

Re: Messages & Communications Doc. No. 38GL-26-2759 through 2768.

From Guam Legislature Clerks <clerks@guamlegislature.gov>
Date Fri 8/21/2026 1:42 PM
To 38th Committee On Rules <committeeonrules@guamlegislature.gov>

Håfa Adai,

Received, and thank you.



Elijah Untalan
Clerks Office

I Mina'trentai Ocho na Liheslaturan Guåhan

Guam Congress Building, 163 Chalan Santo Papa, Hagåtña, Guam 96910

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Sent: Friday, August 21, 2026 12:25 PM
To: Guam Legislature Clerks <clerks@guamlegislature.gov>
Cc: Frank Blas Jr. <speakerblas@guamlegislature.gov>
Subject: Messages & Communications Doc. No. 38GL-26-2759 through 2768.

Håfa Adai Clerks Office,

Please see attached, **Messages & Communications Doc. No. 38GL-26-2759 through 2768** for processing:

✓	38GL-26-2759	Office of the Mayor - Municipality of Agaña Heights	FY2026 Typhoon Bavi Emergency and Recovery Expenditure Report*
✓	38GL-26-2760	Office of the Governor of Guam	On Behalf of Department of Public Works: Notice of Cancellation Request for Proposal (RFP) for New Simon Sanchez High School: FDDBLM Project No. 730-5-1059-L-YIG*
✓	38GL-26-2761	Office of the Mayor - Municipality of Tamuning-Tumon and Harmon	FY2026 Typhoon Bavi Emergency and Recovery Expenditure Report*
✓	38GL-26-2762	University of Guam	FY2025 Citizen-Centric Report*
✓	38GL-26-2763	Department of Public Health and Social Services	Prior Year Obligation to pay Government of Guam Retirement Fund in the total amount of \$26,198.89*
✓	38GL-26-2764	Department of Public Health and Social Services	Guam Board of Barbering and Cosmetology Board Meeting Packet for August 17, 2026*
✓	38GL-26-2765	Guam Power Authority	Notification of Temporary Assignment or Detail – Eric J. Sanchez, Personnel Specialist III, 8/28/26*
✓	38GL-26-2766	Office of Public Accountability - Guam	OPA Report No. 26-08 August 2026, Department of Agriculture Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund Performance Audit for October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2025*
✓	38GL-26-2767	Guam Economic Development Authority	FY2026 3rd Quarter Travel Report for period ending June 30, 2026*
✓	38GL-26-2768	Department of Education	Guam Education Board Regular Board Meeting Packet for August 18, 2026*

Kindly reply to this email.



Si Yu'os ma'åse',

Marie Crisostomo

Committee on Rules Assistant

COMMITTEE ON RULES

Vice Speaker V. Anthony Ada, Chairperson

I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan

38th Guam Legislature

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Messages and Communications 38GL-26-2766*

2 messages

Speaker Frank Blas Jr. <speakerblas@guamlegislature.gov>

Wed, Aug 19, 2026 at 11:34 AM

To: 38th Committee On Rules <committeeonrules@guamlegislature.gov>, Sabrina Salas Matanane <office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>

Håfa adai,

Please see attached M&C Doc. No. 38GL-26-2766

38GL-26-2766	Office of Public Accountability- Guam	OPA Report No. 26-08 August 2026, Department of Agriculture Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund Performance Audit for October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2025*
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*Si Yu'os Ma'àse'**Bernice Rivera*

Administrative Assistant

**Office of Speaker Frank F. Blas, Jr.**I Mina'trentai Ocho na Liheslaturan Guåhan 38th Guam Legislature

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From: **Office of Public Accountability - Guam** <admin@guamopa.com>

Date: Wed, Aug 19, 2026 at 9:16 AM

Subject: Transmittal: Department of Agriculture Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund Performance Audit

To: Chris Barnett <malafunkshun@guamlegislature.gov>, Senator Telo T. Taitague <senatortelot@gmail.com>, Shelly Vargas Calvo <officeofsenatorshellycalvo@guamlegislature.gov>, William Parkinson <senator.parkinson@guamlegislature.gov>, Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>, Senator Sabina F. Perez <office.senatorperez@guamlegislature.gov>, Vincent Borja <vince.borja@guamlegislature.gov>, Tina Muna Barnes <senator.munabarnes@guamlegislature.gov>, Jesse Lujan <senator.lujan@guamlegislature.gov>, Therese Terlaje <senatorterlajeguam@gmail.com>, Christopher Dueñas <senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>, Sabrina Salas Matanane <office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>, Joe S. San Agustin <senatorjoessanagustin@gmail.com>, V. Anthony Ada <vicespeakertonyada@guamlegislature.gov>, Office of Senator Frank Blas, Jr. <speakerblas@guamlegislature.gov>, Lt. Governor of Guam <joshua.tenorio@guam.gov>, Governor of Guam <governor@guam.gov>

Cc: Benjamin Cruz <bjcruz@guamopa.com>, Jerrick Hernandez <jhernandez@guamopa.com>, Selina Onedera-Salas <sonederasalas@guamopa.com>, Thomas Quichocho <tquichocho@guamopa.com>

Håfa adai:

The Office of Public Accountability has released Report No. 26-08, Department of Agriculture Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund Performance Audit. You may visit our website at www.opaguam.org to download the report.

*Si Yu'os ma'àse'***2 attachments** **opa 26-08 full report.pdf**
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1108K**38th Committee On Rules** <committeeonrules@guamlegislature.gov>

Wed, Aug 19, 2026 at 11:55 AM

To: "Speaker Frank Blas Jr." <speakerblas@guamlegislature.gov>

Håfa Adai,

Received, and thank you.



Si Yu'os ma'âse',

Marie Crisostomo

Committee on Rules Assistant

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Vice Speaker V. Anthony Ada, Chairperson

I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan

38th Guam Legislature

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Speaker Frank Blas Jr. <speakerblas@guamlegislature.gov>

Transmittal: Department of Agriculture Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund Performance Audit

2 messages

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Wed, Aug 19, 2026 at 9:15 AM

To: Chris Barnett <malafunkshun@guamlegislature.gov>, "Senator Telo T. Taitague" <senatortelot@gmail.com>, Shelly Vargas Calvo <officeofsenatorshellycalvo@guamlegislature.gov>, William Parkinson <senator.parkinson@guamlegislature.gov>, Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>, "Senator Sabina F. Perez" <office.senatorperez@guamlegislature.gov>, Vincent Borja <vince.borja@guamlegislature.gov>, Tina Muna Barnes <senator.munabarnes@guamlegislature.gov>, Jesse Lujan <senator.lujan@guamlegislature.gov>, Therese Terlaje <senatorterlajeguam@gmail.com>, Christopher Dueñas <senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>, Sabrina Salas Matanane <office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>, "Joe S. San Agustin" <senatorjoessanagustin@gmail.com>, "V. Anthony Ada" <vicespeakertonyada@guamlegislature.gov>, "Office of Senator Frank Blas, Jr." <speakerblas@guamlegislature.gov>, "Lt. Governor of Guam" <joshua.tenorio@guam.gov>, Governor of Guam <governor@guam.gov>

Cc: Benjamin Cruz <bjcruz@guamopa.com>, Jerrick Hernandez <jhernandez@guamopa.com>, Selina Onedera-Salas <sonederasalas@guamopa.com>, Thomas Quichocho <tquichocho@guamopa.com>

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Speaker Frank Blas Jr. <speakerblas@guamlegislature.gov>

Wed, Aug 19, 2026 at 10:42 AM

To: Office of Public Accountability - Guam <admin@guamopa.com>

Cc: Chris Barnett <malafunkshun@guamlegislature.gov>, "Senator Telo T. Taitague" <senatortelot@gmail.com>, Shelly Vargas Calvo <officeofsenatorshellycalvo@guamlegislature.gov>, William Parkinson <senator.parkinson@guamlegislature.gov>, Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>, "Senator Sabina F. Perez" <office.senatorperez@guamlegislature.gov>, Vincent Borja <vince.borja@guamlegislature.gov>, Tina Muna Barnes <senator.munabarnes@guamlegislature.gov>, Jesse Lujan <senator.lujan@guamlegislature.gov>, Therese Terlaje <senatorterlajeguam@gmail.com>, Christopher Dueñas <senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>, Sabrina Salas Matanane <office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>, "Joe S. San Agustin" <senatorjoessanagustin@gmail.com>, "V. Anthony Ada" <vicespeakertonyada@guamlegislature.gov>, "Lt. Governor of Guam" <joshua.tenorio@guam.gov>, Governor of Guam <governor@guam.gov>, Benjamin Cruz <bjcruz@guamopa.com>, Jerrick Hernandez <jhernandez@guamopa.com>, Selina Onedera-Salas <sonederasalas@guamopa.com>, Thomas Quichocho <tquichocho@guamopa.com>

Håfa Adai,

Confirming receipt of your email.

Si Yu'os Ma'åse'

Bernice Rivera

Administrative Assistant

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FRANK F. BLAS, JR.
August 19, 2026
Time: 10:42 AM
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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE GUAM INVASIVE SPECIES INSPECTION FEE FUND

PERFORMANCE AUDIT
October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2025

OPA Report No. 26-08
August 2026





**Department of Agriculture
Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund**

**Performance Audit
October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2025**

**OPA Report No. 26-08
August 2026**

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38GL-26-2766
Messages and Communications

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COMMITTEE ON RULES
August 19, 2026

11:34 a.m.
Marie Crisostomo



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	7
Background	7
Results of Audit	11
DOAg Has Used the Fund for Three of the Four Intended Purposes.....	11
Guam Invasive Species Management Plan Not Developed (Purpose 4)	13
Operational Issues Affect Division's Efficiency and Effectiveness to Meet Fund Mandates	14
<i>Active Council Needed to Strengthen Fund Oversight and Support Plan Development</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Revenue Projections and Budget Management Need Improvement</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Deficiencies in Invoice Processing, Records, and Accountability</i>	<i>17</i>
Weaknesses in Communications with Carriers and Consignees/Importers.....	17
<i>Recruitment and Staffing Challenges.....</i>	<i>17</i>
Reporting Requirements Not Met	18
Travel Expenditures Not Budgeted	18
Other Matters.....	19
<i>Commercially Funded Off-Island Travel, Potential Conflict of Interest.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Bill No. 334-38 (COR).....</i>	<i>20</i>
Conclusion and Recommendations	21
Management Response and OPA Reply	22
Appendix 1: Objective, Scope, and Methodology.....	23
Appendix 2: Applicable Laws, Rules, and Regulations.....	24
Appendix 3: Invasive Species Inventory	27
Appendix 4: 2017-2019 Interim Guam Invasive Species Management Plan	28
Appendix 5: Fee Invoice Processing.....	46
Appendix 6: Carrier Survey Responses	47
Appendix 7: Official Management Response	48
Appendix 8: Prior Audit Coverage	55
Appendix 9: DOAg Invoice to Carrier (Sample)	56
Appendix 10: Invoice from Carrier to Importer (Sample).....	57
Appendix 11: Status of Audit Recommendations	58



Executive Summary
Department of Agriculture
Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund
OPA Report No. 26-08, August 2026

Our audit of the Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund (Fund)¹ determined that the Department of Agriculture (DOAg) has used the Fund to meet three of its four intended purposes:

1. recruiting and hiring a Territorial Invasive Species Coordinator (Coordinator);
2. establishing and staffing a Biosecurity Division (Division) to inspect, quarantine, and eradicate invasive species in incoming freight; and
3. suppressing and eradicating invasive species.

DOAg and the Guam Invasive Species Council (Council) have not used the Fund to meet the fourth intended purpose, which is to develop the Guam Invasive Species Management Plan (Plan). Due to the absence of this Plan, the Division has operated without established standards or a structured system for written reports, formal meetings, and consistent communication. This has also limited the Division's ability to make legislative recommendations to improve invasive species management with stakeholders, policymakers, and the Council responsible for developing the Plan. Lastly, without this Plan, there is no centralized or standardized mechanism for reporting results or outcomes, preventing us from assessing whether the Fund is producing intended results of inspection, quarantine, and eradication of invasive species.

Our audit also identified several issues that have affected DOAg's ability to meet Fund mandates effectively and efficiently, including:

- An active Council is needed to strengthen Fund oversight and to support Plan development.
- Revenue projections and budget management need improvement.
- Invoice processing, recordkeeping, and accountability are deficient.
- Recruitment and staffing challenges persist.

These areas are critical for effective budget planning, Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee (Fee) management, Fund tracking, and administrative operations.

DOAg Has Used the Fund for Three of the Four Intended Purposes

We found that DOAg has used the Fund for three of the four intended purposes as follows: Recruitment of Territorial Invasive Species Coordinator (Intended Purpose No. 1) – The Coordinator position was established in January 2018 but was not filled until FY 2019. Since then, three individuals have held the role. The current Coordinator was recruited in June 2025.

¹ Fund revenues are generated from all Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fees collected from any person responsible for paying freight charges. The audited Fund revenues for FYs 2023, 2024, and 2025 were \$812,863, \$1,971,316, and \$1,726,095, respectively. (FY 2025 revenues were transcribed from the Special Revenue Funds Tracking Report as of September 30, 2025 due to the delayed release of the Government of Guam financial audit.)

Establishment of the Biosecurity Division (Intended Purpose No. 2) & Suppressing and Eradicating Invasive Species (Intended Purpose No. 3) – The Division was initially organized with the Plant Inspection Facility in FY 2016, funded by the General Fund, the Guam Plant Inspection and Permit Fund, and the Tourist Attraction Fund. The Division was partially funded by the Fund in FY 2018 and became exclusively funded by the Fund in FY 2022. The Division has implemented programs and activities for suppressing and eradicating invasive species through pest detection and surveillance, mitigation, eradication, rapid response, research, and outreach & education. To date, the Division has identified at least 50 invasive species, and ongoing work continues to mitigate and eradicate these species. The Division also processes at least 6,000 permits annually for sand and quarried products, plant products, eggs, and the destruction of confiscated agricultural commodities.

Guam Invasive Species Management Plan Not Developed (Intended Purpose No. 4)

DOAg and the Council have not used the Fund for the fourth purpose: to develop the Guam Invasive Species Management Plan (Plan). The development and implementation of the Plan is one of the main duties of the Council; however, the Division—as the Fund administrator—coordinates with the Council in developing the Plan. An Interim Plan was developed, but we found it does not meet statutory requirements, which Management also agreed with.

We urgently recommended to Management that the Plan needs to be developed to include all statutory requirements. In addition, it is essential that Management ensure that the development occurs through the public process and in consultation with all Council members to facilitate legislative review and approval. To address our recommendation, Management has agreed to collaborate with the Council to expedite Plan development, including ongoing consultation with the recently formed Guam Invasive Species Advisory Council (Advisory Council). The Advisory Council is working on completing an “Invasive Species Priority Matrix,” which is intended to be presented to the Council for adoption and inclusion in the Plan. Management has also agreed to develop and provide a timeline for the completion of the Plan.

