

I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan
BILL STATUS

BILL NO.	SPONSOR	TITLE	DATE INTRODUCED	DATE REFERRED	CMTE REFERRED	FISCAL NOTES	PUBLIC HEARING DATE	DATE COMMITTEE REPORT FILED	NOTES
279-38 (COR)	Jesse A. Lujan Christopher M. Dueñas	AN ACT TO <i>AMEND</i> SECTION 1 OF PART 1, CHAPTER XIII, PUBLIC LAW 38-60, RELATIVE TO TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS FOR THE GUAM VISITORS' BUREAU.	2/16/26 4:24 p.m.	2/20/26	Committee on Finance and Government Operations.	Request: 2/20/26 Waiver: 2/27/26	3/4/26 10:00 a.m.	3/12/26	



Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas

CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

March 9, 2026

The Honorable Frank F. Blas Jr.
Speaker, I Mina'trentai Ocho na Liheslaturan Guåhan
163 W. Chalan Santo Papa
Hågatña, Guam 96910

Via Honorable Vice Speaker V. Anthony Ada
Chairman, Committee on Rules

RE: Committee Report on Bill No. 279-38 (COR)

Buenas yan Håfa Ådai Speaker,

Transmitted herewith is the Committee Report on Bill No. 279-38 (COR) – JESSE A. LUJAN -
"AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 1 OF PART 1, CHAPTER XIII, PUBLIC LAW 38-60,
RELATIVE TO TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS FOR THE GUAM VISITORS' BUREAU."

Committee votes are as follows:

- 3 TO DO PASS
TO NOT PASS
4 TO REPORT OUT ONLY
TO ABSTAIN
TO PLACE IN INACTIVE FILE



COMMITTEE ON RULES

RECEIVED:
March 9, 2026 2:58 p.m.
Marie Crisostomo

Senseremente,

Handwritten signature of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas

Senator Christopher M. Dueñas
Chairman, Committee on Finance and Government Operations



Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas
CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

COMMITTEE REPORT

BILL NO. 279-38 (COR)

INTRODUCED BY

Senator Jesse A. Lujan

“AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 1 OF PART 1, CHAPTER XIII, PUBLIC LAW 38-60, RELATIVE TO TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS FOR THE GUAM VISITORS' BUREAU.”



Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas

CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

March 9, 2026

MEMORANDUM

To: All Members
Committee on Finance and Government Operations

From: Senator Christopher M. Dueñas
Chairperson, Finance and Government Operations

Subject: Committee Report on Bill No. 279-38 (COR)

Transmitted herewith for your consideration is the Committee Report on **Bill No. 279-38 (COR)** – Jesse A. Lujan - “AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 1 OF PART 1, CHAPTER XIII, PUBLIC LAW 38-60, RELATIVE TO TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS FOR THE GUAM VISITORS’ BUREAU.”

This report includes the following:

- Copy of COR Referral of Bill No. 279-38 (COR)
- Notices of Public Hearing
- Copy of the Public Hearing Agenda
- Public Hearing Sign-in Sheet
- Copies of Submitted Written Testimony
- Committee Vote Sheet
- Committee Report Digest
- Copy of Bill No. 218-38 (COR), As Introduced
- Fiscal Note Waiver

Please take the appropriate action on the attached vote sheet. Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

Senator Christopher M. Dueñas
Chairperson, Committee on Finance and Government Operations



COMMITTEE ON RULES

Vice Speaker V. Anthony Ada, Chairperson

I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan

38th Guam Legislature

February 20, 2026

To: **Rennae V. C. Meno**
Clerk of the Legislature

Attorney Darleen E.H. Phillips
Legislative Legal Counsel

From: **Vice Speaker V. Anthony Ada** 
Chairperson, Committee on Rules

Subject: **Referral of Bill No. 279-38 (COR)**

Håfa Adai,

As per my authority as Chairperson of the Committee on Rules and subject to §6.01(d)(1), Rule VI of our Standing Rules, I am forwarding the referral of **Bill No. 279-38 (COR)** - Jesse A. Lujan, Christopher M. Dueñas. – “AN ACT TO *AMEND* SECTION 1 OF PART 1, CHAPTER XIII, PUBLIC LAW 38-60, RELATIVE TO TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS FOR THE GUAM VISITORS' BUREAU.”

Please ensure that the subject bill is referred to the Committee on Finance and Government Operations chaired by Senator Christopher M. Dueñas. I also request that the same be copied to the Prime Sponsor of the subject bill, to the Office of Finance and Budget (OFB) and to Management Information Services (MIS) for posting on our website.

A copy of the bill is available on our legislative website.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Kamarin Nelson, Committee on Rules Director at 671-472-2461.





Karl Pangelinan <karl.p@guamlegislature.gov>

(Resend) - PH 1st Notice for Bill #279-38 (COR) - March 4, 2026

2 messages

Karl Pangelinan <karl.p@guamlegislature.gov>
To: phnotice@guamlegislature.gov

Tue, Feb 24, 2026 at 11:34 AM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 24, 2026
MEMORANDUM

To: All Senators, Stakeholders, and Media

From: Senator Christopher M. Dueñas
Chairman, Committee on Finance and Government Operations

Re: FIRST NOTICE of Public Hearing on March 4, 2026

The Committee on Finance and Government Operations will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, March 4, 2026** beginning at **10:00 am** in the Public Hearing Room of the Guam Congress Building.


The agenda is as follows:

- **Bill No. 279-38 (COR)** – Jesse A. Lujan / Christopher M. Duenas - "AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 1 OF PART 1, CHAPTER XIII, PUBLIC LAW 38-60, RELATIVE TO TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS FOR THE GUAM VISITORS BUREAU."

[Bill No. 279-38 \(COR\).pdf](#)If you would like to participate in the Public Hearing listed above or submit written testimony, please contact the Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas for further assistance via email at senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov or by phone at (671) 989 9554.

In compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), all government activities, programs, and services are accessible to individuals with disabilities. If you or anyone you know requires assistance or special accommodations to participate in the public hearing, please contact the Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas at the contact information provided above. The Public Hearing will be broadcast LIVE on local television (GTA Channel 21, Docomo Channel 117) and streamed online through I Liheslaturan Guåhan's YouTube Channel (@guamlegislaturemedia).

Best regards,
Karl Pangelinan
Office of Sen Chris Duenas - Chairman, Committee on Finance & Gov't Operations

 **PH NOTICE 3.4.26 - Bill 279-38.pdf**
348K

Ed Pocaigue <sgtarms@guamlegislature.gov>
To: Karl Pangelinan <karl.p@guamlegislature.gov>

Tue, Feb 24, 2026 at 11:39 AM

Hafa Adai,

calendar has been updated.

[Quoted text hidden]



Edward S. Pocaigue, Jr.
Sergeant-at-Arms

I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan
Guam Congress Building, 1st Floor
163 Chalan Santo Papa
Hagåtña, Guam 96910



1-671-969-3514



sgtarms@guamlegislature.gov

"Disclaimer: This message is intended only for the use of the individual or entity to which it is addressed and may contain information which is privileged, confidential, proprietary, or exempt from disclosure under applicable law. If you are not the intended recipient or the individual responsible for delivering the message to the intended recipient, you are strictly prohibited from disclosing, distributing, copying, or in any way using this message. If you have received this communication in error, please notify the sender and immediately delete any copies you may have received. Thank you."


FIRST NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING - WEDNESDAY MARCH 4, 2026 10AM

 PRINT

**FIRST NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING - WEDNESDAY
MARCH 4, 2026 10AM**

PRESS RELEASE



 **Posted on:** 02/24/2026 09:34 AM

 **Posted by:** Karl Pangelinan, Committee Director

 **Department(s):** **GUAM LEGISLATURE (/notices?department_id=92)**


 **Division(s):**

OFFICE OF SENATOR CHRISTOPHER M. DUENAS (/notices?division_id=267)

 **Notice Topic(s):** PUBLIC HEARING (/notices?topic_id=74)

 **Types of Notice:** PRESS RELEASE (/notices?type_id=2)

 **For Audience(s):** PUBLIC (/notices?public=1)

 **Share this notice**

February 24, 2026

MEMORANDUM

To: All Senators, Stakeholders, and Media

**From: Senator Christopher M. Dueñas
Chairman, Committee on Finance and Government Operations**

Re: FIRST NOTICE of Public Hearing on March 4, 2026

The Committee on Finance and Government Operations will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, March 4, 2026** beginning at **10:00 am** at the Public Hearing Room in the Guam Congress Building. The agenda is as follows:

•

Bill No. 279-38 (COR)

([https://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%20279-38%20\(COR\).pdf](https://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%20279-38%20(COR).pdf))
– Jesse A. Lujan / Christopher M. Duenas - AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 1 OF PART 1, CHAPTER XIII, PUBLIC LAW 38-60, RELATIVE TO TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS FOR THE GUAM VISITORS' BUREAU.

If you would like to participate in the Public Hearing listed above or submit written testimony, please contact the Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas for further assistance via email at senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov (<mailto:senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>) or by phone at (671) 989-9554.

In compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), all government activities, programs, and services are accessible to individuals with disabilities. *If you or anyone you know requires assistance or special accommodations to participate in the public hearing, please contact the Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas at the contact information provided above.*

The Public Hearing will be broadcast LIVE on local television (GTA Channel 21, Docomo Channel 117) and streamed online through I Liheslaturan Guåhan's YouTube Channel ([@guamlegislaturemedia](https://www.youtube.com/@GuamLegislatureMedia)) (<https://www.youtube.com/@GuamLegislatureMedia>).

This ad was paid with funds by the Committee of Finance and Government Operations.



Public hearing on bill to regulate GVB travel

Scheduled for March 4, 2026

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FIRST NOTICE of Public Hearing by Senator Chris Duenas
Published on Kandit on February 24, 2026

The Committee on Finance and Government Operations will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, March 4, 2026** beginning at **10:00 am** at the Public Hearing Room in the Guam Congress Building. The agenda is as follows:

- **Bill No. 279-38 (COR)** – Jesse A. Lujan / Christopher M. Duenas – AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 1 OF PART 1, CHAPTER XIII, PUBLIC LAW 38-60, RELATIVE TO TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS FOR THE GUAM VISITORS' BUREAU.

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Karl Pangelinan <karl.p@guamlegislature.gov>

Second Notice of Public Hearing - March 4, 2026 10am - Bill #279-38 (COR)

Karl Pangelinan <karl.p@guamlegislature.gov>
To: phnotice@guamlegislature.gov
Cc: Senator Chris Duenas <senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>

Fri, Feb 27, 2026 at 8:41 AM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 24, 2026
MEMORANDUM

To: All Senators, Stakeholders, and Media

From: Senator Christopher M. Dueñas
Chairman, Committee on Finance and Government Operations

Re: SECOND NOTICE of Public Hearing on Wednesday, March 4, 2026

The Committee on Finance and Government Operations will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, March 4, 2026** beginning at **10:00 am** in the Public Hearing Room of the Guam Congress Building.

The agenda is as follows:

- **Bill No. 279-38 (COR)** – Jesse A. Lujan / Christopher M. Duenas - "AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 1 OF PART 1, CHAPTER XIII, PUBLIC LAW 38-60, RELATIVE TO TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS FOR THE GUAM VISITORS BUREAU."

