

**Testimony of EAP/ANP Director Tony Greubel
Before the House Natural Resources Committee
Implementation of the Compacts of Free Association (COFA)
January 14, 2026**

Good afternoon, Chair, Ranking Member, and distinguished Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the United States' enduring partnership with the Freely Associated States—the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau. The security and prosperity of the United States are inextricably linked to the Pacific region, reflecting our shared values and interests. The Freely Associated States are not just our neighbors; they are essential partners. Their trust and cooperation are vital to our national security and economic interests.

We have now completed the first year of implementing the renewed Compacts of Free Association (COFA), marking a significant milestone in our commitment to the North Pacific and the people of the Freely Associated States. The COFA agreements are the cornerstone of our engagement in the region—a region that is increasingly central to U.S. security and global stability. As geopolitical competition intensifies, the Pacific's strategic sea lanes, abundant resources, and vibrant communities are more important than ever to the United States and our allies. Our continued partnership with the Freely Associated States strengthens regional resilience, supports economic development, and upholds regional peace and stability.

The Department of State, in close partnership with the Department of the Interior, is co-leading the implementation of the Compact Agreements. We are not simply paying attention—we are taking action at the highest levels of government. This fall, Deputy Secretary Landau made his first trip to the Pacific, visiting Palau and the Marshall Islands and meeting with all three FAS presidents. Vice President Vance also met with Palau President Whipps, underscoring the Administration's commitment. These high-level engagements are producing tangible results. For

example, we have supported the rebuilding of the Marshall Islands Nitijela parliament building, advanced Palau's pension reform, and deepened cooperation on infrastructure and economic resilience. In partnership with Taiwan, we are enhancing the Marshall Islands' disaster response by providing American-made Cessna aircraft. In the Federated States of Micronesia, we continue to promote regional connectivity through the East Micronesia Cable and other telecommunications projects.

We are not resting on past achievements. We are committed to doing even more for the FAS in the year ahead. That is why next week, alongside EAP Assistant Secretary DeSombre and Department of the Interior's Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs William Hague, I will travel to the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia. The purpose of our travel is to strengthen our ongoing dialogue, ensure effective COFA implementation, and align our efforts with our shared goals. By engaging directly with stakeholders, we gain valuable insights into the practical impacts of our programs and identify areas for improvement. This firsthand understanding enables us to address challenges proactively, adapt our approach, and reinforce our commitment to being the partner of choice for the FAS. Our visit demonstrates the United States' dedication to transparency, responsiveness, and mutual respect.

Our mission is clear: deliver on our Compact Agreements.

We deeply appreciate Congress's steadfast support for our work with the Freely Associated States. Congressional leadership has been instrumental in driving progress and ensuring accountability. Your engagement empowers us to deliver meaningful results for our Pacific partners. This fall, the Department of State worked closely with the Interagency Group on the Freely Associated States to advance our shared mission. Every agency plays a vital role, and our coordinated efforts are essential to fulfilling our commitments under the Compacts. Through regular meetings, joint planning, and clear assignment of responsibilities, we are aligning our actions to maximize impact. Our focus is on identifying concrete action items and ensuring each agency is equipped to deliver. By working together,

we demonstrate the full value of U.S. partnership and reinforce our dedication to the FAS.

The Department of State leads by example. Senior officials have engaged FAS leaders at every opportunity, both in the Pacific and in Washington. Deputy Secretary Landau met with all three FAS presidents this fall, hosted a Pacific Islands Forum roundtable, and held productive discussions in Palau and the Marshall Islands, as well as with FSM President Simina in Papua New Guinea. These meetings have produced real results: with Palau, we have signed a third-country national arrangement; with the Marshall Islands, we are working closely to deliver the infrastructure and economic assistance needed to counter external pressures. In Washington, we hosted President Whipps and arranged a productive meeting with Vice President Vance. At the UN General Assembly, we invited FAS leaders to our Pacific Islands business forum. We also met with President Whipps in November, gaining valuable insight into the challenges posed by China in Palau and the region, particularly on transnational crime and corruption. These high-level engagements are not just frequent; they are driving real progress on the issues that matter most to our FAS partners and to U.S. national security interests.

Our assistance is targeted—supporting deterrence, countering transnational crime, and building disaster readiness. We coordinate with partners and allies to maximize impact, using grants, development financing, and private-sector partnerships to advance U.S. interests and promote local resilience. The Department of State, along with our Interior colleagues, is leading on COFA implementation, but we cannot do this alone. We must stand together and act decisively as one government. The strength of our COFA partnerships—and our security as a Pacific nation—depends on it.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.