Operational Issues Affect Division’s Efficiency and Effectiveness to Meet Fund Mandates

Our audit identified several issues that have affected DOAg’s ability to meet Fund mandates effectively and efficiently.

An Active Council is Needed to Strengthen Fund Oversight and Support Plan Development

Our review identified several periods of non-compliance between 2012 and 2021, and again from 2021 to 2024. The Council’s failure to meet as mandated is the primary reason it has not fulfilled its responsibilities. Specifically, the absence of a Plan, the lack of fines and penalties for invasive species-related crimes, and the failure to make recommendations for program and policy management directly limit the Division’s operational capacity.

Revenue Projections and Budget Management Need Improvement

Our analysis indicates that Fund revenues have exceeded annual legislative appropriations during the audit period by \$2.5M. Except for FY 2018 and 2021, appropriations have typically been lower than Fund revenues, with the largest differences in FY 2024 and 2025. When the Fund was

created in 2011, the Guam Legislature projected annual revenues of at least \$2M, based on increasing cargo traffic to Guam. In 2021, after determining that collections were not meeting expectations, the Guam Legislature revised the Fee to apply flat rates on all containers and passenger motor vehicles and extended the assessment to previously exempt materials and goods.

Management determined that the Division requires at least \$2M in annual appropriations to meet its intended purpose but typically adheres to the governor's established budget ceiling when preparing the Division's and Fund's budgets. Prior year Budget Acts show that annual appropriations were aligned with the established budget ceilings, resulting in Management's use of unexpended Fund carryovers from prior years.

Deficiencies in Invoice Processing, Recordkeeping, and Accountability

We identified deficiencies in the Division's procedures for Fee invoice processing, recordkeeping, and accountability. The only documented Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), dated May 2018, is not currently in use and is pending updates to reflect current practices, the current Fee schedule, and the use of the monthly Vessel Cargo Report. Some invoices were issued at least three months after the relevant shipment dates. We also encountered a scope limitation, as invoices and records prior to FY 2024 could not be located. The absence of records from prior years continues to pose a risk of noncompliance in Fee collections. There is no formal procedure for recordkeeping or for retaining digital or physical copies of invoices.

Recruitment and Staffing Challenges

Appropriation shortfalls have limited the Division's ability to recruit scientific, technical, and professional staff. This has led to significant leadership changes, affecting Fund operations and management. Current employees have assumed multiple roles, and Management has transferred staff to other DOAg Divisions funded from other sources. The Division currently lacks an experienced Administrative Officer to manage funds, prepare budgets, and assist DOAg's Administrative Services Officer (ASO). Additionally, the ASO, who oversaw the department's budget, funds management, and procurement, was frequently on extended leave and has recently retired. The absence of the ASO contributed to operational deficiencies, including DOAg's failure to meet reporting requirements.

Other Matters

Commercially Funded Off-Island Travel, Potential Conflict of Interest

On two separate occasions, a private construction company has paid 100% of all (off-island) travel accommodations for the Entomologist. The company requested the Entomologist "to assist the company's environmental manager and other senior managers to inspect, evaluate, and collect quarry material and samples that are subject to inspection upon arrival to Guam." More recently, the company also requested the Coordinator accompany the Entomologist for the same purpose. During our discussion with the Director, we expressed concerns about the high risk of a potential conflict of interest or appearance of bribery. The Director and Management have agreed to refrain from accepting privately funded travel arrangements from any commercial entity until the matter is addressed with legal counsel.

Bill No. 334-38 (COR)

During the course of our audit, legislation was introduced to repeal and reenact the Guam Administrative Rules and Regulations, relative to updating the Invasive Species Inspection Fees, collection, and administrative provisions. This Bill was publicly heard on June 29, 2026, by the Guam Legislature and is now pending further legislative action.

Conclusion and Recommendations

While DOAg has used the Fund for three of the four intended purposes, Management and the Council have still failed to use the Fund to meet the fourth purpose of developing and implementing a Guam Invasive Species Management Plan. This Plan is critical to provide the Division with specific measures of success for their efforts concerning invasive species. The lack of a Plan increases Guam's risk of vulnerability to harmful invasive species that have the potential to devastate the environment, agriculture, and the livelihood of the people of Guam. Consequently, due to the absence of the Plan, we cannot determine whether the programs or activities funded by the Fund are producing its intended results of inspection, quarantine, and eradication of invasive species.

Our audit also found several issues that have impacted DOAg's ability to effectively and efficiently meet Fund mandates, including the following:

- An active Council is needed to strengthen Fund oversight and to support Plan development.
- Revenue projections and budget management need improvement.
- Invoice processing, recordkeeping, and accountability are deficient.
- Recruitment and staffing challenges persist.

To address these issues, we recommended that Management promote regular and active participation by all Council members to expedite Plan development and to improve Fund oversight; adopt a formal SOP for invoice processing and to establish regular communication with Carriers and Importers; work with the Guam Legislature and BBMR to revisit its Fund forecasting assumptions and methods to more accurately reflect actual revenues; strengthen the control environment; and immediately recruit all necessary staff to improve Division operations and management.


Benjamin J.F. Cruz
Public Auditor



Introduction

The Office of Public Accountability (OPA) conducted a performance audit of the Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund (Fund) that is administered by the Department of Agriculture (DOAg). This audit was conducted as part of OPA's Calendar Year 2025 Annual Audit Work Plan, following the Public Auditor's concerns regarding the Fund performance and intent. This is the first performance audit conducted on the Fund.

The objectives of this audit were to determine whether the Fund is:

1. Used effectively and efficiently in accordance with the enabling legislation and
2. Producing the intended results of inspection, quarantine, and eradication of invasive species.

The audit scope covered the period from Fiscal Years (FY) 2023 to 2025 or October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2025, focusing on the administration of the Fund and the operations of the Biosecurity Division of the DOAg. The objectives, scope, and methodology for this audit are detailed in [Appendix 1](#).

Background

Public Law (PL) 31-43 was enacted in May 2011 to "place the value of our precious resources as a top priority to combat harmful invasive species that have the potential to devastate the environment, agriculture, and livelihood of our people." The law established the Guam Invasive Species Council, the Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee, the Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund, and the DOAg Biosecurity Division.

The **Guam Invasive Species Council (Council)** was "established for the special purposes of protecting Guam from alien species that threaten our economy, culture, ecosystem, and human health; and providing policy direction, coordination, and planning among government of Guam departments and federal agencies to prevent the introduction of invasive species and the monitoring, control and eradication of invasive species throughout the island of Guam." The Council is comprised of the "organizational heads, or their designees, from the Guam Department of Agriculture (GDOA), the Customs and Quarantine Agency (CQA), the A.B. Won Pat International Airport Authority, Guam; the Department of Parks and Recreation; the Mayors Council of Guam; and the Northern and Southern Soil and Water Conservation Districts," (Ref: PL 31-43:1).

The **Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee (Fee)** was established "for the inspection, quarantine, and eradication of invasive species contained in any freight, including but not limited to, marine commercial container shipment, air freight, or any other means of transporting freight, foreign or domestic, that is brought into Guam. The Fee shall be paid by the person responsible for paying the freight charges to the transportation company, who shall collect the fee and forward the payment" to DOAg, and "all fees collected shall be deposited in the Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund," (Ref: PL 31-43:3).

The Fee was amended by PL 36-87 to update the Fee by charging flat rates on all containers and passenger motor vehicles entering Guam and to additionally assess all materials and goods that may be carriers of invasive species. DOAg assesses the Fee based on a monthly Vessel Cargo Report (transmitted by PAG) containing information, such as TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units), revenue tons of break bulk, and weight of non-containerized sand, gravel, or rock, transmitted to DOAg from PAG.

The Fee is assessed and collected as described below (Ref: PL 36-87):

1. *Seventy-five cents (\$0.75) on each one thousand (1,000) pounds of bulk sand, quarried product, or cement bulk freight or part thereof;*
2. *Twenty-six dollars (\$26.00) per each twenty-foot equivalent unit (TEU); and*
3. *Two dollars (\$2.00) on each revenue ton, as defined by the PAG tariff, of break bulk or cargo that is not in a container.*
4. *Coal bulk freight and liquid bulk freight are exempt from the Fee.*

The **Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund (Fund)** was created “separate and apart from other funds... all expenditures of the Fund shall be made exclusively by appropriation of the Guam Legislature.” The fees collected (and deposited to the Fund) “shall be expended to:

- (1) Recruit and hire a Territorial Invasive Species Coordinator;
- (2) Establish and provide staffing for a Biosecurity Division within the Department of Agriculture to provide inspection, quarantine and eradication of invasive species contained in any freight brought to Guam;
- (3) Suppress and eradicate invasive species present in Guam; and
- (4) Develop the Guam Invasive Species Management Plan and its updates,” (Ref: PL 31-43:4).

DOAg was authorized to create a **Biosecurity Division (Division)** “to provide for the inspection, quarantine, and eradication of invasive species contained in any freight, including, but not limited to, marine commercial container shipments in efforts to address invasive species coming to, and already present in, Guam.” The Division leads GovGuam’s efforts towards “prevention, control, monitoring, rapid response, eradication, enforcement and education of invasive species in Guam,” (Ref: PL 31-43:5).

The Division is comprised of the *Invasive Species Section*, the *Permitting Section*, and the *Inspection and Enforcement Section*.

The *Invasive Species Section* monitors the introduction of new invasive species, including destructive plant or animal pests or diseases; protects, manages, and conserves natural resources from the effects of invasive alien species; implements appropriate response actions when new species are discovered; conducts research to improve the efficacy of pest response activities; and assist farmers, other stakeholders, and the public in minimizing destructive effects.

The *Administrative/Permitting Section* is responsible for issuing import and export permits and preparing documents related to the operation of a federally certified plant inspection station, processing fee collections, and collecting relevant data related to agricultural product entry. Permits include *import permits for sand and quarried products*, *Certificates of Origin*, *Certificate of Quality and Condition*, Guam and Federal *Phytosanitary Certificates*, *import*

permits for eggs (fresh, balut & salted), destruction of confiscated agricultural commodities, and the Facility Use Fee for air/sea shipping containers or reconditioned shipments.

The *Inspection and Enforcement Section* employs Commodity Inspectors who conduct inspections for the issuance of export certificates; assist in the import and export of agricultural products; enforce federal and Guam laws and regulations to ensure public and environmental safety of imported agricultural products; monitor products offered for sale to ensure safety and legality; and provide oversight of inspection procedures to ensure laws are properly enforced.

Commodity Inspectors play a crucial role in any commodities coming in past the border after CQA inspections. The officers inspect commodities (i.e. rice, fruits, or animal feed) for pests, plant diseases, or banned chemicals at convenience stores, mom-and-pop stores, and small- and large-scale commercial stores. Inspectors also ensure that Guam's import regulations are enforced when exporting commodities or shipping to the island. Inspectors also assist the *Administrative/Permitting Section* by generating permits for importers and exports on Guam when needed.

The **Territorial Invasive Species Coordinator (Coordinator)** "shall serve as the Council Secretary to carry out the necessary communications and coordination directed by the Council," (Ref: PL 31-43:4(b)).

According to the Department of Administration Classification Specifications, the Coordinator is additionally responsible for:

- a) informing the Council of the status of the Fund and recommending budget and staffing requirements to the Council for management and research projects related to invasive species programs,
- b) developing specific programs related to invasive species management on Guam, and
- c) independently performing professional duties, such as planning, designing, implementing, monitoring, and coordinating assigned projects.

To **Suppress and Eradicate Invasive Species Present in Guam**, DOAg and CQA work together to combat and address any introduction of new plant pests or diseases coming in to Guam. CQA's Biosecurity Unit has jurisdiction over the border, managing inspections of incoming shipping vessels and aircraft bound for Guam. The Biosecurity Unit inspects incoming maritime cargo, air cargo shipments, and any means of conveyance to Guam for any new pest (insects, arachnids, animals, etc.) and plant diseases (plant pathogens, fungi, etc.) that are contained in or around any cargo. If any new plant pests or diseases are found, CQA refers those sample specimens to the respective identifiers to determine whether to treat, re-export, or order the destruction of cargo material. If pests or plant diseases are introduced inland, the Division has jurisdiction to attempt to eradicate or control (quarantine) any pest or disease beyond the border.

The **Guam Invasive Species Management Plan (Plan)** "shall be prepared and issued by the Council, detailing and recommending performance-oriented goals and objectives as well as specific measures of success for the government of Guam's (GovGuam) efforts concerning

invasive species. The Plan shall identify the personnel, other resources, and additional levels of cooperation required to achieve the Plan's goals and objectives. Progress reports shall be submitted to the governor of Guam and to the Guam Legislature annually.

The Plan shall include a review of rapid response protocols, existing and prospective approaches and authorities for preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species in Guam, including those for identifying pathways by which invasive species are introduced and for minimizing the risk of introduction via those pathways and shall identify research needs and recommend measures to minimize the risk that introductions will occur. Such recommended measures shall provide for a science-based process to evaluate risks associated with the introduction and spread of invasive species and coordinate a systematic risk-based process to interdict, identify, and monitor pathways that may be involved in the introduction of invasive species.

The Plan shall be developed through a public process, in consultation with stakeholders, and is subject to legislative approval. The Council is mandated to assess the effectiveness of the Plan at least once every three years and to update the Plan biennially, evaluating and reporting on the success in achieving Plan goals and objectives," (Ref: PL 31-43:2, 5 GCA § 70107).

Refer to [Appendix 2](#) for pertinent summaries of each law, regulation, and policy.

Results of Audit

Our audit of the Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund (Fund) found that the Department of Agriculture (DOAg) has used the Fund to meet three of its four intended purposes:

1. recruiting and hiring a Territorial Invasive Species Coordinator (Coordinator);
2. establishing and staffing a Biosecurity Division (Division) to inspect, quarantine, and eradicate invasive species in incoming freight; and
3. suppressing and eradicating invasive species.

DOAg and the Council have not used the Fund to meet the fourth intended purpose, which is to develop the Guam Invasive Species Management Plan (Plan). Without this Plan, there is no centralized or standardized mechanism for reporting results or outcomes, preventing us from assessing whether the Fund is producing intended results of inspection, quarantine, and eradication of invasive species.

Our audit also identified several issues that have affected DOAg's ability to meet Fund mandates effectively and efficiently, including:

- An active Council is needed to strengthen Fund oversight and to support Plan development.
- Revenue projections and budget management need improvement.
- Invoice processing, recordkeeping, and accountability are deficient.
- Recruitment and staffing challenges persist.

We communicated these findings and recommendations to Management during the audit, and they are currently working to address them.

DOAg Has Used the Fund for Three of the Four Intended Purposes

Pursuant to Public Law (PL) 31-43, the fees collected and deposited to the Fund "shall be expended to: (1) recruit and hire a Territorial Invasive Species Coordinator, (2) establish and provide staffing for a Biosecurity Division within DOAg to provide inspection, quarantine, and eradication of invasive species contained in any freight brought to Guam; (3) suppress and eradicate invasive species, and (4) develop and update the Guam Invasive Species Management Plan and its updates."