[Bill No. 279-38 \(COR\).pdf](#)

If you would like to participate in the Public Hearing listed above or submit written testimony, please contact the Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas for further assistance via email at senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov or by phone at (671) 989 9554.

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Best regards,
Karl Pangelinan
Office of Sen Chris Duenas - Chairman, Committee on Finance & Gov't Operations

2NOTICE PH 3.4.26 - Bill 279-38.pdf
348K


Second Notice of Public Hearing - March 4, 2026 10am - Bill #279-38 (COR)

 PRINT

**Second Notice of Public Hearing - March 4, 2026
10am - Bill #279-38 (COR)**

PUBLIC HEARING



 **Posted on:** 02/27/2026 08:42 AM

 **Posted by:** Karl Pangelinan, Committee Director

 **Public Hearing Date:** 03/04/2026 10:00 AM

 **Department(s):**
GUAM LEGISLATURE (/notices?department_id=92)

 **Division(s):**
OFFICE OF SENATOR CHRISTOPHER M. DUENAS (/notices?
division_id=267)

 **Notice Topic(s):** PUBLIC HEARING (/notices?topic_id=74)

 **Types of Notice:** PUBLIC HEARING (/notices?type_id=7)

 **For Audience(s):** PUBLIC (/notices?public=1)

 **Share this notice**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 27, 2026

MEMORANDUM

To: All Senators, Stakeholders, and Media

From: Senator Christopher M. Dueñas
Chairman, Committee on Finance and Government Operations

Re: SECOND NOTICE of Public Hearing on Wednesday, March 4, 2026

The Committee on Finance and Government Operations will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, March 4, 2026** beginning at **10:00 am** in the Public Hearing Room of the Guam Congress Building.

The agenda is as follows:

- **Bill No. 279-38 (COR)** – Jesse A. Lujan / Christopher M. Duenas - "AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 1 OF PART 1, CHAPTER XIII, PUBLIC LAW 38-60, RELATIVE TO TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS FOR THE GUAM VISITORS BUREAU."

[Bill No. 279-38 \(COR\).pdf](#)

[https://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills Introduced 38th/Bill%20No.%20279-38%20\(COR\).pdf](https://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%20279-38%20(COR).pdf)

If you would like to participate in the Public Hearing listed above or submit written testimony, please contact the Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas for further assistance via email at senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov (<mailto:senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>) or by phone at (671) 989-9554.

In compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), all government activities, programs, and services are accessible to individuals with disabilities. If you or anyone you know requires assistance or special accommodations to participate in the public hearing, please contact the Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas at the contact information provided above. The Public Hearing will be broadcast LIVE on local television (GTA Channel 21, Docomo Channel 117) and streamed online through I Liheslaturan Guåhan's YouTube Channel ([@guamlegislaturemedia](#))



Public hearing on bill to regulate GVB travel

Scheduled for March 4, 2026

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[Read More](#)



SECOND NOTICE of Public Hearing by Senator Chris Duenas
Published on Kandit on March 1, 2026

The Committee on Finance and Government Operations will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, March 4, 2026** beginning at **10:00 am** at the Public Hearing Room in the Guam Congress Building. The agenda is as follows:

- **Bill No. 279-38 (COR)** – Jesse A. Lujan / Christopher M. Duenas – AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 1 OF PART 1, CHAPTER XIII, PUBLIC LAW 38-60, RELATIVE TO TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS FOR THE GUAM VISITORS' BUREAU.

If you would like to participate in the Public Hearing listed above or submit written testimony, please contact the Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas for further assistance via email at senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov or by phone at (671) 989-9554.

In compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), all government activities, programs, and services are accessible to individuals with disabilities. *If you or anyone you know requires assistance or special accommodations to participate in the public hearing, please contact the Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas at the contact information provided above.*

The Public Hearing will be broadcast LIVE on local television (GTA Channel 21, Docomo Channel 117) and streamed online through I Liheslaturan Guåhan's YouTube Channel (@guamlegislaturemedia).

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Karl Pangelinan <karl.p@guamlegislature.gov>

Invitation to a Public Hearing on Bill 279-38 (COR)

2 messages

Senator Chris Duenas <senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov> Thu, Feb 26, 2026 at 9:01 AM
 To: Joaquin Cook <kin.cook@bankofguam.com>, George Chiu <george.chiu@visitguam.org>, Michael Sgro <Michael@guamparadisefitness.com>, Michelle Merfalen <michelle.merfalen@visitguam.org>, Jeff Jones <jeffjones@triplejguam.com>, Ho Eun <ho.eun@coretechintl.com>, robert.hofmann@mcog.guam.gov, Brian Artero <brian@cravegroup.net>, Ken Yanagisawa <ken.yanagisawa@visitguam.org>, Joanne Brown <joanne.brown@visitguam.org>, Clifford Guzman <cguzman@gfsgroup.com>
 Cc: Karl Pangelinan <karl.p@guamlegislature.gov>

Buenas yan Hafa Adai!

The Committee on Finance and Government Operations invites you to a public hearing where **Bill No. 279-38 (COR)** is on the agenda. The hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, March 4, 2026, beginning at 10:00 a.m. in the Guam Congress Building.

Your input is valuable, and we encourage you to attend and share your testimony. If you plan to present written testimony, please bring 15 copies or email it to the committee at least 48 hours prior to the hearing.

If you are unable to attend in person, you may submit written testimony via email to senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov at least 48 hours before the public hearing.

Please note: If you plan to testify with a digital presentation via an external USB drive, submit it to our office 48 hours prior to the hearing so our MIS department can assess it.

Kindly confirm receipt of this email and whether you will attend the hearing. If you have any questions or require additional information, please call our office at (671) 989-9554.

Regards,
 --



Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas

Chairman, Committee on Finance and Government Operations

259 Martyr St., Hagatna, Guam 96910
senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov
 (671) 989-9554

Karl Pangelinan <karl.p@guamlegislature.gov> Tue, Mar 3, 2026 at 8:39 AM
 To: Senator Chris Duenas <senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>
 Cc: Joaquin Cook <kin.cook@bankofguam.com>, George Chiu <george.chiu@visitguam.org>, Michael Sgro <Michael@guamparadisefitness.com>, Michelle Merfalen <michelle.merfalen@visitguam.org>, Jeff Jones <jeffjones@triplejguam.com>, Ho Eun <ho.eun@coretechintl.com>, robert.hofmann@mcog.guam.gov, Brian Artero <brian@cravegroup.net>, Ken Yanagisawa <ken.yanagisawa@visitguam.org>, Joanne Brown <joanne.brown@visitguam.org>, Clifford Guzman <cguzman@gfsgroup.com>

All:

Please forward any written testimony in advance of tomorrow's Public Hearing at 10am as I am putting session drive together for any material the panel may need.

Cheers,
 KP

[Quoted text hidden]



Office of Senator Christopher M. Duenas
CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA

Wednesday, March 4, 2026 – Guam Congress Building

10:00AM:

- **[Bill No. 279-38 \(COR\)](#)** – JESSE A. LUJAN - AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 1 OF PART 1, CHAPTER XIII, PUBLIC LAW 38-60, RELATIVE TO TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS FOR THE GUAM VISITORS' BUREAU.



Date: March 4, 2026

I Mina'trentai Ocho na Liheslaturan Guahån
Office of Senator Christopher M. Duenas
Chairman, Committee on Finance and Government Operations

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Bill #279-38(COR) – Jesse A. Lujan - AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION I OF PART I, CHAPTER XIII, PUBLIC LAW 38-60, RELATIVE TO TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS FOR THE GUAM VISITORS' BUREAU.

	Name	Agency / Address	Contact No.	Email	Type of Testimony		Support	
					Oral	Written	Yes	No
1	Frank Arriola	GVB			✓	✓		
2	Rudol Guelmalin	GVB						
3	Iha Caxullo	GVB.						
4	Guadalupe CHU				✓			
5	Lisa Bondatto	GOVB						
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								



March 4, 2026

Senator Christopher M. Duenas
Chairman, Committee on Finance and Government Operations
Calvo Arriola Building Ste. 101-B
259 Martyr St. Hagåtña, Guam 96910

RE: Testimony on Bill 279-38 (COR)

Buenas yan Háfa Adai Mr. Chair and Senators of the 38th Guam Legislature,

On behalf of the Guam Visitors Bureau (GVB), thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Bill No. 279-38 (COR).

At the outset, we respectfully acknowledge that the GVB Board of Directors has not formally deliberated on this measure in a public meeting, nor expressed an official position consistent with Guam's Open Government Law. Accordingly, GVB takes no position on the merits of the policy proposed in this legislation. Our presence today is limited to offering general perspective and technical understanding regarding operational and fiscal considerations.

As a general matter, GVB management welcomes measures that increase transparency and ensure public confidence in the stewardship of public funds. As a public entity entrusted with tourism promotion and destination development, we recognize that transparency and accountability are essential to maintaining public trust.

In that spirit of transparency, GVB regularly shares information regarding travel activities, projects, and strategic initiatives with the Board of Directors as opportunities arise. Management provides updates through regular reporting, briefings, and operational communications to ensure the Board remains informed of ongoing initiatives and mission-related activities, even when formal Board action is not required.

For context, under the current leadership structure, GVB's travel expenses reflect sound fiscal stewardship by limiting non-essential trips and ensuring mission related travel aligns with measurable outcomes.

With respect to Bill No. 279-38 (COR), which proposes transferring travel authorization authority from the General Manager to the GVB Board, we respectfully outline several operational and fiscal considerations.

The primary expenses associated with GVB travel are airfare and registration fees. These costs fluctuate daily and typically increase significantly as the event date approaches. The ability of the



General Manager to approve travel administratively allows GVB to secure early-bird registration rates and more favorable airfare pricing. Removing that flexibility may result in delayed bookings and increased expenditures.

Additionally, the governance framework under 12 GCA Chapter 9 is not structured for rapid operational decisions. Official Board action requires a quorum of eight (8) members. The Board meets once per month, and proxy voting is not permitted. As a practical matter, travel approval could be delayed if a quorum is not achieved or if timing does not align with the Board's meeting schedule.

Tourism, by its nature, is dynamic and opportunity driven. Travel cannot always be planned far in advance, and opportunities cannot always be anticipated. International airlift discussions, federal coordination, trade negotiations, and crisis-response meetings often arise with little notice.

For example, if GVB were to receive notice today that representatives from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Philippine government wished to meet in Manila on Thursday to discuss a pilot expansion of the Philippine visa waiver program for Guam, the Bureau would likely be unable to accommodate that request under the proposed structure. The Board would not be able to convene and approve travel within the required window. In such instances, the inability to respond quickly could result in missed strategic opportunities with significant economic implications for Guam.

Similarly, participation in national and international events such as America 250, where Guam is expected to join other states and territories in commemorating America's 250th anniversary, may require timely commitments to secure participation and favorable travel arrangements. We would note that given the dynamic nature of matters in Washington, the inability to attend unforeseen meetings or engagements may unintentionally signal that Guam is not positioned to participate fully in national initiatives.

In summary, while the objective of enhanced oversight is understandable and transparency remains a shared value, the practical application of this measure may introduce administrative delays and increased costs, potentially limiting GVB's operational agility in a highly competitive global tourism environment.

