

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 214

Establishing a Marine Environmental Enforcement Response Team (“MEERT”)

WHEREAS, both the Division of Marine Law Enforcement and the Division of Fish and Wildlife Protection within the Ministry of Justice are responsible for the enforcement of national government laws directed at protecting the marine environment; and

WHEREAS, the States have a significant role in the protection of the marine environment through conservation laws and conservation officers; and

WHEREAS, numerous governmental and non-governmental organizations in the Republic of Palau also have a significant role in the protection of the marine environment; and

WHEREAS, a coordinated effort between national and state government officers will improve enforcement of marine environmental laws; and

WHEREAS, a coordinated effort between law enforcement officers, governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in conservation efforts, traditional leaders and communities will improve the Republic’s ability to preserve its marine environment; and

WHEREAS, there must be greater focus on working with traditional leaders and communities to increase compliance and reporting of violations of environmental laws; and

WHEREAS, the Ministry of Justice has recently received a grant from ‘WildAid’ to establish a position within the Ministry of Justice to serve as the coordinator of a marine environmental enforcement response team.

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President, pursuant to the Constitution and the laws of the Republic of Palau, I hereby order that a Marine Environmental Enforcement Response Team (“MEERT”) be established within the Ministry of Justice as follows:

1. **Composition.** The members of the MEERT, who shall serve without compensation, shall be as follows:

- The Minister of Justice, who shall act as the Chairman;
- The MEERT coordinator, who shall act as Vice-Chairman;
- The Chiefs of the Divisions of Fish and Wildlife Protection and Marine Law Enforcement;
- One representative from each state Conservation program, as designated by the Governor of the State;
- Two traditional leaders appointed by the Council of Chiefs;
- One representative from the Office of Environmental Response and Coordination;
- One representative from the Environmental Quality Protection Board;

- One representative from the Palau International Coral Reef Research Center;
- One representative from the Nature Conservancy;
- One representative from the Palau Conservation Society;
- One representative from the Palau Coral Research Foundation; and
- Such other members as designated by the MEERT.

2. **MEERT Coordinator.** There is hereby established the position of Marine Environment Enforcement Response Team Coordinator. The coordinator shall be designated by, and work at the direction of, the Chief of the Division of Fish and Wildlife Protection and the Minister of Justice. The coordinator shall be primarily responsible for coordinating law enforcement efforts between the State and National Governments, working with non-governmental organizations, traditional leaders and communities to provide education about marine environmental issues, and to increase compliance and reporting of violations of marine environmental laws.

3. **Meetings.** The MEERT shall meet immediately upon the effective date of this Executive Order, or designation of a MEERT coordinator, and thereafter quarterly, on the first business day of January, April, July and October. Weekly updates of activities shall be disseminated by electronic mail by the MEERT coordinator.

4. **Duties.** The MEERT shall:

- Identify the locations where significant marine violations are occurring;
- Identify solutions to environmental enforcement issues;
- Review relevant legislation;
- Develop outreach strategies to increase compliance and reporting of environmental violations, focusing in part on educating traditional leaders, schoolchildren, and the general public.

5. **Term.** The MEERT shall remain in existence until, and unless, terminated by the President.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my official seal this 7th day of May, 2003, at the State of Koror, Republic of Palau.

/s/

Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr.
President of the Republic of Palau