



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Governor's Council of Economic Advisers  
October 8, 2025

### **READOUT: Governor's Council of Economic Advisers Meeting on October 6, 2025**

SAIPAN, Northern Mariana Islands, OCTOBER 8, 2025 — On Monday, CNMI Lieutenant Governor Dennis James C. Mendiola and Joe C. Guerrero convened an organizational meeting of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers (GCEA or Council) at the CNMI Office of the Governor (Governor's Office).

At the outset of the organizational meeting, GCEA co-chairs Mendiola and Guerrero provided opening remarks, setting their expectations for business moving forward, given the ongoing economic situation facing the CNMI. Council members had the opportunity to introduce themselves and share goals and visions for the body.

The Council received an introduction and briefing from GCEA's Executive Director, CJ Bermudes Jr., who discussed current resources, staffing goals, the forthcoming Council website, and social media strategy. Lauren Garibay, a senior staffer in the Council Secretariat, was also introduced to the body. Garibay is based in Washington D.C., and supports the council pro bono with policy, research, and editorial assistance. Additionally, Council staff announced plans to collaborate with the Northern Marianas College to onboard interns to support the Council's work.

It was announced that Mendiola and Guerrero, in their capacity as Council co-chairs, will serve as the body's spokespersons for public-facing matters. Communication and workflow plans for operational efficiency were proposed and established. Four committees of the Council were established and chairs were nominated, voted on, and seated. The committees are the:

- Committee on Tourism, Infrastructure, & Sports, chaired by Alex Sablan
- Committee on Labor & Workforce Development, chaired by Dr. Christian Wei
- Committee on Domestic Policy and Government Services, chaired by Roman "Bo" T. Palacios
- Committee on Economic Diversification, chaired by Vin Armani

The Council's committees plan on meeting forthwith and frequently at the discretion of each committee's chair. It is the Council's expectation that the development of initiatives begin at the committee level. The full Council will convene at least monthly.

Before adjournment, the Council discussed existing plans and products, including the [Comprehensive Sustainable Development Plan \(2021-2030\)](#), GCEA's 10-year plan from July 2022, and the [Marianas Economic Roadmap published in March 2025](#). Co-chair Mendiola made clear that GCEA should not be "re-inventing the wheel" but rather executing and implementing such products, with adjustments where necessary.

Following the meeting, GCEA held a press conference with media partners. Co-chairs Mendiola and Guerrero, and Executive Director Bermudes Jr., were present at the conference and prepared for questions. Lt. Gov. Mendiola stated that the primary intent of the organizational meeting was to formalize CNMI Governor David M. Apatang's September 2025 directive re-establishing the Council. He added that the Council's priorities were officially launched at the meeting and made clear that GCEA would not be taking away from the mandates of existing central government agencies, but rather streamlining processes.

Co-chair Guerrero provided background into the last iteration of the GCEA and stated that the emphasis of this new Council was to draw upon plans already created, prioritize and "pick the low hanging fruit", and execute. He added that some initiatives could be pursued via executive orders, while others would require legislation and close partnership with the CNMI Legislature. Guerrero highlighted the importance of public participation in the Council's work.

In attendance at the GCEA meeting at the Governor's Office or virtually were the following members:

- Dennis James C. Mendiola, Lieutenant Governor, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (Co-chair of the GCEA)
- Joseph C. Guerrero, President, Saipan Chamber of Commerce (Co-chair of the GCEA)
- Clement "CJ" Bermudes Jr., Executive Director, GCEA
- Lauren Garibay, Deputy for Policy, Research, & Editorial, GCEA
- Mark Rabauliman (Council member)
- Vin Armani (Council member)
- Alex B.K Youn (Council member)
- Juan "Pan" T. Guerrero (Council member)
- Alex Sablan (Council member)
- Roman "Bo" T. Palacios (Council member)
- Dr. Christian Wei (Council member)
- Marcelo V. Masilungan (Council member)

- Michael S. Sablan (Council member)
- Clyde K. Norita, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor (non-member participant)
- David Atalig, Financial & Policy Advisor, Office of the Lieutenant Governor (non-member participant)
- Matthew Deleon Guerrero, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of NMI Delegate Kimberlyn King-Hinds (non-member participant)
- Derek T. Sasamoto, Executive Director, Commonwealth Economic Development Authority (non-member participant)

*For additional information regarding GCEA, its work, or the October 6, 2025 meeting, contact Clement “CJ” Bermudes Jr., the Council’s Executive Director, at [cj.bermudes@cnmi.gov](mailto:cj.bermudes@cnmi.gov).*

### **About GCEA**

The Governor’s Council of Economic Advisers was created by Executive Order 2020-11 in May 2020. The Council advises on the formulation of policy initiatives to encourage economic growth, among other responsibilities. Members and secretariat staff of the Council serve the Governor at no expense to the CNMI Government or taxpayer.