Figure 1 & Report Cover Photo - Nest of tropical paper wasp or "boonie bees." (Courtesy of Christopher Rosario, Mar 2022)

We found that DOAg has used the Fund for three of the four intended purposes as follows:

Purpose 1 Recruitment of Territorial Invasive Species Coordinator

The Department of Administration (DOA) did not establish the Coordinator position until January 2018. Since then, three individuals have held the role. The longest-serving Coordinator was appointed in FY 2019 and resigned in FY 2023. A second Coordinator was recruited in FY 2024 but resigned four months later. The current Coordinator was recruited in June 2025. His responsibilities include generating invoices for Fee remittances by freight carriers, engaging with affiliate partners, and working with the newly created Guam Invasive Species Advisory Council.

Purpose 2 Establishment of the Biosecurity Division

The earliest budget request we located for the Division was for FY 2016. The Division was initially organized with the Plant Inspection Facility, funded by the General Fund, the Guam Plant Inspection and Permit Fund, and the Tourist Attraction Fund. The Division was partially funded by the Fund in FY 2018 and became exclusively funded by the Fund in FY 2022. The Division currently has nine (9) employees.

The Division also conducts identification services for the USDA, particularly for activities relating to Agricultural Quarantine Inspection & Smuggling Interdiction and Trade Compliance and for Postentry Quarantine. These services are pursuant to Memoranda of Understanding between DOAg and the USDA, effective for five years, beginning May 2024.

Purpose 3 Suppressing and Eradicating Invasive Species

The Division is responsible for suppressing and eradicating invasive species through Pest Detection and Surveillance, Mitigation, Eradication, Rapid Response, Research, and Outreach & Education. The Division has identified at least 50 invasive species and oversees mitigation and eradication programs that are federally-funded, to include:

- regional biosecurity training,
- the Detector Dog Program, tree injection, biocontrol, and breeding site removal at ports of entry for Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle management,
- detection surveys (host diseases and pests),
- ant eradication at ports of entry and drone treatment,
- USDA *Pack-a-Pest* Outreach,
- trapping and baiting methods for hornet mitigation, and
- replanting native plants at ports of entry.

See [Appendix 3](#) for the Division's current Invasive Species Inventory.

The Division also processes at least 6,000 permits annually for sand and quarried products, plant products, eggs, and the destruction of confiscated agricultural commodities. While the Division does not report performance metrics, intended results, or outcomes for locally funded programs, the Division provides required reports to federal granting agencies.

Guam Invasive Species Management Plan Not Developed (Purpose 4)

One of the main duties of the Council is to develop and implement the Plan; however, the Division—as the Fund administrator—coordinates with the Council in developing the Plan. The Division referred us to a *2017-2019 Interim Guam Invasive Species Management Plan* (Interim Plan), which we found does not meet the statutory requirements (Ref: 5 GCA § 70107), specifically:

- The Interim Plan does not include detailed recommended performance-oriented goals and objectives or specific measures of success for GovGuam efforts concerning invasive species. The Interim Plan's goals, strategies, and evaluation measures are vague and lack targeted, achievable performance metrics. Additionally, the strategies do not provide timelines for recruiting necessary personnel and do not identify key positions essential to combating invasive species.
- The Interim Plan does not recommend specific objectives and measures for carrying out each GovGuam agency's duties established by law and does not set forth steps to be taken by the Council to carry out duties assigned to it.
- The Interim Plan has not been updated since 2017 and lacks a strategy or timeline for advancing the Interim Plan to an official Plan as required by law.

See [Appendix 4](#) for excerpts of the Interim Plan (Sections I – VI).

According to Management and Council meeting Minutes, the Interim Plan was drafted through a contractual agreement between the Council and the University of Guam College of Natural and Applied Sciences (UOG CNAS), sponsored by the U.S. Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs. Management could not provide additional information about the contract terms.

Management was unable to explain the delay in developing the Plan and confirmed that the Council has not established an actionable timeline for the development, completion, or implementation of the Plan.

Due to the absence of a Plan, the Division has operated without established standards or a structured system for written reports, formal meetings, and consistent communication. This has also limited the Division's ability to make legislative recommendations to improve invasive species management with stakeholders, policymakers, and the Council responsible for developing the Plan. Lastly, without this Plan, there is no centralized or standardized mechanism for reporting results or outcomes, preventing us from assessing whether the Fund is producing intended results of inspection, quarantine, and eradication of invasive species.

We urgently recommended to management that the Plan needs to be developed to include all statutory requirements. In addition, it is essential that Management ensure that the development occurs through the public process and in consultation with all Council members to facilitate legislative review and approval.

To address our recommendation, Management has agreed to collaborate with the Council to expedite Plan development, including ongoing consultation with the recently formed Guam Invasive Species Advisory Council² (Advisory Council). The Advisory Council is working on completing an *Invasive Species Priority Matrix*, which is intended to be presented to the Council for adoption and inclusion in the Plan. Management has also agreed to develop and provide a timeline for the completion of the Plan.

Operational Issues Affect Division's Efficiency and Effectiveness to Meet Fund Mandates

While DOAg has used the Fund to meet three of the four intended purposes, we identified several operational issues that affect the Division's ability to meet these mandates effectively and efficiently. Our review of the Division's budget requests, staffing patterns, and discussions with Management indicate that oversight, revenue projections, invoice processing, and recruitment require improvement. These areas are critical for effective budget planning, Fee management, Fund tracking, and administrative operations.

Active Council Needed to Strengthen Fund Oversight and Support Plan Development

Management cannot confirm when the Council was first convened, but the Council is required to meet at least once per quarter. Our review identified several periods of non-compliance between 2012 and 2021 and again from 2021 to 2024. Management and meeting Minutes confirm that the Council has met more regularly since 2025.

Pursuant to 5 GCA § 70103, the Council is mandated to:

- “develop a Guam Invasive Species Management Plan (Plan);
- provide annual reports to the governor of Guam and to the Guam Legislature on the progress made in achieving Plan objectives;
- identify and record all invasive species present in Guam;
- identify all needed resources for the purpose of working on invasive species prevention, suppression, and eradication;
- advise the governor of Guam and the Guam Legislature on budgetary and other issues concerning invasive species;
- review the structure of fines and penalties to ensure maximum deterrence for invasive species-related crimes; or

² The Advisory Council was formed by the Coordinator and the Entomologist and is comprised of experts who provide technical and science-based information related to the prioritization of pests on Guam and neighboring islands.

- make appropriate recommendations for legislation to improve the management of invasive species programs and policies.”

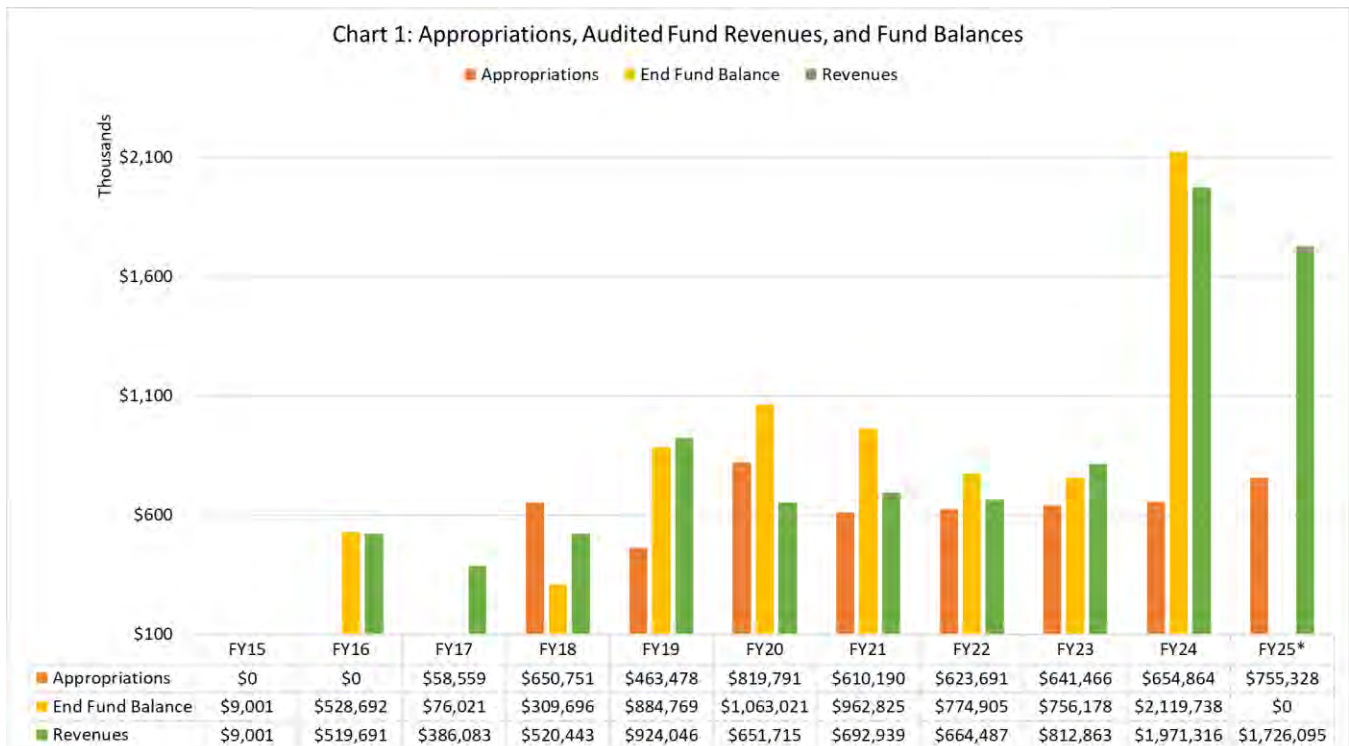
In addition to the delayed development of the Plan, Management confirmed that the Council and the Division have not reviewed the structure of fines and penalties to ensure effective deterrence for invasive species-related crimes. Management could not provide a reason for this deficiency. The lack of fines and penalties reduces anticipated revenue for mitigation, eradication, and containment efforts.

The Council’s failure to meet as mandated or to provide proper oversight has led to weaknesses in the Division’s ability to meet Fund mandates. Specifically, the absence of a Plan, the lack of fines and penalties, and the failure to make recommendations for program and policy management directly limit the Division’s operational capacity.

We recommended that Management continue to collaborate with each Council member to promote regular attendance and active participation. Management should also ensure the Council meets consistently and takes actions that directly improve the Division’s operations and management.

Revenue Projections and Budget Management Need Improvement

Our analysis indicates that Fund revenues have exceeded annual legislative appropriations during the audit period by \$2.5M. Chart 1 below compares annual appropriations, audited Fund revenues, and changes in budgetary fund balances. Except for FY 2018 and 2020, appropriations have typically been lower than Fund revenues, with the largest differences in FY 2024 and 2025.



*The FY 2025 Government-wide Financial Audit has not been completed as of the report date. The figures for FY 2025 revenues have been transcribed from the Special Revenue Funds Tracking Report as of September 30, 2025.

Annual appropriations³ have increased by \$697 thousand (K), from \$59K in FY 2017 to approximately \$755K in FY 2025. Fund revenues⁴ (audited) have increased by \$1.7 million (M), from \$9,001 in FY 2015 to approximately \$1.7M in FY 2025. The increase is due to the updated Fee rate and aggressive Fee collections. Budgetary fund balances⁵ increased from \$9,001 in FY 2015 to \$2.1M in FY 2024.

When the Fund was created in 2011, the Guam Legislature projected annual revenues of at least \$2M, based on increasing cargo traffic to Guam. In 2021, after determining that collections were not meeting expectations, the Guam Legislature revised the Fee to apply flat rates on all containers and passenger motor vehicles and extended the assessment to previously exempt materials and goods.

Management determined that the Division requires at least \$2M in annual appropriations to meet its intended purpose; however, Management typically adheres to the governor's established budget ceiling when preparing the Division's and Fund's budgets. We reviewed prior year Budget Acts and found that annual appropriations aligned with the established budget ceilings. To address appropriation shortfalls, Management uses the authorization for using unexpended Fund carryovers from prior years.

In addition to Fee remittances, the Division seeks federal grants to support activities, such as pest monitoring, control, and eradication. From FY 2017 to FY 2025, the Division secured 35 federal grants totaling approximately \$6.2M. These grants funded programs, including Cooperative Agricultural Pest Surveys, Agricultural Quarantine Inspection, and mitigation efforts targeting the invasive hornet, Little Fire Ant, and Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle.

Because many grants are awarded each year competitively, personnel shortages and insufficient succession create significant risks of losing funding and program continuity. Some grant programs also depend on technical assistance from local USDA staff and UOG experts, increasing the risk of manpower shortages.

The DOAg Director confirmed that Management is aware of the gap between Fund revenues and annual appropriations and has addressed this with BBMR and DOAg's legislative oversight committee. During our audit, Management confirmed that the FY 2027 budget ceiling was increased by \$455K, from \$1.2M in FY 2026 to \$1.7M in FY 2027; however, the appropriation remains subject to legislative approval in the FY 2027 Budget Act.

³ Annual appropriations: A law that provides an agency with annual budget authority, made for specified fiscal years and available for obligation only during the fiscal year for which made.

⁴ Fund revenues: Actual collections of Fee remittances (audited).

⁵ Budgetary Fund Balance: Total amount accumulated from prior years (Source: Government Finance Officers Association).

Deficiencies in Invoice Processing, Records, and Accountability

We identified deficiencies in the Division's procedures for Fee invoice processing, recordkeeping, and accountability. Management confirmed that the only documented Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), dated May 2018, is not currently in use and is pending updates to reflect current practices, the current Fee schedule, and the use of the monthly Vessel Cargo Report. In the absence of an updated SOP, we prepared a flowchart in [Appendix 5](#) based on discussions and confirmation from the Coordinator regarding the Division's procedures.



Figure 2 - A colony of foraging Little Fire Ants, feeding on peanut butter. (Courtesy of Christopher Rosario, Jun 2023)

Invoices are supposed to be processed after the 30th day of each month to ensure timely billing and collection from Carriers. Our review found that some invoices were issued at least three months after the relevant shipment dates. We also encountered a scope limitation, as invoices and records prior to FY 2024 could not be located. The current Coordinator compiled all Fee records to determine the status of remittances and identify outstanding payments. Carriers began remitting overdue payments in 2025. While remittances have been received for known overdue fees, the absence of records from prior years continues to pose a risk of noncompliance in Fee collections.

Management confirmed that there is no formal procedure for recordkeeping or for retaining digital or physical copies of invoices. The current Coordinator has implemented an internal process to improve filing and recordkeeping. While Management has taken steps to address procedural weaknesses, we recommended they promptly document and adopt a formal SOP to enhance training efficiency and ensure accountability in Fee management.

Weaknesses in Communications with Carriers and Consignees/Importers

To clarify the Fee program, we surveyed all seven Carriers and requested at least three invoices per consignee. (See [Appendix 6](#) for Carrier Survey Responses.) Our review indicated that some Carriers may be applying incorrect Fee rates. We recommended that Management promptly and regularly contact all Carriers to ensure Fee rates are compliant with regulations. We also advised establishing regular monitoring and communication protocols to maintain engagement with Carriers and stakeholders and to enforce regulatory requirements.