We respectfully offer these technical observations for the Committee's consideration and remain available to answer any questions.

Si Yu'os Ma'åse',

Régine Biscoe Lee

President and CEO, Guam Visitors Bureau



Senator Chris Duenas <senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>

Bill No 279-38

oanne Brown [REDACTED]
To: senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov

Tue, Mar 10, 2026 at 1:39 PM

Dear Chairman Duenas,

I am providing written testimony in favor of Bill No. 279-38 relative to Board approval for travel authorizations for the Guam Visitors Bureau.

The primary role of GVB is to enhance and facilitate visitor travel to Guam. During this time of much needed recovery in our visitor industry, travel by the GVB is an important component to spur increased tourist travel to our island. As a Board Member, I understand that Guam is in daily competition with other expanding and affordable travel destinations in the Pacific and Asia. These challenges and opportunities should not remove the need for public review and board determination that any and all travel paid for with public funds is needed and justified through a public review process. I am an advocate for greater transparency in the operations of our government and I am of the position that Bill No. 279-38 will further enhance this process.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.

Sincerely,

Joanne Brown
GVB Board Member

Sent from my iPhone



Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas
CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

COMMITTEE VOTE SHEET

Bill No. 279-38 (COR) – Sen Jesse A. Lujan – “AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 1 OF PART 1, CHAPTER XIII, PUBLIC LAW 38-60, RELATIVE TO TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS FOR THE GUAM VISITORS' BUREAU”

Committee Members	Signature	TO DO PASS	TO NOT PASS	TO REPORT OUT ONLY	TO ABSTAIN	TO PLACE IN INACTIVE FILE
Senator Christopher M. Dueñas <i>Chairperson</i>		X				
Senator V. Anthony Ada <i>Vice Chairperson</i>	E-Vote 3/9/26			X		
Senator Frank F. Blas, Jr. <i>Member</i>	E-Vote 3/9/26			X		
Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane <i>Member</i>	E-Vote 3/9/26			X		
Senator Jesse A. Lujan <i>Member</i>	E-Vote 3/9/26	X				
Senator Vincent A.V. Borja <i>Member</i>	E-Vote 3/9/26	X				
Senator Tina Rose Muña Barnes <i>Member</i>						
Senator Joe S. San Agustin <i>Member</i>	E-Vote 3/9/26			X		



Karl Pangelinan <karl.p@guamlegislature.gov>

Urgent E-Vote for Bill #279-38 COR - Jesse A Lujan - GVB Travel Auth Bill

7 messages

Karl Pangelinan <karl.p@guamlegislature.gov>
 To: cmdcommittee@guamlegislature.gov
 Cc: Senator Chris Duenas <senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>

Mon, Mar 9, 2026 at 12:50 PM

Hafa Adai Committee Members:

Please find committee report attached for Bill #279 -38 - Sen. Jesse A. Lujan -
 "AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 1 OF PART 1, CHAPTER XIII, PUBLIC LAW 38-60, RELATIVE TO TRAVEL
 AUTHORIZATIONS FOR THE GUAM VISITORS' BUREAU."

Your action on this measure is respectfully requested.

Kindly indicate your preferred course of action by selecting one of the following options:

TO DO PASS

TO NOT PASS

TO REPORT OUT ONLY

TO ABSTAIN

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 Office of Senator Chris M. Duenas - Chairman Finance & Gov't Operation

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Office of Legislative Secretary Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane

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Mon, Mar 9, 2026 at

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To report out. Thank you.

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Committee Digest for Bill #279-38
Committee on Finance & Gov't Operation
Senator Christopher M. Duenas – Chairman
[Bill No. 279-38 \(COR\)](#)

I. OVERVIEW

Bill No. 279-38 (COR) was introduced by Senator Jesse A. Lujan on February 16, 2026 and referred to the Committee on Finance and Gov't Operations on February 20, 2026. The Committee held a public hearing on March 4, 2026, at 10:00am in the Guam Congress Building's Public Hearing Room.

Notices for the hearing were posted on the Government Public Notices Portal and distributed via email to all senators and major media outlets on February 24, 2026 (5-Day Notice) and again on February 27, 2026 (48-Hour Notice).

Senators Present

Christopher M. Duenas, Chairman
Vice Speaker, V. Anthony Ada, Member
Jesse A. Lujan, Member
Joe San Agustin, Member
Telo T. Taitague
Eulogio *Shawn* Gumataotao

ORAL TESTIMONY:

Mr. George Chiu – Chairman of the Board, Guam Visitors Bureau (GVB)
Mr. Frank Arriola – VP, GVB

WRITTEN TESTIMONY:

Mrs. Regine Biscoe-Lee – President, GVB (Read into record by Frank Arriola)

II. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY & DISCUSSION

The public hearing for Bill #279-38 (COR) was called to order at **10:00AM.**

Chairman Duenas: *Man'aina si yu'os.* Welcome this morning to your Guam Congress building, the 38th Guam Legislature. This morning's public hearing is conducted by the Committee on Finance and Government Operations and is called to order at this time at 10:00 Wednesday, March 4th, 2026. First notice of this public hearing was disseminated to all senators and media outlets on February 24, 2026, with its second notice disseminated on

February 27, 2026. These hearing notices were also made available on the Guam Legislature's website, our legislative calendar, and the government of Guam's public notice portal. The committee will hear testimony in the following bill on the agenda. Bill #279-38 COR introduced by Senator Jesse A. Lujan, an act to amend section one of part one, chapter 13, public law 38-60 relative to travel authorizations for the Guam Visitors Bureau, the GVB Enhanced Oversight and Restructured Governance Establishment Act. At this time, I would like to uh welcome my colleagues who have joined us this morning. Of course, the chairman of the committee the vice chair also I am the vice chair of the committee and the author of the legislation Senator Jesse Lujan we have Senator Gumataotao with us Senator Joe San Agustin and Senator Telo Taitague. Thank you, colleagues for joining us this morning before we begin, I'd like to remind everyone in attendance of *I Liheslaturan Guåhan's* general rules of conduct individuals testifying shall first be recognized by the chairperson before speaking and shall state their full name for recordkeeping purposes. Questions and testimony shall be confined to the substance and nature of the bill on the agenda. Personal inferences to the character or motive of any senator or individual testifying is not permitted. The chairperson of the committee may order the removal from this hearing of any member of *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* or the public audience who fails to observe proper decorum pursuant to the 38th Guam legislature standing rules. Any violation of general rule of conduct will result in immediate removal from this public hearing room. With that, we will now proceed to hear testimony on bill number 279-38 (COR). And I'll recognize Senator Lujan, the author of the bill, and I have a co-sponsored as well to give his opening statement.

Senator Jesse Lujan: Good morning, Mr. Chair, committee members. Thank you very much for being here and also panel being here this morning. Mr. Chairman, thank you again for hearing bill 279-38. Thank you to my colleagues as well and to everyone from the Guan Visitors Bureau, our tourism industry partners and the public who are here and joining us today, via video and in the public hearing room as well. Bill 279-38 is a targeted governance and accountability measure. In plain terms, it grants GVB board the authority to approve travel authorization. That may sound narrow, but it is exactly the kind of basic oversight tool a board needs if we expect the board to hold management accountable and ensure public dollars are being spent responsibly. I want to be clear about why this bill is necessary. Over the past or last several months, I have had many conversations with current and former board members, and I have heard consistent messages. The board wants more control and specifically more control over travel. Back in January during the GVB board meeting, I said directly that some things need to change based on the input I received from board members after that meeting. One of the most immediate and practical reforms they want is to bring travel decisions under the board authorization so that oversight is not an afterthought but a real check in real time. And let us be honest about the current climate. When GVB's current

travel reports were brought to light, it is safe to say the industry, stakeholders, and the general public all want to see accountability. This bill does that. It creates a clear approval process. It puts the board on record, and it helps ensure travel is tied to strategy, outcomes and transparency. It also connects to a bigger picture we cannot ignore. During a recent meeting with the airport, GIAA, we discussed what would happen if Lotte were to pull out and if an oversight, right here two weeks at an oversight two weeks ago with GEDA, GIAA, and even GVB on the record, we heard clearly that if we do not ensure the airport remains revenue generating, it can affect the airport's bond rating and Guam's overall bond standing. Tourism is not just an industry issue. It is a stability issue for our entire civilian econ economy. Today, based on conversations with airport board members and management, one of the concerns coming from Lotte is whether they will stay on Guam is whether our tourism plan is realistic and whether our recovery trajectory is credible. So, you have to understand where I'm coming from and when I, when we the at the 38th Guam legislature stuck our necks out to secure \$10 million for airline and airlift efforts, only to learn that roughly \$62,000 has been spent so far while flights are being cancelled because of low turnout. That is not sustainable. It undermines confidence in the plan. It undermines industry confidence and it puts the future of our single largest civilian economic driver in a worse position. Some things need to change. That is what I said in January and that is what I'm saying again today. If the board cannot drive accountability with the tools that it has, then this legislature will step up and help chart a new course. Board members have asked for GVB to evolve into a true governing board. This bill is one way we can start chipping away at that while we continue working on broader reforms within the Guan Visitors Bureau. Bill 279-38 is not anti-travel. It is pro-accountability, pro-strategy, pro-results. If travel is truly necessary for destination development, airline negotiation, trade shows representation and recovery, then it should be able to stand up to board review and approval. And that's what this bill ensures. With that, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. Appreciate you giving me the opportunity to speak on the opening for this bill. Thank you very much.

Chairman Duenas: *Si yu'os ma'ase.* Chairman Lujan, and of course, we see Chairman George Chiu here, as well as newly appointed vice president, I understand, Frank Arriola. At this time, I'm going to recognize Chairman George Chiu for his remarks on the bill. You may proceed, sir.

GVB Chairman George Chiu: Chairman Duanas, members of the rest of the members of the 38th, senators of the 38th Guam Legislature, good morning and thank you for this opportunity to comment on Bill 279-38. The first thing I want to say is that this bill is being introduced by the 38th legislature. What you're changing is a bill that was also introduced by a previous legislature. So, we're basically taking out something. We're not...as a chairman of GVB, I'm not asking for anything new. You guys are removing something that was already

previously passed by a previous legislature or even the current legislature because it's in the budget law. So, you're taking something out of a of a budget law. In my opinion, should probably have never been there to begin with, but that's water under the bridge. So, you're now changing...removing that portion that was in the previous or current budget law, previous budget law. I don't know when it was initially put in there, but you're just taking that out and transferring the travel authority back to the board. And by doing that, I think it just makes a lot of sense. I've spoken to several of my board members. I think Senator Lujan will recall former Senator Joanne Brown in your office making the statement that she's sat on many boards. Never has she ever sat on the board where the board doesn't approve the travel but is the way around management approved the travel of the board. So, she was the one that comment directly to you Senator Lujan in your office during that meeting. So even your former colleague Senator Joanne Brown is questioning why is travel approved by management for the board and not the other way around. So again this is just logical, common sense and I want to say and in all earnestness and sincerity the board has no desire to micromanage the management and staff of GVB on travel related issues. This is not a power trip or management wanting to control every aspect of management. The current laws are written gives the authority for travel to the to the general manager and president. All you're doing is removing that and putting it back to where it should have been to begin with. I have no reason to be opposing this bill. I definitely support it. But again, I want to emphasize that doesn't mean that the board is going to come in here and once we have this authority to start micromanaging the travel budget and the travel of the management and staff of GVB. The board members are all business people. They have other duties. Board members do not get paid. They are volunteering their time. So all they want to do really is to try to get tourism back on track so that our economy can benefit and the people, the local people who are in the tourism business can continue to find a way to survive and it's very sad because you know you mentioned the possibility of Lotte, that's a big corporation. Let's mention who was the most famous water sport operation here in Guam operating Alapang Beach Club. They're closed. That's a local person born and raised in Guam. Okay. He's out of business already. And so this tourism affects our local people. It's not something that we're looking at that these big corporations. Big corporations have deep enough pockets to withstand the ups and downs of the business. And trust me, this downturn has been going on for a long time. It's going on six years now...that's when COVID hit us in 2020. We're now in 2026. So, six years of downturn. The hotels thankfully have gotten a windfall because of the military buildup, and the contractors are coming in here. Okay. So, again, this is something that is not...I don't think it's something that should be like made out to be a big deal. This is something that was included in the budget bill. Every year the budget bill changes, right? It was passed by the previous legislature somehow during this budget bill that I'm not sure if the 2026 fiscal year

budget bill has even been passed yet but that's it's probably included in the current budget bill and it's and this bill that will remove that, and I think it it's a good thing. Thank you.

