

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 21-28

RE: C.R. NO. 21-59/T&C

SUBJECT: TO CONFIRM THE NOMINATION OF MR. ROB SOLOMON TO  
SERVE AS THE SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

SEPTEMBER 23, 2019

The Honorable Wesley W. Simina  
Speaker, Twenty-First Congress  
Federated States of Micronesia  
Second Regular Session, 2019

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee on Transportation and Communication, to which was referred C.R. No. 21-59 entitled:

"A RESOLUTION TO CONFIRM THE NOMINATION OF MR. ROB SOLOMON TO SERVE AS THE SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA.",

begs leave to report as follows:

The intent and purpose of this resolution are expressed in its title.

The President transmitted the nomination of Mr. Rob Solomon to serve as the Secretary of the Department of Transportation, Communications and Infrastructure to FSM Congress on September 12, 2019, through Presidential Communication No. 21-101. In this communication, the President has indicated that the nominee is qualified for this cabinet position.

Your Committee on Transportation and Communication held a public hearing on Congressional Resolution No. 21-59 on September 20,

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2019. Present at the hearing were the nominee and several staff of the Department, the Chief of Staff, a representative from the Attorney General's Office and a few interested members of the public.

At the hearing, your Committee gave an opportunity for the nominee to comment on his nomination. The nominee stated that he has thirty (30) years of experience as an economist, statistician, financial and strategic adviser. He worked in various Pacific Island countries, mostly in the Cook Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and now the Federated States of Micronesia. The nominee stated that he worked closely with multi-lateral agencies such as the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank.

During the hearing, your Committee asked the nominee how long he has been working for the National Government. The nominee indicated that he worked for the FSM National Government as a consultant for about five years. The Committee asked how he was approached to take up the cabinet post. The nominee stated that the President approached him. The nominee explained that he was currently handling maritime projects and also involved in the fiber optic project so his role in such areas are relevant to the position of the Secretary of the Department of Transportation, Communications and Infrastructure.

Your Committee asked the nominee if he was involved in securing World Bank funding or Asian Development Funding for the FSM. The nominee indicated that in his line of work, he worked closely with the Secretary of the Department of Finance, when it comes to World Bank and Asian Development funding. He indicated that there is a list of priority infrastructure projects that the President and his cabinets discussed thoroughly, and decide which funding to secure. Your Committee appreciated the current responsibilities of the nominee in assisting this Nation in securing funding from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, and asked the nominee whether his current line of responsibility will be disrupted if he becomes the Secretary of the Department. The nominee stated that he would try his best

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to work with the Department of Finance on solicitation of outside funding. Your Committee also asked the nominee if he is comfortable with the salary of the Secretary of the Department, as compared to his current salary as a consultant for the FSM Finance. The nominee stated that he will work with the President on the issue, and maybe they can negotiate for a better offer. Your Committee also asked the nominee if there are other locals that are capable to take the job. The nominee reserved to answer the question, and indicated that the nomination is a prerogative of the President.

Your Committee discussed the concept of "road to the outer islands of this nation", which means that the sea transportation is the highway to these outer lands, and informed the nominee that the existing FSM operating vessels encountered many problems. The issue of naming vessels also is another issue, and the Committee asked the nominee how he could improve the quality of services of sea transportation to our FSM citizens. The nominee stated that he must work diligently with the states leaderships to resolve issues relating to sea transportation especially to needed services to the outer islands.

The nominee stated that the bulk of his work involved implementation of infrastructure projects amongst island nations. In respect to sea transportation or shipping improvement, he will have to work with the President on improving the sea transportation or shipping reoccurring issues.

Your Committee reviewed the qualifications of this nominee extensively at the confirmation hearing. The President in his transmittal letter stated that the nominee would be a positive addition to the aims of this administration in expediting the implementation of infrastructure projects of the Department and to implement related mandates of that Department.

Your Committee discussed the transitioning out of the PMU office and the strengthening of the PMO offices in the states. If he is confirmed, what will be his plans in regards to the

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transitioning out of the Project Management Unit (PMU). The nominee indicated that there are several infrastructure projects for COM-FSM that have not been implemented, and the PMU staff are still working on these infrastructure projects. Hence, he needs to coordinate with the current PMU staff on these projects and determine the appropriate time to transition the staff of PMU to the respective PMOs in the states. The nominee indicated that he attended the recent JEMCO meeting in Honolulu, and indicated that there were much progress achieved in the meeting in regards to PMOs and PMU in the FSM.

The witnesses showed great support for the nominee. The Chief of Staff indicated that currently the expertise staff of the Department is ready to work with the nominee if he is confirmed.

Your Committee requests that this nominee be confirmed as the Secretary of the Department of Transportation, Communications, and Infrastructure.

Your Committee on Transportation and Communication is in accord with the intent and purpose of C.R. No. 21-59, and recommends its adoption in the form attached hereto.

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Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Victor V. Gouland  
Victor V. Gouland, chairman

/s/ Peter M. Christian  
Peter M. Christian, vice chairman

Florencio S. Harper, member

/s/ Esmond B. Moses  
Esmond B. Moses, member

Aren P. Palik, member

/s/ Wesley W. Simina  
Wesley W. Simina, member

/s/ Joseph J. Urusemal  
Joseph J. Urusemal, member