Recruitment and Staffing Challenges

Appropriation shortfalls have limited the Division's ability to recruit scientific, technical, and professional staff. This has led to significant leadership changes, affecting Fund operations and management. Current employees have assumed multiple roles, and Management has transferred staff to other DOAg Divisions funded from other sources.

Drawing on discussions with Management, Council meeting Minutes, and Division Staffing Patterns, we developed a timeline to illustrate these changes.

- FY 2017-FY 2021. The Division was led by the Entomologist, who was also designated as the Division Chief, until the employee retired in April 2021.
- FY 2019-FY 2023. The first Coordinator was recruited and designated as the Acting Division Chief upon the Entomologist's retirement.
- FY 2023-FY 2024. The Coordinator position was vacant for several months until FY 2024. After the new hire resigned, the current Entomologist assumed Coordinator duties, including issuing invoices to Carriers.
- FY 2023-Current. The Entomologist position was vacant until FY 2023, when the current Entomologist was promoted and was also designated as the Acting Division Chief.
- FY 2025-Current. The current Coordinator is usually designated as the Acting Division Chief in the absence of the Entomologist.

The Division employed five (5) staff in FY 2023, eight in FY 2024, and ten in FY 2025. Management has not hired additional Division personnel since FY 2025 and estimates that at least 14 staff members, including a Division Chief, are needed for optimal operations.

The Division currently lacks an experienced Administrative Officer to manage funds, prepare budgets, and assist DOAg's Administrative Services Officer (ASO). Additionally, the ASO, who oversaw the department's budget, funds management, and procurement, was frequently on extended leave and has recently retired.

Reporting Requirements Not Met

The absence of the ASO has contributed to operational deficiencies, including DOAg's failure to meet reporting requirements.

- DOAg has not met its quarterly obligation to report all off-island government travel that is publicly funded during the fiscal year, pursuant to the Budget Acts of FY 2024 and 2025.
- The DOAg Director has not reported (quarterly) the condition of and activity within the Fund to the governor and to the Guam Legislature on a quarterly basis, pursuant to the enabling legislation.

Travel Expenditures Not Budgeted

DOAg's budget proposals for FY 2024 and 2025 did not include travel costs; however, our review identified Fund travel expenditures of \$12K in FY 2024 and \$7K in FY 2025.

We recommended the immediate recruitment of the Division AO and the DOAg ASO to ensure effective Fund management and address deficiencies in budgetary and reporting processes. Management concurs with our findings and is taking steps to comply with the mandated reporting requirements.

In addition to challenges related to recruitment and staffing, litigation is currently ongoing between certain employees and Management. Due to the ongoing nature of this litigation, no further audit procedures were conducted.

The Division is preparing a proposal to increase the Fee, which will boost Fund revenues, to support rapid response activities and establish an emergency team to address newly discovered pests as needed.

We do not agree that the Fund is insufficient to cover Division costs; rather, we found that revenue projections may not have considered past financial conditions of the Fund. We recommended that Management continue to work with the Guam Legislature and BBMR to revisit its Fund forecasting assumptions and methods to more accurately reflect actual revenues and to align annual appropriations to the Division.

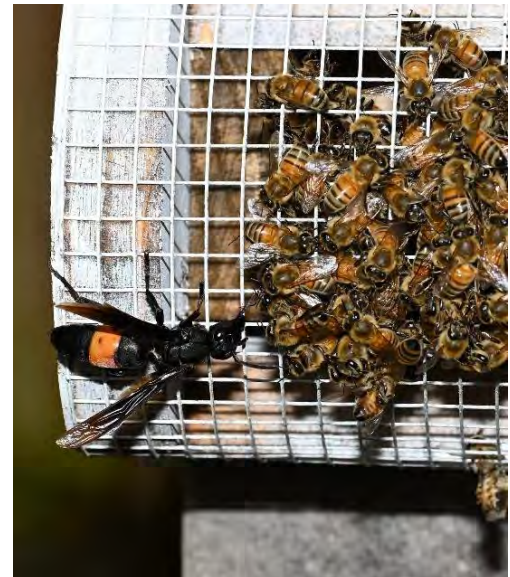


Figure 3 - Greater Banded Hornet (Courtesy of Jackie Serrano, USDA-ARS - Feb 2025)

We recommended that Management strengthen their control environment by implementing the following actions:

- Establish a clear organizational structure, assign responsibilities, and delegate authority to achieve the entity's objectives.
- Demonstrate a commitment to recruiting, developing, and retaining competent personnel.
- Evaluate performance and hold individuals accountable for their responsibilities.

Other Matters

During the course of our audit, we were made aware of the following:

Commercially Funded Off-Island Travel, Potential Conflict of Interest

On two separate occasions, a private construction company has paid 100% of all (off-island) travel accommodations for the Entomologist. In a letter, the company requested the Entomologist "to assist the company's environmental manager and other senior managers to inspect, evaluate, and collect quarry material and samples that are subject to inspection upon arrival to Guam." More recently, the company also requested the Coordinator accompany the Entomologist for the same purpose. During our discussion with the Director, we expressed concerns about the high risk of a potential conflict of interest or appearance of bribery, and we clarified our concerns as follows:

- We did not locate or identify any existing policy, procedure, or lawful requirement for this work to be performed for a commercial entity or private companies at an off-island site, in exchange for paid travel accommodations.

- There are indications of inequitable treatment of other importers who do not pay for the Entomologist or Coordinator to collect samples off-island. We cited the potential for conflict if a shipment from one importer is rejected while another importer—who paid for travel expenses—receives approval.
- We suggested that the private company recruit its own experts, who could consult with GovGuam’s experts. GovGuam’s experts would then certify findings or make a qualified determination for material samples prior to importation.
- We did not identify criteria that explicitly states that conducting sample collections or testing outside the borders of Guam is within the regular scope of work for either the Entomologist or the Coordinator.
- Although the travel accommodations were not paid with public funds, the Director authorized paid Administrative Leave for the Entomologist and the Coordinator.

The Director maintains that Administrative Leave is allowable because the Entomologist and Coordinator were performing work-related duties. We recommended the Director consult legal counsel or provide evidence that these trips and the use of Administrative Leave for commercially funded travel are permissible. The Director and Management have agreed to refrain from accepting privately funded travel arrangements from any commercial entity until the matter is addressed with legal counsel.

Bill No. 334-38 (COR)

Legislation was introduced to repeal and reenact the Guam Administrative Rules and Regulations, relative to updating the Invasive Species Inspection Fees, collection, and administrative provisions. This Bill has been publicly heard on June 29, 2026 by the Guam Legislature and is now pending further legislative action.

Conclusion and Recommendations

While DOAg has used the Fund for three of the four intended purposes, Management and the Council have still failed to use the Fund to meet the fourth purpose of developing and implementing a Guam Invasive Species Management Plan. This Plan is critical to provide the Division with specific measures of success for their efforts concerning invasive species.

The lack of a Plan increases Guam's risk of vulnerability to harmful invasive species that have the potential to devastate the environment, agriculture, and the livelihood of the people of Guam. Consequently, without a plan, we cannot determine whether the programs or activities funded by the Fund are producing its intended results of inspection, quarantine, and eradication of invasive species.

Our audit also found several issues that have impacted DOAg's ability to effectively and efficiently meet Fund mandates, including the following:

- An active Council is needed to strengthen Fund oversight and to support Plan development.
- Revenue projections and budget management need improvement.
- Invoice processing, recordkeeping, and accountability are deficient.
- Recruitment and staffing challenges persist.

To address these issues, we recommended that Management:

- Urgently develop the Plan to include all statutory requirements and to ensure that the development occurs through the public process and in consultation with all Council members to facilitate legislative review and approval.
- Continue to collaborate with each Council member to expedite Plan development and to ensure the Council meets consistently and takes actions that directly improve the Division's operations and management.
- Promptly document and adopt a formal SOP to enhance training efficiency and ensure accountability in Fee management.
- Promptly and regularly contact all Carriers to ensure Fee rates comply with regulations and to establish regular monitoring and communication protocols to maintain engagement with Carriers and stakeholders and to enforce regulatory requirements.
- Immediately recruit the Division AO and the DOAg ASO to ensure effective Fund management and address deficiencies in budgetary and reporting processes.
- Continue to work with the Guam Legislature and BBMR to revisit its Fund forecasting assumptions and methods to more accurately reflect actual revenues and to align annual appropriations to the Division.
- Strengthen their control environment by implementing the following actions:
 - Establish a clear organizational structure, assign responsibilities, and delegate authority to achieve the entity's objectives.
 - Demonstrate a commitment to recruiting, developing, and retaining competent personnel.
 - Evaluate performance and hold individuals accountable for their responsibilities.

Management Response and OPA Reply

On July 24, 2026, we provided a draft report to DOAg Management for their review and official management response. On July 31, 2026, we conducted the Exit Conference with DOAg Management to discuss the reported findings and recommendations.

DOAg Management provided their written management response to the draft report on August 7, 2026, and they generally concurred with our findings and recommendations. Specifically, DOAg's responses were as follows:

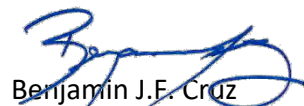
- Recommendation #1: DOAg agrees that the 2017-2019 Interim Guam Invasive Species Management Plan does not satisfy 5 GCA § 70107 and has not been updated since 2017. As Council co-chair and as Fund administrator, DOAG has initiated steps to coordinate development of a Plan addressing each statutory element.
- Recommendation #2: DOAg acknowledges the periods in which the Council did not convene as required and the consequences identified in the report, including the absence of a Plan, the absence of a reviewed structure of fines and penalties, and the absence of legislative recommendations.
- Recommendation #3: DOAg confirms that the SOP dated May 2018 is not in use and does not reflect the current Fee schedule, the current invoicing cycle, or the use of the monthly Vessel Cargo Report. DOAg will supersede that SOP with a document.
- Recommendation #4: The carrier survey responses in Appendix 6 identify two distinct issues that DOAG will address separately.
- Recommendation #5: DOAg agrees that annual appropriations have not tracked Fund revenues and that the Department has relied on unexpended carryover balances to bridge the gap.
- Recommendation #6: DOAg agrees that the vacancy of the Administrative Services Officer (ASO) position, and the extended absence preceding that vacancy, contributed to the reporting deficiencies identified in the report.
- Recommendation #7: DOAg will address each of the three components identified.

See [Appendix 7](#) for DOAg's detailed Official Management Response

The legislation creating OPA requires agencies to prepare a corrective action plan to implement audit recommendations, to document the progress in implementing the audit recommendations, and to endeavor to have implementation completed no later than the beginning of the next fiscal year.

We sincerely appreciate the cooperation and assistance provided by the DOAg staff and management throughout the audit process.

OFFICE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY



Benjamin J.F. Cruz
Public Auditor

Appendix 1: Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Objective

Our audit objective was to determine whether the Fund is:

1. Used effectively and efficiently in accordance with the enabling legislation and
2. Producing the intended results of inspection, quarantine, and eradication of invasive species.

Scope

The audit scope covered the period of Fiscal Years (FY) 2023 to 2025 or October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2025, focusing on the administration of the Fund and the operations of the Biosecurity Division of the DOAg.

Methodology

To meet our objective, we performed the following:

1. Reviewed pertinent laws, rules and regulations, policies and procedures, best practices, and other relevant documents pertaining to the Department of Agriculture's administration of the Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund.
2. Conducted walkthroughs and interviews to gain an understanding of the Biosecurity Division, collections of the Fee, and activity of the Fund.
3. We inquired with DOAg management and identified any prior audits of the Fund or the Biosecurity Division, and we examined potential OPA hotline tips relevant to this engagement.
4. We surveyed seven carriers (transportation companies) to solicit their input on their procedures for assessing, collecting, and remitting Fee collections as well as their feedback about the current rules and regulations.
5. We assessed audit risk, internal controls, and fraud through questionnaires and interviews with key personnel.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions within the scope of our audit objectives.

We identified the following laws, regulations, and policies applicable to the Fund:

5 GCA § 60202. Duties of Department (of Agriculture). The Department shall protect and promote the agricultural resources and economy of the Territory of Guam by research, quarantine, control, conservation, and extension work as authorized or required in this Division and in other laws.

5 GCA Chapter 70. Guam Invasive Species Council.

§ 70102. Guam Invasive Species Council, Established. The Guam Invasive Species Council will be established for the special purposes of protecting Guam from alien species that threaten our economy, culture, ecosystem and human health; and providing policy direction, coordination, and planning among government of Guam departments and federal agencies to prevent the introduction of invasive species and the monitoring, control and eradication of invasive species throughout the island of Guam. The Council *shall* convene within thirty (30) days of enactment and *shall* elect its Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.

Public Law 31-43: Relative to establishing the Guam Invasive Species Council; establishing the Fee and Fund; and authorizing DOAg to establish a Biosecurity Division.

Section 3. Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee, Established. The Guam Department of Agriculture is authorized to establish a fee... for the inspection, quarantine, and eradication of invasive species contained in any freight, including but not limited to, marine commercial container shipment, air freight, or any other means of transporting freight, foreign or domestic, that is brought to Guam. The fee shall be paid by the person responsible for paying the freight charges to the transportation company who shall collect the fee and forward the payment to the Department of Agriculture.

Section 4. Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund, Created.

(b) The fees collected shall be expended to: (1) recruit and hire a Territorial Invasive Species Coordinator; (2) establish and provide staffing for a Biosecurity Division within the Department of Agriculture to provide inspection, quarantine, and eradication of invasive species contained in any freight brought to Guam; (3) suppress and eradicate invasive species present in Guam; and (4) develop the Guam Invasive Species Management Plan and its updates.

Section 5. Biosecurity Division, Authorized.

The Department of Agriculture is authorized to create a Biosecurity Division to provide for the inspection, quarantine, and eradication of invasive species contained in any freight, including, but not limited to, marine commercial container shipments in efforts to address invasive species coming to, and already present in, Guam. The Biosecurity Division will take the lead role for the government of Guam in efforts towards prevention, control, monitoring, rapid response, eradication, enforcement and education of invasive species in Guam. The Director of the Department of Agriculture shall prepare

a budget plan, including projected personnel needs and other items, and submit it as part of the Fiscal Year 2012 budget request for the Department of Agriculture.

Public Law 33-130: An act to appropriate the Revenues from the Fund to fund the operations of the Biosecurity Division.

Public Law 36-87: An act to Amend §1401 and Repeal and Reenact §14102 of Chapter 14, Division 4, Title 8, Guam Administrative Rules and Regulations, relative to the Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee and Assessments.