Chairman Duenas: *Si yu'os ma'ase* Chairman George Chiu. Mr. Frank Arriola please proceed with your testimony.

GVB VP Frank Arriola: *Buenas yan Hafa Adai* Mr. Chair, Vice Chair, and Senators of the 38th Guam Legislature. On behalf of the Guam Visitors Bureau, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on bill number 279-38. My name is Frank Arriola. I'm the new vice president of GVB. *(Arriola continues to read verbatim the written testimony of Pres. Biscoe-Lee which is appended to this Committee Report).*

Questions and Answers for panel

Chairman Duenas: *Si yu'os ma'ase* Frank. Mr. Arriola, is that on behalf of the president or is in coordination?

GVB VP Frank Arriola: Yes. Yes.

Chairman Duenas: So, you read that for uh President Biscoe-Lee?

GVB VP Frank Arriola: Yes.

Chairman Duenas: Okay. Thank you. So the author and the chairman of tourism has opted to go last. So, I'm going to start. You know Chairman Chiu, you've heard the testimony presented on behalf of the president. My first observation is this, and I want to just ask you a direct question. I've heard now the back and forth and the different iterations in terms of this policy and other policies affecting planning for GVB and the duties and responsibilities of the board. I'm kind of perplexed at some of the back and forth and I want to put it directly to you. It seems to me like you've mentioned before, chairman, that you what you do right now is you basically approve a blanket travel for the year when you're approving a budget. But you and others have seen some things that you may or may not have agreed with. What I'm seeing here is something that to me in my opinion is you already know the general plan annually for GVB. There are reoccurring travels and different things, and you know different opportunities that are traditionally availed of. I think what we're trying to drive at here and what you've driven at before and other board members is that it shouldn't be blanket. If there's a question about a certain travel and saying what our return on investment is, what's really going to come back and if there's market shifts, you want the freedom to be able to approve or disapprove that based on how the board's looking at things. Is that kind of an observation?

GVB Chairman George Chiu: Again, I think we shouldn't get bogged down into the weeds of this issue. The issue here is who should have the authority of approval? Should it be the board having the overall approval authority over the management and staff or should it be

the management having the approval authority over the board? If you were a business owner and you wanted to travel, but the law says your manager has to approve your travel. Would you accept that as a business owner? I'm just talking about the overall structure. We trying to, you know, we don't want to get into the weeds of, oh, there might be an emergency trip. This is going to happen. Again, like I said, the board doesn't have any intention to hamstring or micromanage the GVB management staff. What we're trying to do is just make sense of the current rules and law to make sense of it. We're just writing something that probably should not have been there in the first place, but it was in there. So, we're not going to go and dig about why it was in there. Now you guys are coming back with a law that's going to remove that and this is only going to be it you know...it's something that should be done. It's the proper structure then you leave it up to the board to discuss with the management how to implement this structure in a manner that will make GVB's management agile and able to do things. Okay I mean this. Again, it the argument here is a little bit...well, I can't be agile. But if the authority is with the board, the right now the authority is not with the board, because clearly not with the board because the law says it's not with the board. But if you give it to the board, the board can then work with management to decide how to structure what is the proper way to handle this thing to make it agile, make it transparent and make it have a purposeful way to make GVB successful. I'm not saying it's not successful now, okay? I'm just saying the structure is just not correct and you guys are now rectifying the structure of it. The structure...process follows structure. So, once you have the structure then you can fill out the process later. Right? So, it's not the structure follows the process. So, all we're doing is based this law all it's doing is setting up the proper structure the way it should be in any private business and almost on every other government agency boards GCC for example. I don't know...I can't name them all but again you know your former colleague Senator Brown as she mentioned that she's been on many other boards and it's never been like this, I've not been on as many board as she has, but I've been on other boards as it's not been like this. And I've been in private business. It's never been where the general manager has authority over the board. That's all. So, I think it's something that it's really we don't want to get into the nitty-gritty details of why it shouldn't be, why it should be. We just got to ask ourselves what should be the proper structure. If you ran a business, would you want your general manager approving you as the owner the ability to travel or should it be you as the owner approving the ability of any of your managers and employees to travel? What should be the proper structure? That's all.

Chairman Duenas: So, the way I'm seeing it and the reason why I can understand where you're coming from at this point is you're kind of dealing with the aftermath of travel. Sometimes when it when it becomes a controversy, instead of being at the front end of it because if you're looking at a blanket annual approval of a typical budget that you know

already that kind of is something you go to if you go to a Japan travel trade every year it's kind of a standard thing that's usually not too controversial but overall, basically deciding on the spot or within a couple of weeks that the board's not involved in you do you see that you end up with the results of whatever outcome of that of that decision is.

GVB Chairman George Chiu: I was not on the board of GVB back when the board was approving the travel. So, I don't know how that went. Okay. But back then, when the board was approving the travel GVB was quite successful. So, I don't think having the board approve the travel is going to be a hindrance to the performance of GVB. Ever since I've been on the board, the law has changed through amendments to the budget which gave authority to the GM that superseded the board's ability to have proper oversight over the bureau. And we're slowly getting back to the way it should be in my opinion, and I think that's a good thing. And we have a much more functional bureau now as compared to in the past when I first came onto the board in terms of the board's role and the management role is it's getting it's getting better. Okay. And I think this is another step in the right direction. Again, to have the proper structure and when you have the proper structure the process will flow accordingly.

Chairman Duenas: Frank, I don't want to put you on the spot, but I just want to make an observation. I know you're new to this position. You just recently been appointed, but I would make this advice to you on the testimony just so you take it back for your deliberations because it sounds like a relatively neutral position that's been presented. You know, in the scenario that's been put forward in terms of some emergent travel, you know, agencies are usually pretty flexible and travel can come from outside of the agency to be able to deal with on the spot, you know, days in advance notice for things that might deal with national security, other things or other opportunities that the board could avail on to where you can do intergovernmental transfers to handle those things. I don't think that that's going to necessarily be an impediment if this legislation goes forward. So, I just wanted to if you have some thoughts you're willing to share, that's fine. But other than that, I think you should take the take it back you know, when you sit down and work with the board from the management level that those things are not too difficult to deal with in terms of

making emergency decisions. Also, George, I mean, even if you are approving the budget on a on a basis to where you're approving travel and don't you think you could have a provision in there with to where there would be something where at least the chairman, if an emergent situation came up, could deem certain travel as being necessary on an emergency basis or something that needed to be dealt with that outside of a board meeting?

GVB Chairman George Chiu: Again, like I mentioned earlier chairman, the board has no desire to micromanage the management and staff of GVB. If the structure is there, all these type of issues can be worked out between the board and the management. So again, it's the

willingness for again the issue here is not how to work out the little details of these issue. We don't want again we get bogged down in the weeds. It is what's is the right way to structure this? Who should have the approval authority? And then once it's there it doesn't again it doesn't mean that the board wants to approve every single travel every single expense. No good business person is going to run their business in that manner. No. No one. Okay. No business no successful business manager is going to be a micromanager. No. So there it's all we're asking for right now is set up the structure the way it should have been. Get it back to where it was. We're not asking for something new. We're just saying get it back to where it was when and when it was there back then. I didn't see any problems with how the management and there was no complaints from management about the board having that approval authority. I never heard of anything on that. But that's all it is. We're not we're not asking for something new. We're just asking to go back to the way the way it was. And this law will do that. And I think it's a good thing. And I'm confident that that we have intelligent board members on GVB will find a way that once they have this approval authority, they're not going to they're not going to go and I want to see this \$10 expense. Why'd you spend \$10 on this chocolate bar? That's not that's not the purpose of having the authority. So, I think the you have 12 very capable 11 you know board members who knows how to run their businesses successfully and they'll know how what to do with the authority and they won't find the right way to get this thing done. And again, I want to re-emphasize, we're not asking for anything that the law here is not proposing anything new. It's basically putting it back to where it was prior to having the budget bill amended that allowed all this authority to begin with. So, it's not...it's not new.

Chairman Duenas: So Frank, I'll give you an option to either take the information back or if you want to share.

GVB VP Frank Arriola: Yeah. Well, I just wanted to share, I spent 17 years at Guam Community College and everybody up here knows that I come from a background of compliance, transparency, and the two, three days that I've been with the team. I want to let you know that there's really good, really good accountability on the management side and also the management team side. So, you have my commitment, my commitment to ensure that that happens. Spoke with the chairman beforehand. We agree on a lot of things and I think there's some mechanics that need to be ironed out but we still need to be able to function. I'm also in the private sector and empowering us to perform is very important. So, I just want you to consider that. I agree with everything that the chairman says and I just wanted to share that with you.

Chairman Duenas: Thanks Frank. I'd also like to also recognize Vice Speaker Ada. Thank you for joining us sir. At this time, I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to Senator Gumataotao for any questions he may have.

Senator Shawn Gumataotao: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, George, and thank you, Frank, for being with us, as well as the GVB team. Just have a few questions. Because the bill impacts GVB travel only during FY 2026, should the policy be amended so that the GVB travel policy, if adopted, is codified into statute?

GVB Chairman George Chiu: In other words, you're going to say it won't be an annual thing, but it'll be it'll be forever.

Senator Shawn Gumataotao: Are we just going to keep coming back here every couple years? Yeah. Are we going to codify it, call it a day?

