

Executive Order No. 321

To establish a Capital Building Task Force to evaluate the possible mold issue at the Capitol and make any recommendations that are necessary to remedy the issue.

WHEREAS, on January 11, 2012, the Capital Improvement Division under the Bureau of Public Works warned the then-Minister of Public Infrastructure, Industries, and Commerce, Jackson Ngiraingas, that the shut-down of the air conditioning at the capitol would create a dangerous situation for all present in the capitol building, unless all mold in the building was cleaned up and eradicated prior to the turning on of the air conditioning (Capital Improvement Office Memorandum, dated Jan. 11, 2012); and

WHEREAS, at the time this warning was largely ignored and the air conditioning was turned-on without a thorough cleaning of the mold present within the building; and

WHEREAS, almost one year later, on January 9, 2013, the Judiciary evacuated the Judiciary Building at the Capitol and suspended all activities at the Capitol indefinitely because one of their employees has contracted a lung infection that is believed to be the result of a persuasive mold problem (Judiciary Press Release No. 39); and

WHEREAS, on January 21, 2013, the Ministry of Health issued a comprehensive memorandum from Ms. Eden R. Uchel, the Acting Chief of the Division of Environmental Health, that addressed complaints about the Ngerulmud Capitol Buildings in Melekeok. This memorandum was the result of interviews with employees, visual inspection (with photos attached to the memorandum), a site inspection report from November 27, 2012, and warnings dating back to a memorandum issued by the Capital Improvement Office on January 11, 2012 (noted above). The memorandum concluded with the recommendation that: “While all these issues have no current evidence that links all sickness to the mold, it is with utmost caution that DEH recommends that the powers that be, close all affected areas of the buildings and perform professional cleaning activities, and repair and clean the air conditioning system (and all its ducts) prior to allowing healthy workers back into the buildings.” (emphasis in original); and

WHEREAS, these warnings can no longer be ignored and action must be taken to ensure the safety of all of the employees of the National Government that work at the Capitol; and

NOW THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority set forth in the Constitution of the Republic of Palau in the President of the Republic, the President hereby orders as follows:

(1) That a Task Force, to be entitled the “Capitol Building Task Force,” shall be created and composed of the following volunteer members: one member from the Office of the President, Fritz Koshiba, who shall be the Chairman of the Task Force; one member from the Capitol Improvement Office, Manager Brian Melairei; one member from the Bureau of Public Health, the Chief of the Division of Environmental Sanitation, Eden Ridep; one member of the Senate, Senator Mason Whipps; one member of the House of Delegates, Delegate Masasinge Arurang; and one member or employee of the Judiciary, Clarence Masayos.

(2) That the Capitol Building Task Force shall take all necessary measures, including, if necessary, requesting appropriations from the Olbiil Era Kelulau to evaluate the severity of the presence of mold at the Capitol Building, identify the problem that is causing the presence of mold at the Capitol Building, and recommend what the solution is to remedy the problem.

(3) That the Capitol Building Task Force shall have its first meeting on Thursday, January 24, 2013, and shall provide a report to the President of the Republic with their findings and recommendations, if any, within fifteen (15) days of this Executive Order.

(4) That all branches and entities of the national government make all employees and resources available to the Capitol Building Task Force, upon request of the Capitol Building Task Force.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my official seal this 23rd day of January, 2013 in the Republic of Palau.

/s/

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