Public Laws 37-42 & 37-125:XIII:I:1(i) & XIII:I:17:

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:

- (i) travel to attend conferences and official meetings with national and regional government officials or national and regional organizations of which the entity is an official member where attendance is necessary to advancing Guam's interests during Fiscal Year 2024 and as approved by a governing board or Director

Section 17. Reporting Requirements for Travel. All governmental entities (including line and autonomous agencies), instrumentalities, and public corporations shall submit a quarterly report of all off-island government travel that is publicly funded during Fiscal Year 2024/2025.

General Appropriations Acts of Fiscal Years (FY) 2018-2025 – Relative to the appropriations from the Fund to the Department of Agriculture for operations and for the Biosecurity Division operations and authorizations for carryover of unexpended revenues of the Fund.

8 GAR § 14103. Failure to Pay or Remit Assessed Fee.

The following fees shall be imposed for failure to pay, bill, or remit the Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee provided for above:

- (a) A person responsible for paying the freight charges to the transportation company who fails to pay the fee; or
- (b) A transportation company that fails to:
 - (1) Bill the fee, within fifteen days of the delivery of the freight, to the person responsible for paying the freight charges to the transportation company;
 - (2) Remit the fee to the Department of Agriculture within forty-five days of collecting the fee from the person responsible for paying the

freight charges to the transportation company, shall pay two times the amount of the fee or \$50, whichever is higher.

Department of Agriculture Biosecurity Division Standard Operating Procedure Inspection Fee (May 2018) – To guide the DOAg Biosecurity Division with the Fee program on a monthly collection, reporting, and accountability of the Fee. The policy includes instructions for the control of invoicing, remittances, and deposits of the fee; billing; collection assistance; receipts; payments and deposits; and exceptions.

Appendix 3: Invasive Species Inventory

Below is an inventory of invasive species identified by the Division.

1	Ambrosia Beetle	26	Khapra Beetle
2	Asian Cycad Scale	27	Land Vitex
3	Asian Long horned Beetle	28	Lesser Banded Hornet
4	Australian Grapevine Yellows	29	Little Fire Ant
5	Avocado Seed Moth	30	Melon Fruit Fly And Others
6	Bacterial Crown Rot	31	Mile-a-Minute Vine
7	Brown Tree Snake	32	New Guinea Sugarcane Weevil
8	Castor Capsule Borer	33	Northern Giant Hornet
9	Chain Of Love	34	Old World Bollworm
10	Citrus Fruit Borer	35	Oriental Citrus Aphid
11	Citrus Long horned Beetle	36	Palm Lethal Yellowing
12	Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle	37	Panama Disease
13	Coffee Leaf Rust	38	Red Imported Fire Ant
14	Cotton Cutworm	39	Red Palm Weevil
15	Cucurbit Beetle	40	Red Ring Nematode
16	False Codling Moth	41	Root-Knot Nematode
17	Feral Canine And Feline	42	South American Palm Borer
18	Feral Swine	43	South American Palm Weevil
19	Giant African Snail	44	Spotted Lantern Fly
20	Golden Twin Spot Moth	45	Summer Fruit Tortrix Moth
21	Greater Banded Hornet	46	Tropical Fire Ant
22	Greater Banded Hornet	47	Tropical Host Pests
23	Hog Plum Beetle	48	Vespa Hornet Species
24	Honey Bee Pests	49	Yellow-Legged Hornet
25	Japanese Wax Scale	50	Yellow-Vented Hornet

Appendix 4: 2017-2019 Interim Guam Invasive Species Management Plan, (Sections I. – VI.)

Page 1 of 18

The following pages contain excerpts from the 2017-2019 Interim Guam Invasive Species Management Plan, Sections I. – VI.





GUAM INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL (GISC)

Guam Invasive Species Council Members

- Guam Department of Agriculture (DOAG), *Co-Chair*
- Guam Customs & Quarantine (CQA), *Co-Chair*
- A.B. Won Pat International Airport Authority (GIAA)
- Guam Department of Parks & Recreations (DPR)
- Jose D. Leon Guerrero Port Authority of Guam (PAG)
- Mayors' Council of Guam (MCOG)
- Northern Soil & Water Conservation District (NSWCD)
- Southern Soil & Water Conservation District (SSWCD)
- University of Guam (UOG)

Non-Voting Members

- Bureau of Statistics & Plans (BSP)
- Guam Environmental Protection Agency (GEPA)
- Guam Homeland Security/Office of Civil Defense (GHS/OCD)
- Department of the Navy, Naval Facilities, Marianas (NAVFAC)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

**Produced under the direction of the Guam Invasive Species Council
and the Office of the Governor of Guam.**

Sponsored by the Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs.



TABLE OF CONTENTS		
I.	MISSION STATEMENT & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	01
II.	INTRODUCTION	02
	History of Invasive Species on Guam	
	Scope of the Invasive Species Problem	
	Environmental, Human and economic Costs to Guam	
	Environmental and Human Health Costs	
	Economic Costs	
	Summary	
III.	GUAM INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP & STRUCTURE	09
	Council Membership	
	Biosecurity Division and Support Staff	
IV.	2017-2019 GOALS & STRATEGIES	11
	Goal 1 <i>Territorial Invasive Species Coordinator</i>	
	Goal 2 <i>Prevention</i>	
	Goal 3 <i>Deterrence</i>	
	Goal 4 <i>Educational Outreach</i>	
	Goal 5 <i>Rapid Response Plan</i>	
V.	OTHER STRATEGIC GOALS	14
	Goal A <i>Incorporate with RBP</i>	
	Goal B <i>Establish Formal Recognition</i>	
	Goal C <i>Funding Sources</i>	
VI.	PRIORITY INVASIVE SPECIES	15
VII.	REFERENCES	16
VIII.	APPENDICES	17
	A. Definitions	
	B. Guam Invasive Species Council Act of 2011	
	C. Preliminary Listing of Known Invasive Species on Guam	
	D. BTS Technical Working Group Draft Strategic Plan	
	E. Little Fire Ant	
	F. Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle	
	G. Greater Banded Hornet	
	H. Asian Cycad Scale	
	I. Feral Swine	



I.

MISSION STATEMENT

The **Guam Invasive Species Council** protects Guam from alien species that threaten the economy, culture, ecosystem and human health through policy direction, coordination and planning for the prevention, control, monitoring and eradication.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2017-2019 Interim Guam Invasive Species Management Plan (GISMP) expresses the overarching goals and priorities of the Guam Invasive Species Council (GISC or Council).

The Guam Invasive Species Act of 2011 (Public Law 31-43) established the Council as Guam's lead entity in coordinating with local, regional, national, and international jurisdictions in the fight against alien invasive species. Although the GISC is in its infancy stages of organization, it draws from the collective knowledge, past research, and progress of its members in establishing the Council's goals and priorities.

Priorities and goals identified in this plan reflect current and near-term resources, member capabilities, and status of certain invasive species. Recommendations contained in the Regional Biosecurity Plan for Micronesia and Hawaii (RBP), the 2016-2018 National Invasive Species Council's Management Plan, the Regional Invasive Species Council (RISC), and various stakeholders were considered in the development of this plan. The Council also considered developments under the purview of the Hawaii Invasive Species Council and its 2015-2020 HISC Strategic Plan.



II. INTRODUCTION

History Of Invasive Species On Guam

Guam's history of introduced species is a mixture of deliberate and accidental introductions. Deliberate introductions may include rice brought in by early Chamorro settlers or domestic farm animals introduced during the Spanish colonial period. Accidental introductions are commonly referred to as invasive species that include rodents, insects, agricultural pests, plants, and disease-causing pathogens.

Prior to Ferdinand Magellan's landing in 1521, the Chamorro people inhabited the Mariana Islands for 4,000 years and likely brought rice with them for cultivation. Their survival rested largely on a subsistence economy where they harvested coconut, root crops, and fish. They continued to practice subsistence farming up until the 1950s. Chamorro people produced primarily for two reasons: survival and the reciprocal practice of exchanging of gifts for goods and services. This system of exchange, or *chenchule'*, is a Chamorro core value still practiced today.



TOP: Carabao race at the 1934 Guam Fair.
LOWER: Magellan's passage to the Philippines eventually established the Galleon Trade Route, Guam included as a port stop.



Magellan's passage to the Philippines eventually established the Galleon Trade Route. Galleon ships traveled often between Acapulco, Mexico and Manila, Philippines. Guam was signaled as a convenient port stop between the West and the East during the Spanish Colonial Era. Spanish and other European vessels frequently stopped in the Mariana Islands, trading iron and other goods for food and water with the Chamorro people. Through these years, domestic animals such as deer, swine, and cattle, were introduced in these series of trades with the Chamorro people. Some of these species were purposed for sustenance; other animals like the carabao were introduced to the island for farming and transportation. Most of these intentional introductions included species from both the Philippines and Mexico and can still be found today. These feral ungulates like the deer, pig, and carabao roam wild in

parts of Guam. The feral swine population continues to grow and because of their burrowing, they have become a significant threat to crops, native trees, the coral reef, and to humans.

Introduced species aren't always intentional. Unintended introductions included other animals, pests, plants, and diseases. Possible pathways for entry of invasives included stowaway rodents and pests hidden in cargo container disembarking the ships. They carried in with them disease-causing pathogens like bacteria and fungi that tainted agricultural crops and livestock; subsequently, increasing illness and death among the Chamorro people.

A common known invasive weed is the *Antigonon leptopus*. It is known locally as *kadena*, in Chamorro, and "Chain of Love" in English. The *kadena* is found in Mexico where it also gets its common name, Mexican Creeper. The *kadena* was likely introduced during the Spanish colonial period of Guam. The *kadena* spreads far and wide and completely "climbs" over a host of other trees and plants. This vine can choke smaller plants and trees and prevent photosynthesis by blocking sunlight from reaching those plants.



Image capture of feral swine impacts to the landscape.



TOP: "Chain of Love" *Antigonon leptopus* or *kadena* growth in Guam. **LOWER:** *Leucaena leucocephala* or *tangantangan* growth in Guam, with seed pods.

World War II left the island of Guam devastated. The extensive bombing of Guam by American forces to drive out the Japanese soldiers left the island's forested areas almost completely bare and devoid of foliage. Erosion set in and in effort to mitigate it, the Naval government airdropped thousands of *Leucaena leucocephala*, or *tangantangan*, seeds across the island. The *tangantangan*, a type of legume that fixes nitrogen in the soils needed for plant growth through its nitrogen fixing nodes in its root systems, quickly grew atop the war-torn eroded areas. The island saw almost immediate regrowth of vegetation. Today, *tangantangan* provides the local population with various uses such as firewood, timber, shade and compost. While it was well intended, the introduction of the *tangantangan* also came at a cost. Because *tangantangan* grows so quickly and produces an abundance of seed pods, they are literally invasive since they quickly occupy space that would otherwise be taken up by a native plant species. Today, reforestation efforts utilize acacia trees instead of the *tangantangan*; although an alien species, acacia trees prove to be as effective and particularly invasive.

The Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency have identified several deliberate releasing of exotic animals formerly kept as

pets in recent years. Some of these intentional releases are committed by pet owners avoiding proper clearances and have even included a pair of pythons. Less exotic animals such as non-native fresh water fish, are found in the island's rivers and streams.

The most commonly known unintended introduction and perhaps the most impactful is the Brown Tree Snake (BTS). Shortly after World War II, the island was bustling with military activity to rebuild the island's civilian dwellings and businesses, as well as develop and strengthen the United States' military bases. Military cargo ships arrived and departed daily. Among these arrivals included a cargo ship from Manus Island, Papua New Guinea. Aboard this vessel was most likely a single pregnant female brown tree snake. It escaped the vessel and it made its home in the island's jungle. The BTS would thrive on an abundant food source of mostly birds and lizards across the island ultimately causing the extinction and extirpation of many native and endemic species. The loss of pollinating birds and even the fruit bat negatively affects forest regeneration and forest structure on Guam.



Brown Tree Snake (BTS) on a coconut tree in Chalan Pago, Guam

The BTS's devastating impact isn't limited to ecological systems but also on the economy. In the mid-1980s, it was discovered that the BTS was largely responsible for the island's frequent power outages as they coiled around power lines. Property damages and repairs are reported to have cost the government millions of dollars. This prompted federal and local government officials to work collaboratively to establish a regulatory framework in which the BTS is managed. This framework includes the Endangered Species Act of 1973, the Memorandum of Agreement on Control of the Brown Tree Snake in 1993, and the Executive Order 13112, Invasive Species in 1999. In 2004, Congress passed the Brown Tree Snake Control and Eradication Act which enabled the formulation of the BTS Technical Work Group (TWG). Since that time, the BTS TWG have made significant progress towards preventing the escape of the BTS from Guam to other locations; reducing their impact on Guam's ecosystems; and develop steps leading to eradication.

Over 50 years after the introduction of the BTS and numerous other damaging species, the government of Guam recognized the dangerous but silent invasion of alien invasive species on the island. In 2005, Governor Felix P. Camacho issued Executive Order 2005-13 relative to the Invasive species control and interdiction, which established the Guam Invasive Species Council (GISC), its members and officers, duties and responsibilities, and calling for the draft of an invasive species management plan. While well-intentioned, the efforts to control and prevent invasive species on island did not take traction.

In 2007, Guam faced a new foe in the *Oryctes rhinoceros*, commonly known as the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB), when it was first noticed in Tumon Bay. The CRB is a major pest of



Oryctes rhinoceros, commonly known as the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB).

the coconut palm, oil palm and other species. Palms are damaged when adult beetles bore into the crowns of palms to feed on sap. Preferred breeding sites are dead, standing coconut stems, and piles of decaying vegetation. Guam, prone to typhoons that leave behind piles of green debris, and the abundance of coconut trees on island make for ideal conditions for the CRB to thrive. The CRB is native to Southeast Asia, primarily in Indonesia and the Philippines. We still do not know how the CRB arrived on Guam but the College of Natural and Applied Sciences at the University of Guam suspects their arrival likely came by way of a shipping container of construction materials and long before they were noticed.

In 2011, reports of *Wasmannia auropunctata*, or the Little Fire Ant (LFA), received highest of concerns since they deliver a very painful sting and can cause an extremely itchy rash. The introduction of the LFA, CRB, BTS and countless other harmful species causing harm to the island's economic and human health, prompted the Guam Legislative to pass Bill 111-31, calling for the formal establishment of the Guam Invasive Species Council, collecting of a biosecurity fee, and the authorization of the Department of Agriculture to establish a Bioscurity Division. The bill was signed into law on May 17, 2011 by Governor Eddie Baza Calvo as the Guam Invasive Species Council Act of 2011. In 2014, the GISC began quarterly meetings to lay the groundwork in carrying out the mandates of the law.

In 2016, the Department of the Interior's (DOI) Assistant Secretary of Insular Areas, Esther Kia'aina, charged the territories with strengthening their defense systems against the threats of alien invasive species. DOI made grants available to the territories for the purposes of drafting their own invasive species management plans and has expressed commitments that future grant-funding will be made available for the sake of fighting against invasive species at all borders. At this time, none of the U.S. territories have issued an invasive species management plan and so far there has never been such a plan adopted by any of the territories. The determination of GISC to submit a plan for Guam demonstrates the diligence of the Council, and the support of Governor Calvo and DOI. Despite the Council's infancy GISC members and stakeholders have been working in the fight against alien invasive species for many years and recognize the opportunities in unifying its efforts.