GVB Chairman George Chiu: Right. I think you know again Senator, our oversight chairman may have a concern. Okay. Board members change, right? When there's a new administration that comes in, the board member change you don't the oversight chairman might not as feel as comfortable with a new board as he might feel comfortable with. Things change. So, once you codify something, it's there forever. So I have to in this case I would say I wouldn't want if I was a legislature I wouldn't want to lock it in because you don't know who's going to be the next board members. You don't know who's the next board's going to look like. So, you will probably want that flexibility as the legislature to decide how you want to handle your oversight of GVB. If you're comfortable then you'll just it's an annual law. You guys pass the law. I don't think you need to have a public hearing every single time because if it's already the law, I don't know. I don't know how to I'm sorry. I'm very ignorant when it comes to the legislative process on how laws are passed. So, I can't comment on that. But personally, if I was a senator sir, I wouldn't want to lock myself into a long-term forever deal. I want to see do I have confidence in this new board then I will do something, right? As a legislature if I don't have confidence and then maybe we do something else but if you if you make it permanent and codify it then you basically have to change the law instead of being an annual thing where you it can change every year you lose that flexibility and becomes harder I don't know if it becomes harder or easier. I really don't know you guys are experts in passing laws. So, you have to tell me, but I wouldn't want to lock myself in. That's just my personal opinion. Yeah. Okay. I think you would keep that flexibility and that power in my hands as a senator, as a legislature. I would not give it up and make it.

Senator Shawn Gumataotao: So, Frank, what do you think from your previous experience?

GVB VP Frank Arriola: Well, I don't know the board bylaws, but I believe that there can be work done within resolutions within the board of trustees or board of directors at the GVB.

So, I don't want to speak to that because I haven't gone through the bylaws, but I think there can be things as far as coming back every year to get approval might be counterproductive. You know, we want to stay focused on the mission of tourism. So, coming before the legislature on something that we think the board has oversight and can manage us properly, I think I agree with the chairman.

Senator Shawn Gumataotao: All right. With that said, if the GVB board is expected to approve thousands of dollars in marketing efforts, shouldn't they also have the authority to approve the specific high-cost travel that constitutes a significant part of those very same marketing efforts?

GVB Chairman George Chiu: Um, my answer is yes, but my answer again is we're not going to micromanage, right? But you have to have that, you know, I hear the word empowerment. I think it's the board's duty to empower, not the other way around. Right. So, the board has right now you say the board can pass a resolution, do things, but if it's against the law, you can't pass a resolution that's going to be against the law because the law says right now certain approval has to be done by certain areas. So, you can't pass a law that's going to counter be against what's the law passed by the legislature. I'm definitely not going to pass a resolution that's going to be against what the legislature has wanted. I'm not going to break that law, right? But if you give that authority back to the board, doesn't mean the board's going to go crazy and want to look at every single thing. We don't have the time. We have our own businesses to run. So, we're again not we don't want to get...I keep going back to say we don't want to get bogged down into the weeds. We just want the what should be the logical structure of how it should be set up. That's it. Once you set it up, then let the organization go and handle their business was the proper setup. That's all.

Senator Shawn Gumataotao: Okay. With that said, let me ask you this, based on the OPA's findings and recommendations in OPA report number 23-11 from December of 2023, which concluded that GVB officials use their corporate credit cards in violation of certain provisions of its own credit card policy and procedures and the Guam procurement law and regulations. What information is available regarding the corrective measures that GVB has taken since 2023 to avoid issuing excess per diem allowances and eliminate the increased risk for GVB funded travelers to misappropriate that per diem?

GVB Chairman George Chiu: I can tell you right now the current management and staff are not doing that. Okay. you're referring back to something back in 2023. Quite honestly, I don't even remember if I was actually on the board back then or not, but if I was, the law back then gave full fiscal responsibility, if I'm not mistaken at that time, full fiscal responsibility to the general manager. So, the board had no say, no oversight on that if I'm not mistaken. And then again the law currently gives full travel authority to the general manager...right, approval for

travel to the general manager. So, the board again had no it's my opinion the board had no oversight over that.

Senator Shawn Gumataotao: So let me ask this then, referencing that same report though, which also found that GVB's agreement with its bank did not provide mileage accrual, resulting in lost opportunity to defray costs for student travel. Where in from your experience where is GVB with the promulgation of relevant rules and regulations and do these particular policies comply with the government's travel and transportation policy, particularly the provisions which support student travel. Now I know that you mentioned that you might not have been there but as a member of the board, I'm sure that these types of policies do come across the table in front of you.

GVB Chairman George Chiu: Travel policy comes to me on where I sit on boards of private companies. I don't recall ever discussing travel policies and rules regarding GVB travel. I think back in 2023 I was, you know, there was a question about the legality of the election of certain board members. So that we were not properly elected because of some open government law. I'm not sure if 2023 was at that time frame that we're talking about. But again, there should be there should be discussions between the board and the management on all these travel policies and once it's implemented it's up to the president and the vice president if it's so delegated by the president to implement those policies. But right now I really can't tell you what those policies are because it's been so many years where the board had no authority over travel. So, we don't really...other than approving and you know we approved prior there was even a period of time where the board didn't even have to approve the budget because the entire fiscal responsibility was given away. It was authorized by law to be handled by the management. Okay. And now again I'm coming back down to the travel area. I can't answer you. Maybe you'll have one?

GVB VP Frank Arriola: Yeah. So, I know for sure we've had a clean audit. (Asking GVB staff) Rudd, how many years in a row? Yeah. So, more than 10. We've had a clean audit for more than 10 years. But, we focus on compliance and so you have our commitment to the board. 2023. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. About 10 years. Yeah. No, but clean audit. We've had a clean audit.

Senator Shawn Gumataotao: Right. And so, I appreciate that because I think for me what I'm trying to get at is, you know, with all of the things that are happening at the bureau, you guys spend a lot of time talking about when that next...you're trying to bring people here, but you're also doing the same the other way around. So, how it's not part of a regular board meeting on any review of that particular type of policy? I'm just in observation, but I think that you would spend even in the 365 days in any of your board meetings at least looking at it annually or semi-annually.

GVB VP Frank Arriola: Senator, I've sat on both sides of this thing and I agree with the chairman 100%.

Senator Shawn Gumataotao: No, I totally get it. *(GVB VP Frank Arriola interjects)* And then you also have my commitment as a vice president that we will comply with the rules and government law. I got you Frank. Thank you for that. Mr. Chairman, I have two more questions. Is it appropriate for a single individual to have unilateral authority over five-figure travel expenditures without the management board oversight typical of other government agencies in the government of Guam?

GVB Chairman George Chiu: I don't know how other government agencies are handled so I can't answer that question. Is it typical to...I think currently the general manager basically has approval authority up to \$24,999 on procurement issues. So is it unusual for them to have...so five figures that's already five figures. So, I have full faith in the management. So, if they're going to be able have the authority to approve procurement up to \$24,999, then I would assume that would include the travel portion too, right? I mean, it's already there at up to \$24,999. So, again, I'm not looking at the details of what we're trying to get at here. We're just looking at the structure.

Senator Shawn Gumataotao: Yeah. Okay. I only have one last question, George, if I can. Mr. Chair, how is GVB using its current travel authority to develop emerging visa-waiver program markets like Malaysia, Taiwan to hedge against potential downturns in Japan or Korea? And is the strategy being reviewed by the board on a quarterly basis?

GVB Chairman George Chiu: Well, I think that's the reason why we approve the budget for marketing for GVB to go out there and handle. And that's why GVB goes to these shows in Malaysia and Singapore because there are different markets that we are not...and that's why the board has approved additional marketing funding for Philippines to look at diversification from our two core markets that are having a struggle right which is Korea and Japan. So again, I'm not saying that they're not doing their job. I think they're doing as best job as they can given the current circumstances. And the board's role is to be there to support them and empower them and today's this law...we're here to testify again...is basically is it's a structure issue. This is...it's a good law. It's it gives it back to where it should have been where it was.

Senator Shawn Gumataotao: Okay. And that's it. We're putting something back to the way it was and what comes out of it is going to be up to the board and the management to work closely together. And it's the job of the board to work closely with the management. And I think it's a relevant question considering that we are trying to bring our tourism back. So that's the only reason why I'm going down this road, George. But I do appreciate your time. Thanks for being with us.

GVB VP Frank Arriola: Mr. Senator, can I make a short comment? (*Sen Gumataotao*) Sure. So, each of the board directors actually has a committee. And so there are ways for a board member or director to actually work with the committee to get things approved for ad hoc or something that needs to be approved with urgency.

Senator Shawn Gumataotao: Right. No, I understand. All right. Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman Duenas: *Si yu'os ma'ase* Senator Gumataotao. Senator San Agustin, you're recognized.

Senator Joe San Agustin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Simple question to GVB rep first. Can you explain to the committee what the current travel authorization policy is at GVB to Mr. Arriola. Do you know what the current policy is?

GVB VP Frank Arriola: Yes. So, let me just see. I prepared some Q&As just in case. So, the GVB board approves operational budget for the fiscal year and then within the fiscal budget, there is money set aside for traveling and then within that, travel authorizations are approved by the general manager. So, the board approves travel, money is allocated for travel.

Senator Joe San Agustin: The board approves the budget. Then you break it down. Then the general manager approves the travel. Correct? Am I correct? I mean, that's basically what you said, right? I just want to make sure.

GVB VP Frank Arriola: Yes.

Senator Joe San Agustin: Okay. Next one. From an operational standpoint, how would shifting travel approval from the general manager to the board affect the bureau's ability to respond to time-sensitive opportunities? You catch the question? I'll repeat it. From an operational standpoint, how would shifting approval from the general manager to the board affect the bureau's ability to respond to time-sensitive opportunities?

GVB VP Frank Arriola: That's our primary concern is that being able to respond, especially if there are time-sensitive issues.

Senator Joe San Agustin: Thank you. Got it. Okay. Now, for the chairman, Mr. Chiu, simple question. How long have you been on the board, sir? How long? How many years? How many years have you been on the board, sir?

GVB Chairman George Chiu: I don't recall, sir. How you how many years? I don't recall how many years I've been on the board...on the GVB board. Oh, yeah. I know. Those are things I really don't pay attention to. I just do my job. I know. I was elected by the membership twice, right? So, that should be a two-year term. So, it should be four years maximum. It's not two years. So, right now, I say it's three. Yes, three. I think three now because there might be one more year left. But the first election, I replaced Stephen Gatewood...because he resigned. So, but that was deemed a non-legal replacement because of some open government law.

Senator Joe San Agustin: All right. No problem...

GVB Chairman George Chiu: I really I don't know, so I don't...if you don't count those I would say I was elected by the general membership twice. So, this should be my officially third year, but I was probably there before then that was deemed it was deemed invalid.

Senator Joe San Agustin: Okay. Now the reason why I was trying to...leading to that question or what led to that question number one, do you realize why the law was changed to add the general manager to approve travel? Do you remember back then what happened? I can give you the history of it.

GVB Chairman George Chiu: I do not. I was not privy to know the reasoning behind the change and the general manager requested the change. All I know is the general manager requested the change and it was approved by the legislature and that's the way it is and we follow it. So that's the law. So there's nothing for me to comment on that. That's how it was. It was approved and changed.

Senator Joe San Agustin: All right. Okay. Just to remind you and the people listening, the reason why it was changed then was that the board couldn't get a quorum. Okay. You...there's no need for you to debate on that one. That was very factual. And anything that would need to be approved by the board couldn't happen. Okay? That's the only reason why it changed then. Now, based on your time on the board, how many times did you not have a quorum? Or did you have you always have quorum since in the past and now and for you know...

GVB Chairman George Chiu: Well right now we have we have a quorum all the time.

