Interior's Committee on Interagency Territorial Assistance is relatively new, I firmly believe that it should be continued. Clearly, since there are so many interrelated federal programs applicable to the territories, it is essential that every effort be made to share policy and coordinate programs in order to avoid duplication of effort.

This is a particularly sensitive time with respect to the territories. The Northern Marianas is in the process of political transition leading to Commonwealth Status, and will become available for more federal programs in accordance with the Covenant. The political future of the remainder of the Trust Territory is uncertain, but it is likely that there will be a reduction and eventual termination of federal programs there. American Samoa recently decided by referendum to elect its own governor and will be moving toward greater self-government.

Therefore, I am requesting that your personal representative participate in the Washington Interagency Committee for Territorial Assistance, which will serve as a focal point for policy matters relating to the territories, and which I hope will achieve the desired coordination of federal involvement.

Similarly, since there are federal agencies in the San Francisco area that have close contact with the Pacific territories relative to program implementation and technical assistance, I am suggesting that a Regional Committee for Territorial Assistance be established in the San Francisco area (Region 9) which would parallel the

objectives of the Washington Committee, but emphasizing program management and implementation rather than policy. It would also be chaired by Interior. I am asking Charles R. Renda, Regional Solicitor of the Department of the Interior, to chair that committee. It would work closely with the Federal Regional Council.

I would appreciate it if you advise me by June 1 of your personal representative to serve on the Washington Interagency Committee for Territorial Assistance, and also the name, title, address and phone number of your agency's representative to serve on the Regional Committee so that we may move ahead with the objectives of this committee.

Thank you for your cooperation. I look forward to working with you and the Committee of Interagency Territorial Assistance in this area of mutual concern.

Sincerely,

(sgd) Cecil D. Andrus  
SECRETARY