Scope Of The Invasive Species Problem

Guam's rate of introduced species is alarmingly high. Dr. Aubrey Moore, entomologist with the University of Guam's College of Natural and Applied Sciences recorded sixty known invertebrates since 2000. This is an average of at least three per year. Dr. Moore further reports that before human intervention, species arrived every few thousand years, and today, one new species arrives on Guam every few months. This is 10,000 times the natural rate.

The scope of Guam's invasive species problem rests largely with securing pathways to entry of all plant and animal species into Guam, and human intervention. Guam's borders must be strengthened by improving its capabilities in the prevention of alien invasive species from not only reaching the shores of Guam but entering our neighbors in the region like the Northern Marianas, the rest of Micronesia and Hawaii. As the main gateway between the west and east, GISC intends to rally more federal and local government support to build upon Guam's existing efforts towards biosecurity.

Threats of alien invasive species on Guam are detrimental and a singular pest requires a system of technical approaches from understanding what its predators are, habitats, and other characteristics to identifying the appropriate biocontrols that are effective and do not pose inadvertent harm to the ecosystems they're applied in. Eradication is a term loosely used in conversation and really depends on a range of factors to include how early a new pest is detected, location of detection, and what resources are available for eradication. Because eradication is costly it enforces the immediate need to strengthen prevention measures.

Environmental, Human And Economic Costs To Guam

Environmental And Human Health Costs

Endemic or native species are at risk of extinction because they have not evolved defenses against alien predators, parasites, and diseases. Further, when native plant and animal populations are removed from an ecosystem there are cascading effects as a result. Food webs and habitats are interrupted or destroyed for all species resulting in the overall declining health of the natural environment. Changes in ecosystems and biodiversity translate to increased scarcity of agricultural, herbal, and other natural resources, as well as other unintended consequences affecting human health.

Invasive species are a leading cause of population decline and extinction in animals. BTS have been implicated in the precipitous decline in native forest birds and the modern extinction of at least 10 species on Guam. The loss of pollinating birds and fruit bat prevent forested communities from regeneration. An adverse impact includes the decline in native and endemic species of plants and trees.

The CRB is probably the most visually impactful of any arrival of invasive species to the island of Guam to date. Since the time of the CRB's detection in 2007, nearly all of the coconut trees at the Governor Joseph Flores Ypao Beach Park and other public beaches along Tumon Bay have been lost. Only those found on private hotel and resort properties remain standing and the rest of the island's



Capture of CRB affects on coco palm population and green waste conditions to thrive in.



TOP: Guam's native *Cycas micronesica*, or *fadang*, decimated by the Asian Cycad scale. **LOWER:** The Cycad scale embeds itself deep within the leaves of the *fadang* to capture the plant's juices.

coconut palm population remain at risk. This devastation negatively impacts the island's population that rely on the tree for its fruit, sap, and leaves.

Guam's native *Cycas micronesica*, or *fadang*, was once in noticeable abundance until 2003 when it was decimated by a new invasive insect pest broadly referred to as the Asian Cycad scale. The Cycad scale embeds itself deep within the leaves and crevices of the *fadang* and latches on to capture the plant's juices. Nearly 90% of the *fadang* has been decimated prompting its protection by law. The *fadang* has served as a cultural resource for the Chamorros for many years and have a significant role to biodiversity in forested areas. The absence of the *fadang* in the forested areas have adverse effects to their communities.

The Greater Banded Hornet (GBH), or *Vespa tropica*, is one of the most recent new detections of invasive wasp in

2016. Two colonies were detected, one in upper Tumon and another in Yoña, after University of Guam entomologists received reports of very painful stings. The GBH is large and aggressive compared to honey bees and other species of wasps. They raid other nests to bring larvae back to feed their own larvae. Though those colonies have been destroyed, the Council continues to monitor for any reports.

The Little Fire Ant (LFA), or *Wasmannia auropunctata*, is listed by the Global Invasive Species Database as one of the top 100 worst invasive species worldwide and is considered the greatest ant threat to the Pacific Region. They deliver a painful sting causing an extremely itchy rash. If left uncontrolled, it leaves the human population vulnerable to stings, poses unintended consequences when it competes for habitats with native species, and is a significant threat to agriculture.



Vespa tropica, or the Greater Banded Hornet (GBH), is one of the most recent new detections of invasive wasp. **INSET:** An incident involving the Guam Fire Department demonstrates the harmful stings by the GBH.

Economic Costs

Monitoring, control, and eradication of invasive species takes expertise, time, and a tremendous amount of resources and money. The Council will develop its own economic assessments on costs related to combating invasive species and explore opportunities for funding.

According to a study conducted in 1999 on Economic Impacts of Invasive Species to Wildlife Services' Cooperators, it is estimated that the cost of BTS-related power outages exceeded

Guam is enjoying a recent renaissance of cottage-, small-, and commercial-scale plant and poultry farming. This activity positively addresses food security but presents challenges to detect and control/eradicate new invasive species, and highlights capacity and capability gaps of responsible local agencies, to include weak inspection policies, inefficient communication between inspecting agencies, and lack of funding. Researchers and scientists require adequate funding to search and test biocontrols that do not pose adverse impacts to the environment.



The GBH is large and aggressive compared to honey bees and other species of wasps.

IMAGE 1 IS COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GUAM CIVIL DEFENSE PROGRAM. CENTER IMAGE BY BRENT

Island ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to the destructive power of invasive pests. The unimpeded spread of invasive species is of the greatest threat to Guam's economy, natural environment, and the health and lifestyle of its people. Invasive pests can cause millions of dollars in crop losses, the extinction of native species, the destruction of native forests and habitats, and the spread of diseases. Invasive species are ultimately organisms that causes decreases in ecosystem function. Invasive species also rarely arrive by themselves and common introductions involve human intervention. Overall more support and funding is needed for invasive species work throughout Guam.

The goals and strategies outlined in this plan are intended to move forward on priority issues through the mission and responsibilities of the GISC. They were developed in a series of stakeholder workshops and meetings to get guidance and input on the Council's unique role to progress invasive species work in Guam. The fight to protect Guam's terrestrial, aquatic, and marine ecosystems continues.

Invasive species is everyone's responsibility.

III.

GUAM INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP & STRUCTURE

Council Membership

The Council membership is composed of the organizational heads, or their designees, from the following:

- a) Guam Department of Agriculture (DOAG)
- b) Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency (CQA)
- c) A.B. Won Pat International Airport Authority
- d) Jose D. Leon Guerrero Port Authority of Guam (PAG)
- e) University of Guam (UOG)
- f) Guam Department of Parks and Recreation
- g) Mayors' Council of Guam
- h) Northern and Southern Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Included as non-voting members are representatives from the Bureau of Statistics and Plans (BSP), Homeland Security, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The Council may invite additional public and private sector members to serve on subcommittees with significant responsibilities concerning invasive species, and may prescribe special procedures for their participation.

The Guam Invasive Species Council Act of 2011 also mandated the Council to review the 2009 Interagency Biosecurity Task Force Work Plan which provides a needed component of a comprehensive biosecurity system that has seamless coverage and enforcement, to achieve a level of protection necessary to maintain or enhance the valuable natural resources of Guam. In 2016, the DOAG and CQA signed the Interagency Biosecurity Work

Plan (IBW), outlining the commitments, duties, roles, and responsibilities between both parties in the interest of collectively combating invasive species. The purpose of the agreement is to establish a heightened agricultural biosecurity effort geared towards enhancing the ability of both CQA and DOAG to provide Guam with a more effective biosecurity protection program; and to improve Guam's protection of dangerous or invasive species and diseases, and to effectively prevent, respond, contain and eradicate agricultural threats, whenever necessary, that may infiltrate the biosecurity net. The IBW reinforces a joint effort by both agencies to cooperatively lead GISC in developing strategies and improving upon existing efforts to the threat of IS. The IBW also establishes a seamless connection between port of entry inspections, exotic pest surveys, and the ability to respond to a disease or pest introduction.

Biosecurity Division And Support Staff

To support GISC policies, the Act also established a Biosecurity Division within the DOAG as the lead local government agency with a purpose to provide for the inspection, quarantine, and eradication of invasive species contained in any freight, including, but not limited to, marine commercial container shipments in efforts to address invasive species coming to, and already present in, Guam.

The law also calls for the establishment of the Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee to be collected by freight customers and deposited into a separate account. The purpose of the fee was to fund the Biosecurity Division, its support staff, and for the Council to hire a Territorial Invasive Species Coordinator (TISC) who will serve as the Council's Secretary to carry out the communications and coordination as directed by the Council. Implementation of the fee began in July 2015 so vacancies did not open up until the passage of Bill 223-33 by the Guam Legislature (*I Liheslaturan Guåhan*). The bill was signed into law as P.L. 33-130 in March 2016 and appropriated the revenues from the Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee to fund vacant positions within the Biosecurity Division as well as operational expenses of the program.

In a GISC meeting held in February 2016, following the passage of Bill 223-33, members proposed recruitment for the following:

- a) Entomologist
- b) Botanist
- c) Plant pathologist
- d) Biosecurity officers
- e) Administrative support staff

The entomologist position was filled shortly thereafter. Active recruitment for the remaining positions is ongoing.

IV.

2017-2019 GOALS & STRATEGIES

The Guam Invasive Species Council Act of 2011 outlines the statutory responsibilities of the Council:

- a) Create a mission statement on invasive species for Guam.**
- b) Develop a Guam Invasive Species Management Plan (GISMP).*
- c) Act as the lead entity for Guam to include local regional, national and international invasive species efforts.*
- d) Provide annual reports on the progress made in achieving the objectives of the GISMP to *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* and *I Maga'låhen Guåhan*.
- e) Coordinate and promote Guam's position with respect to federal issues concerning invasive species in Guam.*
- f) Identify and record all invasive species present in Guam.* (See Appendix C)
- g) Identify all needed resources for the purpose of working on invasive species prevention, suppression, and eradication.*
- h) Advise *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* and *I Maga'låhen Guåhan* on budgetary and other issues concerning invasive species.
- i) Review the structure of fines and penalties to ensure maximum deterrence for invasive species-related crimes.
- j) Make appropriate recommendations for legislation to improve the management of invasive species programs and policies.
- k) Update the Interagency Biosecurity Task Force Work Plan.**
- l) Perform all functions necessary to effectuate the mission of the Council.

* *in-progress*

** *final to date*

The goals presented in the next section are identified by the Council as preliminary steps in enhancing and strengthening its capabilities to effectively carry out its mission and responsibilities.

Goal 1***Territorial Invasive Species Coordinator*** _____

The GISC will continue to pursue the recruitment of a Territorial Invasive Species Coordinator (TISC) and all necessary personnel to include but not limited to those listed in the Support Staff section of this plan.

The recruitment of a TISC is still in the process of being established as a classified position in the civil service program. The DOAG Biosecurity Division will recruit a Program Coordinator IV in the interim until a TISC has been established and recruited.

Strategies

- Define staffing patterns/ funding capabilities for TISC and personnel.
- Identify potential candidates for recruitment.

Evaluation Measures

- Strong public, regional, and global presence and position of the Council.
- Clear communications and coordination between the Council and branches of government, stakeholders, and community.
- Turnaround time for completion of deliverable actions carried out by the Council.

Goal 2***Prevention*** _____

Prevention is the most cost effective strategy for combating invasive species. In 2010, DOAG's Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources reported at least 73 non-native organisms found only at the Jose D. Leon Guerrero Port which gave strong implications of pathways via boat traffic. Reprioritizing inspection services for all vessels, goods, and commodities arriving into Guam is critical for the Council to increase prevention measures.

Strategies

- Coordinate with *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* to craft policy and identify funding sources that would establish a fully-contained animal and plant inspection facility at the PAG.
- Ensure comprehensive biosecurity inspections occur prior to arriving in Guam.
- Institute a green waste response plan specifically to reducing micropiles of green debris around the island.

Evaluation Measures

- Regional and global recognition and compliance of Guam's biosecurity controls.
- Rapid response and containment of new detections at ports of entry.
- Decreased rate and volume of pest detections.

Goal 3**Deterrence** _____

Enforcement of regulations will deter violations and further introduction of invasive species via human intervention.

Strategies

- Establish working group to coordinate with *Liheslaturan Guåhan* in crafting policy that intends to define penalties and fines for those found in violation of contributing to the introduction of invasive species to Guam.

Evaluation Measures

- Rate and volume of detections at known pathways.
- Shift in attitudes regarding public approach to combating invasive species.
- Lean public reporting of suspected violators.

Goal 4**Educational Outreach** _____

Educational outreach programs encourage advocacy in protecting Guam from invasive species. The Council's goal is to engage visitors and the island community to participate as it is an important component to invasive species management on Guam.

Strategies

- Establish working group to build and promote campaigns that increase public awareness and participation in invasive species management.
- Involve the Guam Department of Education and all learning institutions in observing the National Invasive Species Awareness Week. Activities may include school decorating contests, poster/essay contests, and mural contests, geared toward biosecurity and native habitat restoration.
- Coordinate and conduct workshops, conferences, community conversations, and other public forums for sharing of information relative to invasive species on Guam.
- Integrate pest reporting systems between agencies and be made available for public reporting procedures.

Evaluation Measures

- Increased public knowledge of invasive species.
- Changes in rate and volume of reported detections.

Goal 5***Rapid Response Plan*** _____

A rapid response plan will detail mobilization and protocol of all stakeholders and agencies responding to new detections of invasive species.

Strategies

- The 2005 Draft Emergency Response Plan will be reviewed and updated for use as the Council's Rapid Response Plan (RRP).

Evaluation Measures

- Clear identification of work flow at the interagency level, leadership roles, and SOP tasks.
- Early detection categorization on newly discovered invasive species.
- Immediate fortifying of pathways of early detections.

V.

OTHER STRATEGIC GOALS

Goal A***Incorporate With RBP*** _____

Incorporate Guam priorities and efforts into the Regional Biosecurity Plan.

Goal B***Establish Formal Recognition*** _____

Establish formal representation at the federal (NISC, DoD) and regional levels (Regional Invasive Species Council, SPC).

Goal C***Funding Sources*** _____

Explore additional local, federal, and grant funding sources for the continued support of existing programs and the development of new programs surrounding the detection, control, monitoring, and eradication/interdiction of invasive species on Guam.

VI.