Senator Joe San Agustin: You always have quorum. *(Mr. Chiu responds – “Yes, lately”)*. Okay. So, you mentioned Mr. Chiu, Mr. Chairman, that you don't believe that the manager,

the GVB manager should approve the board's travel. I agree with you. Then maybe that needs to be taken out of the law so that if the board wants to travel, the board will approve their travel, but everything else will remain. Would you have any objection to that? Because you made that very clear. It's not right that the manager is going to approve the boss's travel. The board should be able to approve its own travel. Am I correct?

GVB Chairman George Chiu: Again. Yeah, that definitely doesn't make any sense. But I think the...I don't...you know my understanding and I could be wrong is that that the management approves the travel has authority to approve travel and travel with the board and travel with all the other ones on listed. I don't really follow that because it's been in place for so many years now and we just don't really pay attention to that aspect because it's been in the law for a number of years already. So, I don't pay attention to that aspect right now. I'm being asked to comment on should the approval go back to the board and I'm just saying the structure in normal circumstances sir is that the approval authority will rest with the board on most and if you ask, the board has never debated that I'm fairly confident if you ask each individual board member who's a business person what their position will be on this thing they would they will probably agree with my opinion that the approval should rest with the board. And again, they will find out that none of the board members have the approval again. I want to reemphasize; this doesn't mean that the board is going to micromanage the process again. All we're trying to do is set up the correct structure. That's all. Is that what you mentioned...the structure was needed be done right there because there was no quorum. So, we...but we don't even want to get into the reason why there was no quorum available back then. But there was until it was remedied right until it was deemed that it was wrongfully elected. Okay? I mean, I'm not going to argue with that again. Okay? So, it is what it is. I respect him very much for what he's capable of doing and I have nothing to say, you know, and he's able to accomplish all these things and because he get these things passed. I'm not here to complain about that. That was in the past and it was done...and it was done according to the law, and you have to respect the law.

Senator Joe San Agustin: So, do you have any objection to what I mentioned on the bill? Just remove board members travel...that will be handled by the board themselves. Everybody else will be handled by the general manager. Do you have any objection to that?

GVB Chairman George Chiu: I don't have objection to that but you're going to say only that. I mean if that's if that's what the legislature want to pass, I won't object to it. I'm just saying the correct structure should be the board to have full authority over this issue and the board would then empower the management to handle it, but I don't see anything wrong with that. But I'm not going to object to you saying if the board travel doesn't have to be approved by

the management, that should be a given, I would think. But the board but the board approving everything regarding the travel is also the proper structure and again once that structure is in place it would empower the management to do things it may be goes back to the same way the management has the approval to approve everything but that approval should come from the board and not by a legislative act.

Senator Joe San Agustin: I understand where you come from sir that's what I'm saying, I just want to remind you that what was said earlier the board approves the budget. They decide how they're going to spend the money, the travel and everything. So, I just want to make sure that...

GVB Chairman George Chiu: Theoretically, if we follow the law, the board should not be approving anything travel related because that's all approved by the by the right. So, we approve a blanket amount for the budget. In that budget there is a portion set aside for travel. It's a lump sum amount and that's it. We don't see anything else after that. But the management report will say, "Hey, this is this amount is for North America and we're going to go to these shows and so on and so forth." Yeah, they will do that. There's nothing wrong with how the thing is done. But again, you know, there's nothing wrong with wanting...having this thing go back to the way it was prior to all the changes. Because the bureau was functioning fine prior to all the changes. But again, like you said, there was lack of a quorum. So, these necessitated changes. I'm not going to argue or comment on that you know, again, the legislature has a right to pass the laws which you have passed. And now it's just trying to put it back to the way it was, and I don't see any reason why it should not be. And the bureau functioned fine back then...also in my opinion. But I'm hoping that we just go back to the way things were and we go back to the way things were. Does that mean tourism will recover the way it was? I sure hope so. I mean I'm a believer of, you know, if it wasn't broken before, let's not fix it. But it was broken. We had to fix it. Now it looks like it's fixed. Let's go back to the way things are. That's all. Let's get back to structure the way it should be.

Senator Joe San Agustin: That's all. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Duenas: *Si yu'os ma'ase* Senator San Agustin, Senator Taitague, you recognized.

Senator Telo Taitague: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning to my colleagues and those who are listening at home. Welcome. And of course GVB...a very hardworking group of people taking a lot of heat. And it seems to me like this, you know, Mr. Chiu, you mentioned earlier that this bill was something that wasn't brought up by the board. It was this body that decided

to have a bill that was created to take away the authority of the general manager for travel. But if you have a board member going to see a senator to create, you know, talk about this bill or it brought up, then it sounds to me like it's the board that is creating this bill. So that doesn't make any sense. So, my question now is, are you a policy board or a governing board for GVB?

GVB Chairman George Chiu: That's the million-dollar question, Senator.

Senator Telo Taitague: So, let me ask Frank, Mr. Arriola, congratulations on your position. I've been in your position before. I sat there and I wish you the very best and my door is always open to you. I know that you're not confirmed by this body, but I want to offer you that opportunity if there's anything I can be in assistance with you. So, my question to you, I know you know I wish that by the way, where is the president right now?

GVB VP Frank Arriola: The president is traveling with Governor Leon Gurerro. There's a trade mission to Taiwan. So, they had left this morning.

Senator Telo Taitague: Taiwan? Did

GVB VP Frank Arriola: Yes, ma'am.

Senator Telo Taitague: Did you approve that? Senator, I mean Chairman Chiu?

GVB Chairman George Chiu: No, we don't approve the travel of GVB, remember?

Senator Telo Taitague: Yeah, but it's a great opportunity. Well, I kind of figured that, but [laughter] it's a great opportunity for Guam and I'm glad to see that the GVB as well as the airport is continuing to work together, you know, to bring not just tourists, but you know, growing our economy is very important. And I know that I believe if I'm not mistaken they might be trying to wine and dine China Air to bring them here because you and I both know in order to bring tourists here we got to have the airline seats. So, I'm glad to see that GVB, Mr. Chair is working closely with the airport and GEDA I think. Is GEDA on that trip too?

GVB VP Frank Arriola: Yes. So the two action items for uh GVB uh number one is we're meeting with leadership from China Airlines to get additional capacity. Hopefully, we re-engage to have them re-enter into the market. And then there's a sister signing agreement with Kaohsiung.

Senator Telo Taitague: Okay, Mr. Chair, do you support this travel?

GVB Chairman George Chiu: I have no objections to that travel. I would have and basically I told President Lee, go over there, get China Airlines to come and fly. They're flying four times a week to Palau at 50% capacity. Get them to fly two times a week to Guam and get over there and get EverRich to come and replace DFS. Those are my specific conversations with her. If EverRich will come over here and replace DFS, it would be the greatest opportunity for Guam in our tourism business. So, yes.

Senator Telo Taitague: Very good. Very good. So, Mr. Arriola, vice president, is GVB a policy board or a governing board?

GVB VP Frank Arriola: No, it's actually a advisory board, but they do create policies. Yes.

Senator Telo Taitague: So, well usually if you go in the definition between advisory board and policy board if you're saying advisory not I'm sorry a governing board versus policy board then an advisory board is under policy. It's not under governing. And if you read Mr. Chiu the difference between a governing board and a policy board. Well, GVB is a policy board. It doesn't require the board to approve travel. However, Mr. Chiu have you seen any shenanigans going on with GVB mispending money for travel since you've been there for 3 years. Have you seen any of that?

GVB Chairman George Chiu: I'm not here to like I mentioned earlier I have complete faith in the in the management of GVB. I'm here basically to talk about of structure of a board again you know governing board, a policy / advisory board if you speak to different attorneys, you get a different response to what exactly GVB is okay so I don't think we want to go down that rabbit hole.

Senator Telo Taitague: You've been there three years don't you think you would take the initiative to find out instead of sit there and saying I don't even know how many years I sat on the board I don't even know if it's a policy or a governing board. I don't even know. That's kind of ironic, Mr. G, because I know you're a smart man. I know when you put yourself to it, you will find out what is going on at GVB. So, it's very simple. You've been sitting there. Have you seen any mispending of GVB travel since you've been there? Yes or no?

GVB Chairman George Chiu: We don't get that kind of detailed information as a board.

Senator Telo Taitague: So, if there is any concern of travel, have you asked GVB management for any information such as okay we're approving like my good colleague Senator San Agustin mentioned about how the budget is approved and then it's allocated to certain areas. Have you ever asked GVB to find out what is the travel expenses for Taiwan? What's the travel expenses for China or you know Korea, Japan etc. Have you ever asked for that as a chairman as a chairman now? Have you ever asked for that information to I see itemized travel.

GVB Chairman George Chiu: We have a board member sitting on the marketing committee for Japan, on the marketing committee for Korea, on the marketing committee for Taiwan. So those are the board members that will look at that. As a chairman, I do not ask those specific questions unless it's...

Senator Telo Taitague: And you can see right, have they ever asked...chairman, have they ever asked for that information to itemize these travels?

GVB Chairman George Chiu: I know that prior to all these changes, when there was a certain board member as a chair of a certain committee that board member did approve or deny travel-related expenditures. And there are times that has happened from my knowledge, okay, prior to this change. And now because there's no authority for them to approve that travel, these committees, they're not in the position these committee chairs are not in the position to approve or disapprove any travel from within.

Senator Telo Taitague: But you are in a position to ask for the information. Correct?

GVB Chairman George Chiu: It's up to the committee chairperson to ask for that information.

Senator Telo Taitague: But as a chairman, and believe me, like I said I've sat in Frank's position I've been at these meetings, the chairman can ask for any information...any information they want to find out what's going on and again I'm going to ask the question have you seen any misuse of travel funds since you've been sitting as a chair?

GVB Chairman George Chiu: I saw no reason to ask that question.

Senator Telo Taitague: Okay, so you basically haven't seen any.

GVB Chairman George Chiu: Again, I already mentioned in the beginning of this hearing that I have full faith in the management and that this is not an issue of whether there's any abuse going on or not. It is just the structure that I'm looking at.

