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Stevenson A. Joseph
Governor

August 30, 2024

The Honorable Ricky Carl
Chairman
Finance Committee
11th Pohnpei Legislature
Peilapalap, Pohnpei 96941

Dear Senator Carl:

I acknowledge receipt of your letter addressed to Mrs. Sihna Lawrence, Director of the Department of Treasury and Administration, expressing your concerns regarding her responsibilities and involvement in various boards and commissions. I appreciate your commitment to the financial stability of our state and the importance you place on ensuring that the duties of the Director of Treasury and Administration are carried out with the utmost focus and dedication.

I noted your communication dated August 22, 2024, to connote Director Lawrence's lacking competence and required knowledge in her Finance Directorship roles and mandates. Therefore, I solicit justifications for this, given that Director Lawrence's credibility and professionalism are being questioned. I further solicit a collaborative process to address financial issues. The situation at hand with our Director of Finance may be resolved through an oversight hearing. I understand our mandates are constitutionally intended to collaborate and coordinate through a just and fair process, for purposes of an efficient, accountable, transparent, and professional service to the People.

Mrs. Lawrence's service on boards such as the FSM Trust Fund Board, the Board of the Bank of the FSM, and the Board of Directors of Pohnpei Port Authority is in alignment with her mandate as Director of the Department of Treasury and Administration. Her participation in these boards is not only within her legal purview but also integral to the broader financial management and representation of Pohnpei State's interests.

Your letter suggests that the unsettled issues of reimbursement at the State Treasury, particularly in relation to the reapportionment of revenue sharing from the National Government and the implementation of Compact Three funds, may warrant Mrs. Lawrence's exclusive focus on state financial matters. While I understand your concern, I would like to emphasize that Mrs. Lawrence's involvement in these boards is an extension of her role and contributes to the overall financial strategy and oversight that benefits our state.

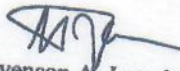
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If there are specific instances where Mrs. Lawrence has violated any law or acted contrary to the Financial Management Act, I kindly request that you provide the relevant details. This information will be taken seriously, and any necessary corrective actions will be implemented promptly.

Mrs. Lawrence has my full confidence in her ability to manage the responsibilities of her office, including her contributions to the boards on which she serves. I believe that her comprehensive involvement in financial matters, both within and beyond the Department of Treasury and Administration, is crucial to the continued progress and stability of our state.

I look forward to continued collaboration with you and the Finance Committee as we work together to address the financial challenges and opportunities facing Pohnpei.

Sincerely,



Stevenson A. Joseph
Governor
State of Pohnpei

cc: Lt. Governor, State of Pohnpei
Speaker, 11th Pohnpei Legislature
Members, Finance Committee, 11th Pohnpei Legislature
Director, Department of Treasury and Administration

Enclosed: August 22, 2024 letter from Chairman Carl