PRIORITY INVASIVE SPECIES

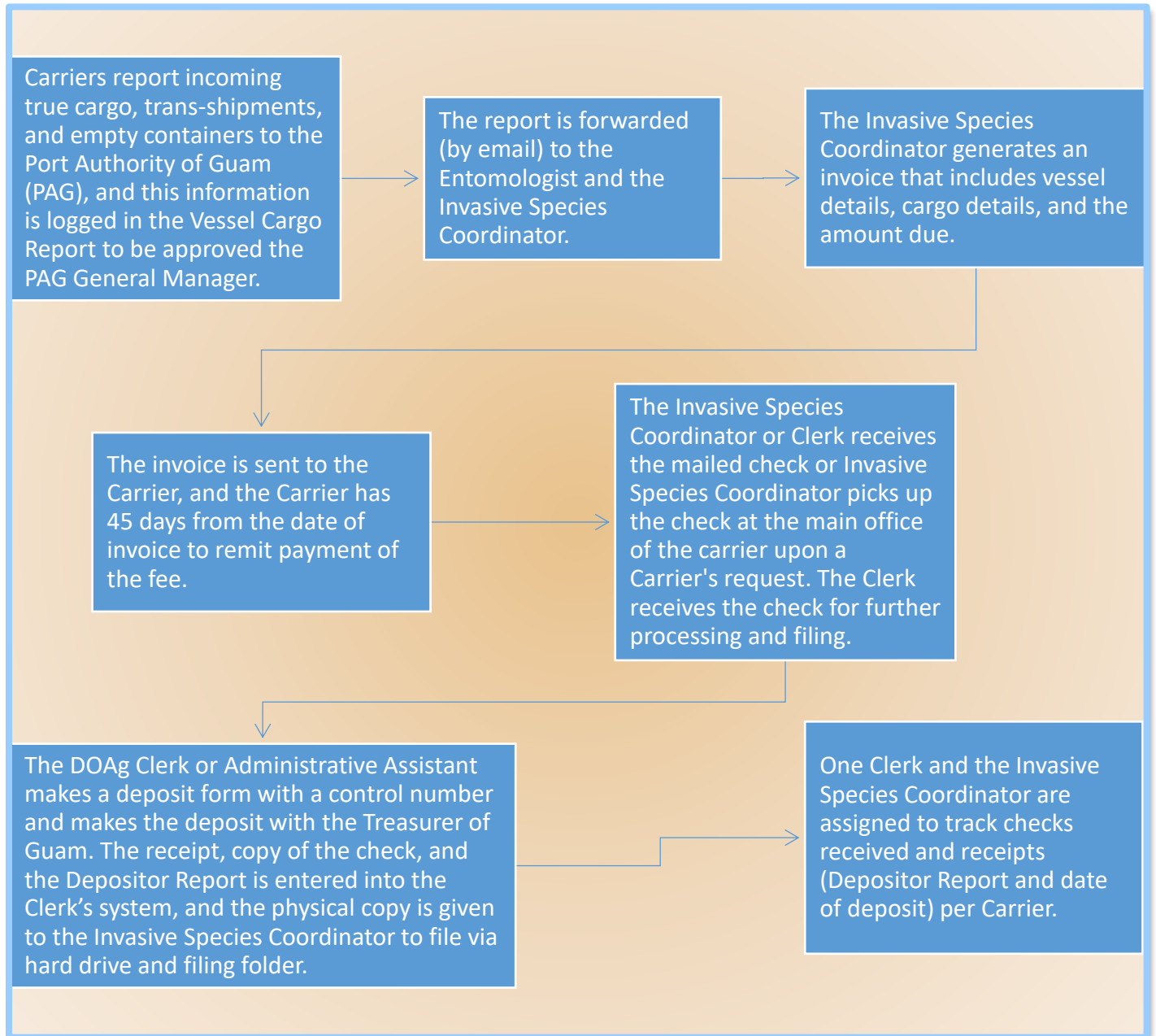
The Council has identified the following threats as having considerable impact to the island and have deemed it a priority for aggressive and continuous interdiction.

Refer to Appendices on current resource needs.

SPECIES ↓	THREAT → or RESOURCE	Devastates Native Species or Ecosystem?	Economic Threat?	Human Health Threat?	Cultural Threat?	Best/New Science or Technology?
Brown Tree Snake (BTS)		YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Little Fire Ant (LFA)		UNKNOWN	YES	YES	YES	YES
Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB)		YES	YES	NO	YES	POSSIBLE
Asian Cycad Scale		YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
Greater Banded Hornet (GBH)		POTENTIAL	YES	YES	YES	YES
Feral Swine		POTENTIAL	YES	YES	YES	NO
Chain of Love or Kadena		YES	POTENTIAL	POSSIBLE	YES	NO

Appendix 5: Fee Invoice Processing

In the absence of an updated SOP, we prepared the flowchart below based on discussions and confirmation from the Coordinator regarding the Division's procedures.



Appendix 6: Carrier Survey Responses

The table below shows the responses from four of the seven Carriers we surveyed. The remaining three Carriers did not respond to our survey.

No.	Question	Carrier A Response	Carrier B Response	Carrier C Response	Carrier D Response
1	Please describe the procedure your company uses to calculate, assess, and/or charge the fee to those responsible for remitting payment	The Guam Invasive Species Fee is assessed in accordance with the regulations established by the Department of Agriculture, Biosecurity division. The fee is collected on the following items: a. Twenty-Six Dollars (\$26.00) per Twenty-Foot Equivalent Unit (TWU): This applies to each containerized shipment, shipped into Guam. b. Two Dollars (\$2.00) per Revenue Ton as defined by the Port Authority of Guam. This applies to each inbound non-containerized cargo or break-bulk shipments.	On an excel sheet, all inbound cargo per vessel is manifested. From there ISF charges are calculated based on container size or \$2/RT for non-containerized shipments. Based on the rates, the amount is assessed to each customer and shown on the shipping documents. Customer is aware to pay whatever shipping cost, plus ISF charges found on the shipping documents.	Our company calculates and assesses the Invasive Species Fee based on the weight of the shipment, as indicated on the Bill of Lading: Less than container load (LCL) - 0.75 per 1,000 pounds with a minimum charge of \$5.00 Full Container Load (FCL) - \$36.00 per 20 foot container, \$72.00 per 40 foot container This standardized approach ensures transparency and consistency for all customers.	We assess the fees based on the rate provided by Guam Department of Agriculture at cost plus our Admin Fee per BL.
2	How does your company notify or inform payers to pay the fee? If your company provides an invoice or some other form of billing to the payer, please provide three copies of invoices that were issued in January 2024 and in January 2025 for our review.	The payers or customers are aware of Public Law 31-43 regarding the Invasive Species Fee and its tariff assessment. All inbound shipments containerized, breakbulk or non-containerized, shipped into Guam are billed the invasive species fee (ISF) through the freight bill of lading (BL) in accordance with above item (1).	We issue notice of arrivals (NOA) which serves as our invoice. This document itemizes all applicable charges, including ISF fees. For reference, please see attached samples of shipments in January 2024 and 2025	We notify customers of the Invasive Species Fee by including the charges on our official invoice. This invoice serves as the formal request for payment and details all applicable fees. Copies of invoices issued in January 2024 and January 2025 are attached for your review.	The fees are included in the Notice of Arrival, samples attached.
3	Please describe how your company processes invoices received from the Department of Agriculture and include discussion of reason(s) or situation (s) that would cause deviation from paying the amount due as stated on an invoice	The invoices from the Department of Agriculture's Biosecurity Division are received by email. The Carrier's accounts payable team handles the reconciliation and payment approval of the invoice. Each month, the accounts payable team performs a detailed audit that matches the ISF collected through BLs by vessel and voyage. The reconciliation process ensures that the billing invoices for the ISF are accurate prior to making payment. Once approved, the check is issued by Finance and delivered to the Department of Agriculture, Biosecurity office. In the event of any discrepancies between both records, a notice to the agency is provided for quick resolution.	When the fee was first introduced, there was no clear guidance on how the payments to DOA should be made, as we did not receive invoices from their department. Relying on our manifest, we have continued to calculate, bill, and remit payments to DOA based on our own shipping data, which consistently proves more accurate than the invoices we now receive from them. Notably our figures sometimes to be slightly higher than DOA's billing, so we maintain our practice of billing according to our data	Upon receiving invoices from the Department of Agriculture, our finance team reviews each invoice for accuracy and compliance with contractual terms. Payment is processed promptly unless discrepancies are identified, such as incorrect billing amounts or missing documentation. In such cases, we communicate directly with the Department to resolve any issues before remitting payment	We reconcile the invoices received from Guam Department of Agriculture, against the shipments that our company received during the billing period. If all matches our records, then, we process payment to Treasurer of Guam.
4	Please provide any other concerns or observations about the Department of Agriculture, the Biosecurity Division, the Invasive Species Fee, or the Invasive Species Fund.	We request the submission of invoices each month in a timely manner to ensure a smooth payment process. Another amendment to Law 36-87 is being sought to clearly state that ISF fees in line with the intent of the original law 31-43 to be applied to inbound cargo with final destination Guam.	From the very beginning, our main concern has been witnessing concrete actions that justify this fee.	While not directly related to the Invasive Species Fee, we would like to highlight an operational concern regarding permits for vegetable and fruit shipments. Expedited processing, ideally same-day or next-day issuance after submission, would greatly enhance efficiency and support timely delivery of goods.	Requesting prompt billing from Guam Department of Agriculture.



Lourdes A. Leon Guerrero
Governor
Joshua F. Tenorio
Lt. Governor

Department of Agriculture Dipattamenton Agrikottura

163 Dairy Road, Mangilao, Guam 96913



Chelsa Muña
Director
Glenn C. Takai
Deputy Director

August 07, 2026

Transmitted via electronic mail
bjcruz@guamopa.com

Benjamin J.F. Cruz
Public Auditor
Office of Public Accountability
Suite 401 DNA Building
238 Archbishop Flores Street
Hagåtña, Guam 96910

RE: Official Management Response to Draft Performance Audit Report, Department of Agriculture Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund (Audit Period October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2025)

Håfa Adai Public Auditor Cruz:

The Department of Agriculture (DOAG) acknowledges receipt of the draft performance audit report of the Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund (Fund), transmitted on July 24, 2026, and appreciates the Exit Conference held with your office on July 31, 2026. This letter constitutes DOAG's official management response for inclusion at Appendix 7 of the final report.

We thank the Office of Public Accountability (OPA) audit team for its professionalism and for the constructive manner in which the findings and recommendations were communicated to us during fieldwork. DOAG values the audit as the first independent review of the Fund since its creation under Public Law 31-43, and we accept the report's findings that DOAG has met three of its four intended purposes. The fourth, unmet intended purpose being the development of the Guam Invasive Species Management Plan (Plan) required by 5 GCA § 70107.

DOAG concurs with all seven recommendations. Our specific responses, planned corrective actions, and requested technical corrections follow.

General Comments

Before responding to each recommendation, DOAG acknowledges and appreciates the diligence with which the final report reflects the following corrective measures already underway during the audit period and after its close:

- A Territorial Invasive Species Coordinator (Coordinator) was recruited in June 2025 and has since compiled all available Fee records to determine remittance status and identify outstanding balances. Carriers began remitting overdue payments in 2025.

Director's Office (671) 300-7965 | Agricultural Dev. Services (671) 300-7973 | Animal Health (671) 300-7964/6
Aquatic & Wildlife Resources (DAWR) (671) 735-0294 | Forestry & Soil Resources (671) 300-7975/7
Plant Nursery (671) 300-7974 | Biosecurity Division (671) 475-1427 | Pest Hotline (671) 475-7378
Website: DOAG.guam.gov

REPORT THREATS TO GUAM'S NATURAL RESOURCES (671) 884-TOKA (8652)

Official Management Response to Draft Performance Audit Report, Department of Agriculture Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund
August 07, 2026
Page 2 of 7

- The Coordinator has implemented an internal filing and recordkeeping process for Fee invoices pending adoption of a formal Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).
- A Guam Invasive Species Advisory Council (Advisory Council) has been formed to provide technical and science-based input, and is completing an Invasive Species Priority Matrix intended for Council adoption and inclusion in the Plan.
- The Council has met more regularly since 2025, including the meeting achieving full attendance from all voting members, held on September 29, 2025.
- The FY 2027 budget ceiling for the Division was increased by \$455,000, from \$1.2 million in FY 2026 to \$1.7 million in FY 2027, following DOAG's engagement with the Bureau of Budget and Management Research (BBMR) and the Department's legislative oversight committee. The corresponding appropriation remains subject to legislative approval in the FY 2027 Budget Act.
- The Division secured 35 federal grants totaling approximately \$6.2 million from FY 2017 through FY 2025, supporting pest survey, quarantine inspection, and mitigation of the Little Fire Ant, Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle, and invasive hornets.

DOAG seeks to establish the baseline from which the corrective action plan below proceeds.

Response to Recommendations

Recommendation No. 1 — Urgently develop the Plan to include all statutory requirements, and ensure development occurs through the public process and in consultation with all Council members to facilitate legislative review and approval.

Position: Concur.

DOAG agrees that the 2017-2019 Interim Guam Invasive Species Management Plan does not satisfy 5 GCA § 70107 and has not been updated since 2017. As Council co-chair and as Fund administrator, DOAG has initiated steps to coordinate development of a Plan addressing each statutory element, specifically:

- Performance-oriented goals and objectives with specific, measurable indicators of success for GovGuam invasive species efforts, replacing the general evaluation measures in the Interim Plan;
- Identification of the personnel, other resources, and levels of interagency cooperation required to achieve those goals;
- Specific objectives and measures for each member agency's statutory duties, and the steps the Council will take to carry out its own duties;
- A review of rapid response protocols and of existing and prospective authorities for preventing introduction and spread, including pathway identification and a science-based, risk-based process to interdict, identify, and monitor those pathways;
- Identification of research needs and recommended risk-minimization measures;
- An annual progress reporting mechanism to I Maga'hāgan/I Maga'lāhen Guāhan and I Liheslaturan Guāhan, a triennial effectiveness assessment, and a biennial update cycle.

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Plant Nursery 300-7974 | Biosecurity Division 475-1427 | Pest Hotline 475-7378
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REPORT THREATS TO GUAM'S NATURAL RESOURCES 864-TOKA (8652)

Official Management Response to Draft Performance Audit Report, Department of Agriculture Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund
August 07, 2026
Page 3 of 7

The Plan will be developed through a public process in consultation with stakeholders and submitted for legislative approval. The Advisory Council's Invasive Species Priority Matrix will be presented to the Council for adoption and incorporated into the Plan.

The Invasive Species Coordinator (Council Secretary), under the direction of Mr. Christopher Rosario and Director as Council Co-Chair is leading efforts to complete a draft of the Plan by the end of this calendar year, 2026.

Recommendation No. 2 — Continue to collaborate with each Council member to expedite Plan development and to ensure the Council meets consistently and takes actions that directly improve the Division's operations and management.

Position: Concur.

DOAG acknowledges the periods in which the Council did not convene as required and the consequences identified in the report, including the absence of a Plan, the absence of a reviewed structure of fines and penalties, and the absence of legislative recommendations. Planned actions:

- Publish an annual Council meeting calendar at the start of each fiscal year providing for no fewer than four regular meetings, with notice issued in accordance with the Open Government Law;
- Requests each member agency head designate a standing designee with authority to act, and to name an alternate, so that quorum does not depend on principal availability;
- Maintain a standing agenda that carries Plan development as a recurring action item until closed;

Recommendation No. 3 — Promptly document and adopt a formal SOP to enhance training efficiency and ensure accountability in Fee management.