Senator Telo Taitague: Oh but it is Mr. Chiu. It is not okay. ((*Chiu interjects*) *Not in my opinion.*) Because the difference between a policy board and a governing board has everything to do with it. And if they're a governing board, we wouldn't be sitting here because in a governing board, they actually approve everything. I mean, it's easy. Look up the definition, you know, or what's the difference between a governing and a policy board. It's very simple. And right now, GVB is a policy board. I'm glad my good colleague brought up the fact the reason why we had to change this you know and I felt more comfortable at this at doing that and I voted as well as Senator Brown had no qualms about it I didn't hear anyone complaining when it came when we introduced this bill into the budget. Didn't hear anything I think we needed to do it for a good reason and until for me as far as I'm comfortable the way it is right now because you see there has been so many issues with board members abusing funds at GVB and until we can actually change the voting of GVB members where you have big companies who are able to buy up all these votes and proxy. Let me let me tell you, Mr. Chiu, I'm sure you know how it rolls. You go into a voting situation for GVB on membership. You get one guy walking in the door with 250 votes that he has to proxy 250 votes for one person to go in there and vote who sits on that board. Now, that's an issue. I didn't ask a question yet. So, that's a huge issue. And until we can fix that issue on who gets seated at GVB boards then I think we need to be very cautious on both sides. Now transparency is very important and I think GVB is the oversight chair of GVB wants to ensure transparency and I totally agree with that and it all it takes is for the board to ask for the information instead of "I want power," "give us more power," it's obvious that the board wants more power for what? I don't get it. They're abusing the situation. I've asked if you guys asked to see an itemized travel. You guys don't even want to see that. So, what is the issue? Sounds to me like it just wants power. Now, we've seen in the past what the board has done to abuse power where a chairman of a board actually required his company's employees to go on a trip and it was not approved by the general manager at the time, but ended up getting all the board members to vote on it. That's the kind of abuse that the board has shown in the past, and we just don't want to see that again. Have you seen any abuse at GVB right now when it comes to travel? I don't think so. So, the other one I have is...when there is a requirement, it was in [snorts] the testimony earlier. It was talked about general manager to approve travel administration allows GVB to secure early bird registration rates etc. Okay. Now we all know that the prices to fly is ridiculous. I don't know if anybody have seen the latest price just to travel to Hawaii. Oh my gosh. It's like \$2,300 and in some situations \$3,000 just to travel to Hawaii. It's ridiculous. So, whenever you get these early birds or opportunities to purchase these airline

tickets to save the bureau funding and that's what we're trying to do. I mean, they're trying to save funding here. Is there an opportunity for...and then Frank, I don't know if you can answer this, but and if you can't, Mr. Chiu to answer my question, then maybe I can ask somebody else who's been there a little bit longer that in the event that there is a deal out to purchase any tickets how difficult it is to get them to vote on this and [clears throat] if there is, can it be done? In other words, can you call up as many board members you can to get them to vote on something and then later on ratify it when you come into a meeting? So, who would like to answer that? I know it's okay. Mr. Chair?

GVB Chairman George Chiu: I am told that is possible. Okay. I've not done that as a chair because I don't know if you know I am told the previous boards have done that to facilitate situations that are you know that immediate emergency situation. So, the board does have that ability to do that. I personally have not had to had that situation yet because we didn't need to do it. But I know that previous boards have enacted those. Okay. Exactly what you're saying. Okay. But if I may, I also would like to comment on the makeup of the board. There's four elected members, five appointed by the governor, two appointed by the legislature, and then one is voted on by all 11 members that's on the board, right? That requires industry experience, and it takes eight votes. I think that's another way to make sure that the four elected members from the membership can't exert any decision. It takes eight votes to pass anything which is a little bit different from other boards right because you have 12 people so you would think seven will make a quorum and seven will be able to pass any resolution, but at GVB it takes eight so that kinds of dilute the ability of the...it's the only agency where the majority is not seven out of 12 but eight out of 12 so it's actually more than a 50%.

Senator Telo Taitague: So, Mr. Chiu, if you look at the history, you'll find that those four members have always been the same people. Usually, the same people have been sitting. You're never going to see a small businessperson be elected as a member, a small business owner. It's always what we call the four horsemen on the island, the biggest companies who [clears throat] get those seats on the board, who make decisions, who brings perspective to the board. When the opportunity for small businesses, the guy who has a business on the beach for jet skiing, he's never going to have an opportunity to sit on GVB board. Or the small business who owns a mom and pop, you know, tourist shop. They're never going to have the opportunity to sit on the board. So yeah, if you look at the makeup of those four individuals that's been appointed, they were appointed by proxying and those proxy like one person coming in with over 200 votes. We've seen it done. So, my point is whether it's eight people to vote on who the 11th member is going to be. Yeah. Well, it's usually been controlled for a long, long time. And we've been finding out, and I mentioned it before, that some of the

funding from GVB has been sent to enhance...have been spent to enhance certain board members businesses. So, you know, it I think we're all here for one reason, Mr. Chair, and I think I'll end it like that. Thank you for the opportunity to extend my time. Unusual. Usually, it's cut down, but I appreciate that extra time. I think we're all here for one purpose. One, we need to save some funding. We need to be able to be transparent and we need to leave GVB as a policy board. I mean the board members as a policy board the situation that it's set up and we need the board members of GVB to be more active with regarding information you saying that you have no you have every confidence in GVB you haven't seen any misuse or abuse or anything like that so that's good to hear but continue Mr. Chiu, continue to ask those questions. Continue to look at the travel logs. So, other than that, I appreciate you sitting there on the board and doing your due diligence, but I just hope that you get more involved in what GVB is all about and how it's run rather than, you know, wanting more power. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman Duenas: *Si yu'os ma'ase* Senator Taitague. Author of the bill and chairman of tourism, Senator Lujan you're recognized.

Senator Jesse Lujan: Thank you very much Mr. Chair and thank you very much Chairman Chiu and Vice President Arriola. Thank you very much and congratulations on your appointment and selection for vice presidency of the Guam Visitors Bureau. And yes, we are all here as a result of actually constant conversations and our attendance at board meetings and communication with not just management, but board members and you know these times of tough economic times and challenges in tourism. You know I'm oversight chair not just for tourism but also transportation...all of transportation, utilities and all that. We want to bring all these agencies to be in compliance to be in almost same structure as well. And this is the only agency outside of all the other agencies we have where the board does not determine travel. And so, we wanted...this is not because of looking at mismanagement or things of that nature just to bring all the boards in compliance with all the other boards that are autonomous at this point, at least in in my oversight. You know in talking about if board has the authority to approve travel at this point. Yes, they do. But we have got to remember that law trumps board approvals or board decisions. And that is the current law at this point is that that travel is approved by the general manager. And that was struck out by previous legislature. All we're doing at this point again is bring it into compliance. And as other members had talked about in regards whether the board is an advisory board or a policy board, this is the beginning of what we are doing in regard to the structure of the board. And this again, as I said, is the start of a much broader conversation in regard to and thank you, Senator (Taitague) oh, she left already. The structure, the membership and this is again a broader conversation and much more in-depth conversation in the makeup of the board and

that will require a lot more conversations and meetings regarding that. We are going to be looking at again the structure and governance of the board as well and this. It's just the beginning of that process and this is not just what this board asked for but the previous board had asked for and now we're moving in this direction in regard to that and thank you for agreeing. I know you sit on both sides of this situation here. I know you that in previous boards and also in the private sector and you sit in high management but there's always somebody above you as well that has the authority over what you do that you have to get approval from as well. So, you know that situation, and likewise, you know these tough economic times people want results from what we give them from the public funds right? And so that's what we're doing at this point. And it was just that we want complete transparency. Not that there not that there isn't, but we want to make sure that it's structurally in place that there's, we talked about of course a trip at this point, right? And I know you read the President Lee's testimony here, but also just for information that we received the reports from GVB as well, right? And likewise, we saw that because in the testimony you said there's some time-sensitive stuff where travel is necessary and you know if you go to the board, it might be too late because you might have to pay premium price. Okay. Well, there are some Guam law provides that only economy tickets should be purchased with public funds and reviewing the reports that includes premium economy seats at this point. So even with the approval of just the manager himself, we're buying econ, uh premium economy seats.

GVB VP Frank Arriola: Yes, Senator. I believe there's also with these conventions and these meetings that they have, they normally offer an early bird sign-up fee. Whereas if it's 200 for the early and then maybe 500 if you sign up right before. So, I think that that's where that comment came from, sir.

Senator Jesse Lujan: Okay. And likewise in speaking to a few former presidents or general managers at the time, the presidency title changed later on...in talking to a few...one of them actually sitting right over there, Karl Pangelinan. And I asked the question, has the board ever interfered or hindered a necessary travel? And that question was, at least in his tenure, it never happened. *((Frank Arriola interjects) To my knowledge, no.)* Yeah, it never happened. But likewise, right, now the board meets once a month and maybe that's something where the board, you know, if there is a necessity or something and maybe the board needs to look at maybe twice a month? Because the board used to meet twice a month. Maybe that's something that the board themselves can determine that need. But in previous times the board had never hindered the necessity to travel. And as you said there are there are committees within the board that take care of the different markets that you guys have right and they're in charge of those different markets and they bring it to the board. Yeah. And I think at this point Mr. Arriola is that we just want everybody to comply and there's true

transparency. Not again there's not saying that...this is not anti-travel. This is just purely you know, good governance basically, governance and transparency in the people's money. Again, not saying that there's misuse, but we just want to make sure, that there's you know accountability in all facets because I tell you know what I hate is when we ask Mr. Chiu a question and he says, "I don't know anything about it." [laughter] I don't know anything about it. We weren't told until later on. Right. Well, we you know, those are the things that we need to hold people accountable with that, right? So, we want to make sure everybody is on the same page. When the board chair or board members don't know what's happening, we have to have as the manager, everybody in in that agency should be on the same page. I'm glad at this point as well. I know President Lee and the airport and I think I think GEDA is on this trip to Taiwan as well, right? *((Frank Arriola interjects) Yes, sir.)* Because I tell you and I'm glad that I think there was a representative of GVB that was the last GIAA meeting because that's one of the things I required. I said, "Hey, please, when the airport has their meeting and GVB has their meeting, you need to have representatives that can speak on behalf of those agencies and those different agencies because there are a lot of crossovers." A lot of crossovers. And remember this this last time in regard to the airline incentives, it cost us thousands of dollars because there was misrepresentation. Yes, there was misrepresentation or a misspeak. And now I don't know who it was. I don't know which agency misspoke, but it cost us thousands of tens of thousands of dollars to make good on that because it was a misspeak or a misunderstanding. And that's we want to make sure that that doesn't happen again. And it it's looking like we're going down that road of being, you know, very cautious about what we say and how we present these things.

GVB VP Frank Arriola: Senator, if I may, we have 100% confidence in the leadership of our chairman and the board of directors, and we intend on being compliant with all the government of Guam laws and board policy. So, we're on board with all of this.

Senator Jesse Lujan: Yeah. And again, this is not about control or who has the power and things like that. This is about accountability, okay? And everybody getting on the same page. Getting on the same page. Like I said, you know, when we have other board chairs that come in here, they lead the meetings. They're the bosses. The board chair is the boss basically, right? They're the ones that will know what's happening. In this instance, when we have the board chair here, we ask him a question. He doesn't know anything about it.

GVB VP Frank Arriola: Yes sir. So, we need to improve communication with our Chairman of the Board.

Senator Jesse Lujan: Not just communication, but how that information is being disseminated...and again, approvals okay because then who do we hold accountable to that? We want to try to get down to is we're trying to fix things and make things better. We're not looking at saying, "hey you did this therefore you're out." We say we're looking where the problem is here. Where can we fix it to get it better. That's what we're trying to do with oversights and things of that nature. Okay. You know, the example that President Biscoe-Lee gave in regard to something for example GVB were to receive notice today that representatives of the Guam or the US Department of Homeland Security and Philippine government wish to meet in Manila on Thursday to discuss the expansion of Philippine visa waiver program for Guam. It's not a good example because GVB will get involved later on. Right now, we're actively communicating with Homeland Security, the governor's office, Lieutenant Governor's office, and this visa waiver. Now, when GVB will come in, that's later on when we're looking at getting approvals already and how this will work out. How this will work out. We're working with Philippine Airlines at this point. Philippine Airlines is looking to possibly add a component to their ticketing in regard to maybe a bond situation. The GVB doesn't come in until later on in the initial conversations to get approvals. You know, we have to get past the overstay situations and all that. GVB doesn't get involved. GVB will have plenty of time to be able to get board approval to be able to get that. They're not the first ones, or the first line of communications in this visa waiver program. So, it's a bad example, but I understand the necessity for urgency and like I said, previous presidents or general managers have not been hindered by board approvals.

