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Judy Aldan

IN THE
SUPREME COURT
OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

**IN RE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL**

SUPREME COURT NO. 2021-ADM-0011-MSC

ORDER ESTABLISHING OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

¶ 1 The Court recognizes the need to have a fully dedicated Office of the General Counsel (OGC) to provide a broad spectrum of advisory legal functions and to oversee various legal issues affecting the court system and its administration on Saipan, Rota, and Tinian.

¶ 2 For many years, the Judiciary's General Counsel has served in a dual role of Executive Director of the Law Revision Commission and General Counsel to the Judiciary. Serving in these two roles prevents the General Counsel from fully dedicating their time to completing the duties of both positions, and thereby overloading the individual with work and straining services provided in both capacities.

¶ 3 Over the last five years, the Judiciary has been affected by various challenges, including shutdown of the courthouse due to HVAC and mold issues, two super typhoons, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Such disasters and challenges have further underscored the need for a separate OGC to assist the Court in navigating through complicated legal issues arising from procurement and contract management and to ensure legal compliance and sufficiency for the use of a multitude of federal grants that followed the aforementioned emergencies.

¶ 4 The Court further recognizes the need to create a separate OGC apart from the Administrative Office and under the direct supervision of the Chief Justice, with whom administrative responsibility of the Judiciary lies. Such placement is consistent with the NMI Constitution and 1 CMC § 3401 and ensures the office's independence and impartiality.