Position: Concur.

DOAG confirms that the SOP dated May 2018 is not in use and does not reflect the current Fee schedule, the current invoicing cycle, or the use of the monthly Vessel Cargo Report. DOAG will supersede that SOP with a document covering, at minimum:

- The invoicing cycle keyed to receipt of the monthly Vessel Cargo Report from the Port Authority of Guam, with a defined maximum interval between vessel arrival and invoice issuance, addressing the instances in which invoices were issued at least three months after the relevant shipment dates;
- The current Fee schedule under Public Law 36-87, and the schedule enacted by Bill No. 334-38 (COR) should it become law;
- The billing and remittance deadlines and the penalty provisions under 8 GAR § 14103, including the fifteen-day billing requirement, the forty-five-day remittance requirement, and the penalty of two times the Fee amount or \$50, whichever is higher;

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REPORT THREATS TO GUAM'S NATURAL RESOURCES 864-TOKA (8652)

Official Management Response to Draft Performance Audit Report, Department of Agriculture Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund
August 07, 2026
Page 4 of 7

- Records retention for both digital and physical copies of invoices, remittance advices, deposit forms, and depositor reports, consistent with applicable GovGuam records retention schedule;
- A monthly receivables and aging report identifying outstanding remittances by carrier;
- Annual review and reissuance of the SOP, with documented training for all assigned personnel.

DOAG acknowledges the scope limitation created by the unavailability of invoices and records prior to FY 2024 and accepts that the absence of those records leaves a residual risk of undetected noncompliance in Fee collections for those periods. This is primarily due to the lack of consistent retention of personnel to fill the Invasive Species Coordinator, which has been resolved.

Recommendation No. 4 — Promptly contact all Carriers to ensure Fee rates comply with regulations and establish regular monitoring and communication protocols with Carriers and stakeholders to enforce regulatory requirements.

Position: Concur.

The carrier survey responses at Appendix 6 identify two distinct issues that DOAG will address separately.

DOAG Invasive Species Coordinator is in communication with carriers to review the fees being charged to consignees. DOAG will issue written notice to all carriers restating the assessment basis and the current rates, and requesting written confirmation of the rate each carrier passes through to consignees and importers.

Additionally, DOAG will reconcile carrier-reported volumes against the Vessel Cargo Report on a quarterly basis and resolve variances in writing.

The Invasive Species Coordinator will incorporate into the SOP a standing communication protocol with the Port Users Group and individual carriers, and will address the operational concerns raised in the survey.

Recommendation No. 5 — Continue to work with BBMR and DOAG's legislative oversight committee to ensure all Fund revenues are allocated to the Division.

Position: Concur.

DOAG agrees that annual appropriations have not tracked Fund revenues and that the Department has relied on unexpended carryover balances to bridge the gap. DOAG will:

- Continue to advocate for appropriation of the increased FY 2027 ceiling of \$1.7 million, with increases based on corresponding fund revenues;

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REPORT THREATS TO GUAM'S NATURAL RESOURCES 864-TOKA (8652)

Official Management Response to Draft Performance Audit Report, Department of Agriculture Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund
August 07, 2026
Page 5 of 7

Recommendation No. 6 — Immediately recruit the Division Administrative Officer and the DOAG Administrative Services Officer to ensure effective Fund management and address deficiencies in budgetary and reporting processes.

Position: Concur.

DOAG agrees that the vacancy of the Administrative Services Officer (ASO) position, and the extended absence preceding that vacancy, contributed to the reporting deficiencies identified in the report. Planned actions:

- In FY27 DOAG will announce the recruitment for the ASO position and discuss with recruitment of an AO for the Division, with BBMR.

Reporting requirements. DOAG concurs with the finding that the Department did not meet (a) the quarterly report of publicly funded off-island travel required by the FY 2024 and FY 2025 Budget Acts and (b) the quarterly report to the Governor and the Legislature on the condition of and activity within the Fund required by Public Law 31-43. DOAG has completed the compilation of the travel report and will submit the report retroactively. Moving forward, DOAG will submit a quarterly report to the Governor and the Legislature on the condition of and activity within the Fund.

Travel expenditures. DOAG acknowledges that travel costs of approximately \$12,000 in FY 2024 and \$7,000 in FY 2025 were charged to the Fund without corresponding line items in the Department's budget proposals. Future budget submissions will include a travel line item with justification tied to the Division's statutory functions.

Recommendation No. 7 — Strengthen the control environment.

Position: Concur.

DOAG will address each of the three components identified:

- **Organizational structure, responsibilities, and delegation.** DOAG will issue a current organizational chart for the Division showing the Invasive Species Section, the Administrative/Permitting Section, and the Inspection and Enforcement Section, with reporting lines and written delegations of authority. DOAG will recruit and fill the Division Chief position rather than continuing to rely on acting designations by the Entomologist and the Coordinator.
- **Recruiting, developing, and retaining competent personnel.** DOAG has documented the Division's full staffing requirement, estimated at not fewer than 14 positions including a Division Chief. The Division is currently staffed with 10 positions. Classification status and funding source for an additional 6 positions are included in the proposed FY27 staffing pattern. DOAG will include succession provisions for grant-funded technical positions given the competitive award cycle described in the report.
- **Performance evaluation and accountability.** DOAG will ensure that performance appraisals are completed on schedule for all Division personnel in accordance with

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REPORT THREATS TO GUAM'S NATURAL RESOURCES 864-TOKA (8652)

Official Management Response to Draft Performance Audit Report, Department of Agriculture Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund
August 07, 2026
Page 6 of 7

applicable DOA personnel rules, with individual performance elements linked to the Plan's measures of success once the Plan is adopted.

Response to Other Matters

Commercially Funded Off-Island Travel and Potential Conflict of Interest

DOAG reaffirms the commitment made during the audit: the Department will not accept privately funded travel arrangements from any commercial entity pending resolution of the matter with legal counsel.

DOAG will take the following steps:

- Request a written opinion from the Office of the Attorney General of Guam addressing (a) whether off-island inspection, evaluation, and collection of quarry material at a supplier's site falls within the scope of the Entomologist's or the Coordinator's official duties; (b) whether acceptance of travel accommodations funded by a regulated commercial entity is permissible under Guam's ethics provisions and applicable DOA personnel rules; and (c) whether the authorization of paid Administrative Leave for such travel was proper;
- Pending that opinion, develop a written policy governing any pre-shipment or off-island inspection activity, including a cost-recovery mechanism under which a requesting party remits the full cost of inspection to the Treasurer of Guam rather than paying employee travel directly, and under which the service is available to all importers on the same terms;
- Adopt the report's suggestion that private parties may engage their own qualified experts, with GovGuam personnel reviewing and certifying findings or making the qualified determination on material samples prior to importation.

DOAG asks that the final report continue to state expressly that no public funds were expended for the travel accommodations in question, and that DOAG is not aware of any determination that a shipment was approved or rejected on the basis of who paid for travel. DOAG does not offer this as a defense of the arrangement, and accepts that an appearance of a conflict is itself a sufficient basis for the recommendation.

Bill No. 334-38 (COR)

DOAG offered testimony on Bill No. 334-38 (COR) at the public hearing held on June 29, 2026, and continues to support repeal and reenactment of the applicable provisions of Chapter 14, Division 4, Title 8, Guam Administrative Rules and Regulations, to modernize the Fee, its collection, and its administrative provisions. To the best of our knowledge, the measure remains pending further legislative action. DOAG will offer the specified revised provisions through the Administrative Adjudication process to ensure compliance with the rule-making process.

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REPORT THREATS TO GUAM'S NATURAL RESOURCES 864-TOKA (8652)

Official Management Response to Draft Performance Audit Report, Department of Agriculture Guam Invasive
Species Inspection Fee Fund
August 07, 2026
Page 7 of 7

Closing

The Department appreciates OPA's work on this audit. The findings give DOAG, the Council, and I Liheslaturan Guåhan a shared factual basis for strengthening Guam's biosecurity posture, and the Department is committed to the corrective actions described above.

Should you require additional information or clarification, please contact me at Chelsa.muna@doag.guam.gov.

Si Yu'os Ma'åse'.

Chelsa D. Muna

Digitally signed by Chelsa D.
Muna
Date: 2026.08.06 22:45:07
+1000'

CHELSEA MUÑA
Director

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REPORT THREATS TO GUAM'S NATURAL RESOURCES 864-TOKA (8652)

Appendix 8: Prior Audit Coverage

This is the first performance audit report of the Guam Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund (Fund), but we reviewed the Government of Guam Financial Statements for FY 2015-2024 to identify the total revenues and the budgetary fund balance for each fiscal year for the Fund.

Fiscal Year	Total Revenues	End Fund Balance
FY 2015	\$9,001	\$9,001
FY 2016	\$528,692	\$519,691
FY 2017	\$76,021	\$386,083
FY 2018	\$309,696	\$520,443
FY 2019	\$884,769	\$924,046
FY 2020	\$1,063,021	\$651,715
FY 2021	\$962,825	\$692,939
FY 2022	\$774,905	\$664,487
FY 2023	\$756,178	\$812,863
FY 2024	\$2,119,738	\$1,971,316

Appendix 9: DOAg Invoice to Carrier (Sample)

The image below is of an invoice that was issued by the Division to one of the Carriers, according to the Vessel Cargo Report received for the period of February 2025.

 DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE BIOSECURITY DIVISION 17-3306 Neptune Ave., Barrigada, Guam 96913 Tel: 475-1427, Fax: 477-9487, PEST Hotline: 475-7378 https://biosecurity.guam.gov	 Chelsa Muña Director
Lourdes A. Leon Guerrero Governor	Roy Gamboa Deputy Director
Josh Tenorio Lt. Governor	"Invasive Species Are Everyone's Responsibility"

BILL TO: [REDACTED]	INVOICE #: [REDACTED] DATE: 07/09/2025 DUE DATE: 08/22/2025
----------------------------	--

PAYABLE TO: Treasurer of Guam

CHECK MEMO TO: Guam Department of Agriculture
Account No. 3-662-61601
ISIFF February 2025

DELIVER CHECK TO: Guam Department of Agriculture
[REDACTED]
USDA Plant Inspection Facility, Biosecurity Division,
17-3306 Neptune Avenue Barrigada, Guam 96913

PERIOD COVERED: February 2025 (FY 2025)

Ves Ref #	Vessel Name	Voyage	ATA	ATD	Inbound (Full)					TEU's	TTL BB REV TON	Total
					20D	20R	40D	40R	45D			
28512	[REDACTED]	362	2/5/25 1918	2/6/25 0800	87	3	46			182.00	0	\$4,732.00
28527	[REDACTED]	238	2/22/25 0724	2/22/25 2312	68	3	34			139.00	0	\$3,614.00
										321.00	0	\$8,346.00
Invasive Species Inspection Fee Fund										\$8,346.00	\$0.00	
Total (including BB REV. TON)										\$8,346.00		

RECEIVED BY: _____

DATE RECEIVED: _____

Appendix 10: Invoice from Carrier to Importer (Sample)

The image below is an image of an invoice issued by a Carrier to an Importer/Consignee, indicating the total assessment of the Fee.

Page 1 of 1

INVOICE DATE			
CUSTOMER			
SHIPMENT			
DUE DATE			
TERM			
CONSOL NUMB			

SHIPMENT DETAILS			
CARRIER			
ORDER NUMBERS / OWNER'S REFERENCE			
IMPORT CUSTOMS BROKER	WEIGHT	VOLUME	CHARGEABLE
	3366.000 KG	29.671 M3	29.671 M3
			13 PKG
ORIGIN	ETD	DESTINATION	ETA
USMIA = Miami, United States		GUGUM = Guam, Guam	11-Jan-24
CONTAINERS			
PCIU8476879 - 40HC			

CHARGES	
DESCRIPTION	CHARGES IN USD
OCEAN FREIGHT CHARGE	5,900.00
ORIGIN CHARGES	1,149.00
BUNKER RECOVERY FACTOR	552.00
PORT CHARGES	800.00
DESTINATION HANDLING CHARGE	135.00
Destination Documentation Fee	25.00
CUSTOMS CLEARANCE	25.00
CUSTOMS FEE	25.00
INVASIVE SPECIES INSPECTION FEE	72.00
TRUCKING CHARGES - INBOUND	300.00

TOTAL CHARGES	
	SUBTOTAL 8,983.00
	TOTAL USD 8,983.00

CUSTOMER ID	Invoiced	USD 8,983.00	BALANCE DUE	USD 8,983.00
PAYMENT METHOD			DUE DATE	05-Jan-24
Transfer Funds To:				

Appendix 11: Status of Audit Recommendations

No.	Addressee	Audit Recommendation	Status	Action Required
1	DOAg Management	Urgently develop the Plan to include all statutory requirements and to ensure that the development occurs through the public process and in consultation with all Council members to facilitate legislative review and approval.	OPEN	Provide a corrective action plan with the responsible officials and timeline of implementation.
2	DOAg Management	Continue to collaborate with each Council member to expedite Plan development and to ensure the Council meets consistently and takes actions that directly improve the Division's operations and management.	OPEN	Provide a corrective action plan with the responsible officials and timeline of implementation.
3	DOAg Management	Promptly document and adopt a formal SOP to enhance training efficiency and ensure accountability in Fee management.	OPEN	Provide a corrective action plan with the responsible officials and timeline of implementation.
4	DOAg Management	Promptly and regularly contact all Carriers to ensure Fee rates comply with regulations and to establish regular monitoring and communication protocols to maintain engagement with Carriers and stakeholders and to enforce regulatory requirements.	OPEN	Provide a corrective action plan with the responsible officials and timeline of implementation.
5	DOAg Management	Immediately recruit the Division AO and the DOAg ASO to ensure effective Fund management and address deficiencies in budgetary and reporting processes.	OPEN	Provide a corrective action plan with the responsible officials and timeline of implementation.
6	DOAg Management	Continue to work with the Guam Legislature and BBMR to revisit its Fund forecasting assumptions and methods to more accurately reflect actual revenues and to align annual appropriations to the Division.	OPEN	Provide a corrective action plan with the responsible officials and timeline of implementation.
7	DOAg Management	Strengthen their control environment by implementing the following actions: - Establish a clear organizational structure, assign responsibilities, and delegate authority to achieve the entity's objectives. - Demonstrate a commitment to recruiting, developing, and retaining competent personnel. - Evaluate performance and hold individuals accountable for their responsibilities.	OPEN	Provide a corrective action plan with the responsible officials and timeline of implementation.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE GUAM INVASIVE SPECIES INSPECTION FEE FUND Report No. 26-08, August 2026

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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MISSION STATEMENT

We independently conduct audits and administer procurement appeals to safeguard public trust and promote good governance for the people of Guam.

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The Government of Guam is the standard of public trust and good governance.

CORE VALUES

Objective

To have an independent and impartial mind.

Professional

To adhere to ethical and professional standards.

Accountable

To be responsible and transparent in our actions.

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