GVB VP Frank Arriola: Yeah, we just asked for operational flexibility and our chairman's been 100% supportive of our operation.

Senator Jesse Lujan: So, I mean, again, you support his testimony. You support the transparency and the efforts in again what we're trying to do here. This is not an anti...you know, Frank, you can't travel. It's not it. At some point, you're going to need to travel and you must travel for a certain whatever it is that needs to be done. And there are times that you know things will pop up and oh they just came about. But the board has a discretion to be able to give that flexibility to management when things come up but they need to be informed as well. So that's getting everybody on the same page. You know this is not pitting management versus the board. That's not the intention here. Is everybody getting on the same page? Because we need to put this structure together. We need to see tourism...I mean we're greatly challenged and it's all of our minds that need to come together and our thoughts and ideas to come together to be able to solve this and likewise, all you know all the decisions at GVB need to come together as one cohesive body to be able to get through this. So, you know, that's where we're at, Frank, and I want everybody to know and Chairman

Chiu, that that's where we're at with this situation here is this is the start of us, looking at the structure of the board of GVB has outlived itself from its enabling legislation? It might have. It might have, and that's why we have to holistically look at it and discuss this and make the modifications where they needed to adhere to the times.

GVB VP Frank Arriola: Yes. And we'll follow up with a recap, provide corrective action plan for all of the concerns with the senators provided to our chairman and our oversight. So, we'll work on that.

Senator Jesse Lujan: Thank you. Let me ask you this. Do you agree then in the increased board oversight over travel? That is one concrete step towards restoring confidence among stakeholders and general public especially in light of the reports that have come out. You agree with that?

GVB VP Frank Arriola: Senator, could you please repeat that? **(Sen Lujan repeats question)**. We have 100% confidence in our chairman and the board of directors, and we will be compliant with any rules or laws that are best.

Senator Jesse Lujan: Okay. Thank you very much. I think that's it, Mr. Chair.

Chairman Duenas: Yeah. Does that conclude also your closing?

Senator Jesse Lujan: Yeah, actually yeah. Let me...I thought you had some questions. *(Chairman Duenas interjects: I asked them at the outset.)* Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, colleagues, we'll close on this point. Everyone in this room wants tourism to recover. Okay. We want butts in the seats definitely. Okay. And heads in beds. And we also want routes sustained and expanded. We want confidence restored among hotel partners, small businesses and workers who depend on visitor arrivals. We want Guam to compete again, not just a hope. Okay. Bill #279-38 is a practical accountability tool to help us get there. It strengthens governance, supports transparency, and ensures that travel decisions are tied to strategy and results and not assumptions. I want to thank, of course the chairman of the committee of finance and government operations, Senator Chris Duenas. Thank you very much. Who also is the vice chair for our agencies as well for tourism, for hearing this bill and I appreciate him as co-sponsor and partnering in pursuing reforms that strengthen public trust and improve outcomes for Guam. I respectfully ask again colleagues for your support and I look forward to working with all stakeholders to move this measure forward and pass it during our March session. With that being said, I thank you. Congratulations again on your selection and you know you've been there a few days and you're already before the

legislature. You're welcome. And more to come. Yeah. And thank you Mr. Thank you again for chairman Chiu for being here as well and for your leadership. I look forward to again our continuous dialogue and whatever else maybe our round table in the structure of the board. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman Duenas: *Si yu'os ma'ase* Senator Lujan. You know, I just want to make a few comments as we close. Observations. I see nothing but collegiality here. I know that the staff consistently are pushing forward tourism here and there was a mention that you're on the hot seat. You know, we're all on the hot seat. The fact is that, you know, we here in the legislature, you constantly see us going back and forth on how we make Guam better and how do we improve on the issues. We're getting signals now on the military buildup that things are winding down and leveling off. It's all our job to make sure that our economy stays stable. One of the constant refrains has been bringing tourism back, leveling our economy, and then trade missions that are currently going on and other things, building out our economy. That's the hot seat we're all on. And so, we just want to continue to say we're here to work with you to try to make things move forward. And that's the spirit which we bring these proposals forward. Chairman, you mentioned this is going back to whatever precipitates back and forth. The truth is what I see here and what I hope to see going forward is the same collegiality and the ability to work together under that structure. I don't think that's going to change from what I've seen and heard today. But once again, you know, we all have we all have a great investment in what we're discussing here and tourism's just been a mainstay for Guam for decades and it's something that we're all grappling with and trying to find solutions to. So hopefully this bill is not looked at as trying to be divisive but trying to continue to enhance operational capabilities at GVB to do the good work that you all do. So, with that, this will conclude today's public hearing on bill number 279-38 COR. The committee will continue to accept written testimony on the bill within seven calendar days of today, which may be addressed to Senator Christopher M. Duane as chairman of the committee and mailed to 163 West Chalan Santo Papa Guam 96910. You may also email your testimonies to senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov. This public hearing is now adjourned and the time is 11:32. *Si yu'os ma'ase* we're adjourned. Thank you.

III. FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee finds that Bill No. 279-38 (COR) seeks to amend Section 1 of Part I, Chapter XIII of Public Law 38-60 to restore the Guam Visitors Bureau (GVB) Board of Directors' authority to approve off-island travel funded by the Tourist Attraction Fund. The bill removes language in the FY 2026 budget law that vested travel authorization solely in GVB management.



COMMITTEE REPORT DIGEST – BILL #279-38 (COR)

[Public Hearing - Senator Christopher M. Duenas - March 4, 2026 10am](#)

Testimony from GVB Board Chairman George Chiu emphasized that the bill does not create new authority but returns travel approval to the board, consistent with prior practice and with governance norms across other public boards. Chairman Chiu stated, “You’re just taking that out and transferring the travel authority back to the board... it just makes a lot of sense.”

The Committee further finds that board members have expressed a desire for greater oversight of travel expenditures to ensure alignment with strategic priorities, transparency, and public accountability. Senator Jesse Lujan, the bill’s author, testified that board members “want more control and specifically more control over travel,” noting that recent concerns regarding travel spending have underscored the need for real-time oversight.

The Committee also notes that GVB management, through testimony delivered by Vice President Frank Arriola, acknowledged the importance of accountability and expressed willingness to work with the board on implementing appropriate processes while maintaining operational agility.

Restoring travel authorization authority to the GVB Board of Directors strengthens oversight, aligns GVB governance with standard board-management structures, and reinforces public confidence in the stewardship of Tourist Attraction Fund resources. The Committee recommends Bill No. 279-38 (COR) - Jesse A. Lujan, Christopher M. Duenas - AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 1 OF PART 1, CHAPTER XIII, PUBLIC LAW 38-60, RELATIVE TO TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS FOR THE GUAM VISITORS' BUREAU with the recommendation TO REPORT OUT ONLY.

I MINA'TRENTAI OCHO NA LIHESLATURAN GUÁHAN
2026 (SECOND) Regular Session

Bill No. 279-38 (COR)

Introduced by:

Jesse Anderson Lujan
Christopher M. Dueñas



AN ACT TO *AMEND* SECTION 1 OF PART 1, CHAPTER XIII, PUBLIC LAW 38-60, RELATIVE TO TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS FOR THE GUAM VISITORS' BUREAU.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF GUAM:

Section 1. Section 1 of Part I, Chapter XIII, Public Law 38-60, is hereby *amended* to read as follows:

“CHAPTER XIII

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

PART I – SPENDING CONTROLS ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

Section 1. Government-Funded Travel Prohibited. Funds appropriated by this Act shall not be expended for off-island travel or per diem expenses by government employees and officials, except for:

- (a) travel that is federally-funded;
- (b) travel that is specifically required to administer or secure federal grants;
- (c) travel to promote tourism on Guam; provided, that such travel is paid for by the Tourist Attraction Fund and is restricted to the GVB General Manager or his/her designee, appropriate GVB staff, board members, cultural performers, and village leaders as approved by the ~~General Manager~~ GVB Board of Directors;

1 (d) travel by law enforcement personnel conducting an official
2 investigation and law enforcement personnel providing escort services for criminal
3 suspects, detainees, and convicted felons being returned to Guam for judicial
4 proceedings or being transferred to off-island correctional facilities;

5 (e) travel by medical personnel providing escort services for patients
6 requiring off-island medical treatment and other escorts as specifically authorized
7 by the Department of Public Health and Social Services pursuant to Guam law;

8 (f) travel necessary for the enforcement of court orders;

9 (g) travel under the Residential Treatment Fund;

10 (h) travel required for witnesses testifying on behalf of, and government
11 attorneys representing the government or the people of Guam in a criminal or civil
12 case;

13 (i) travel to attend conferences and official meetings with national and
14 regional government officials or national and regional organizations of which the
15 entity is an official member where attendance is necessary to advancing Guam's
16 interests during Fiscal Year 2026 and as approved by a governing board or Director;

17 (j) Executive Security functions under the Guam Police Department for
18 the purpose of providing Executive Security to *I Maga'hågan Guåhan* and *I*
19 *Sigundo Maga'låhen Guåhan* when traveling off-island to represent the people of
20 Guam at meetings and functions determined critical to the welfare of Guam;

21 (k) travel to testify on issues related to Guam's political status; or

22 (l) travel to testify at the invitation of the U.S. Congress on legislation
23 that is supported by the Guam Legislature as indicated by a legislative resolution.”



COMMITTEE ON RULES

Vice Speaker V. Anthony Ada, Chairperson
I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan
38th Guam Legislature

February 27, 2026

To: **Rennae V. C. Meno**
Clerk of the Legislature

From: **Vice Speaker V. Anthony Ada** 
Chairperson, Committee on Rules

Subject: **Fiscal Note Waiver for Bill No. 279-38 (COR)**

Håfa Adai!

Find the attached, Fiscal Note Waiver for the following bill:

Bill No. 279-38 (COR).

I also request that the same be sent to the respective Chairperson of the Standing Committee, to which this bill has been referred. Kindly copy the same to Management Information Services (MIS) for posting on our website.





BUREAU OF BUDGET & MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Post Office Box 2950, Hagåtña Guam 96932



LOURDES A. LEON GUERRERO
GOVERNOR

LESTER L. CARLSON, JR.
DIRECTOR

JOSHUA F. TENORIO
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

FEB 27 2026

Vice Speaker, V. Anthony Ada
Chairperson, Committee on Rules
I Mina'trentai Ocho na Liheslaturan Guåhan
38th Guam Legislature
Guam Congress Building
163 Chalan Santo Papa
Hagåtña, Guam 96910

Hafa Adai! Vice Speaker Ada:

The Bureau requests that Bill No. 279-38 (COR) be granted a waiver pursuant to Public Law 12-229 as amended for the following reason(s):

Bill No. 279-28 (COR) is an act to amend Section 1 of Part 1, Chapter XIII, Public Law 38-60, relative to the authorization of travel for the Guam Visitors' Bureau (GVB) to be approved by the GVB Board of Directors and not the GVB General Manager.

The Bureau has determined that the Bill is administrative in nature and poses no fiscal impact upon any funds of the Government of Guam.

Senseramenta,


LESTER L. CARLSON, JR.