



## COMMONWEALTH JUDICIARY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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### Press Release

### For Immediate Release

April 12, 2018

### Inter-branch Collaboration Continues Regarding Guma' Hustisia

Saipan, MP – On Monday, April 9, 2018, in a meeting held at the Lt. Governor's Conference Room, the leaders of the three branches met to continue discussions to move toward the re-opening of the Guma' Hustisia. Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro, other members of the Judiciary, Governor Ralph DLG. Torres, Lt. Governor Victor B. Hocog, Senate President Arnold I. Palacios, and House Speaker Rafael S. Demapan gathered with staffers to address the air-conditioning and mold remediation issues that have forced the closure of the Guma' Hustisia to the public.

Short-term measures to address potential health and safety concerns, the failing air system, and necessary mold remediation were the initial topics discussed. Short-term measures are necessary as the failing system cannot effectively maintain the building and may, at any time, irreparably shut down. Installation of peripheral units will assist in maintaining air circulation and appropriate and consistent temperature and humidity levels. This short-term measure would also meet the goal of allowing certain offices to operate out of the Guma' Hustisia to provide vital public services.

The health and safety of the public and court employees remains a priority, and specialized mold assessment and remediation work will need to begin prior to opening the Guma' Hustisia to the public. A project to provide an assessment for mold remediation and eradication design, funded through Capital Improvement Project funding administered by the Office of the Governor, was on-going prior to the failure of the Guma' Hustisia's air-conditioning system on March 15, 2018. In addition, the Judiciary has made continuous efforts throughout the past fiscal years to mitigate mold. Those efforts include the installation of dehumidifiers and removing affected carpets, furniture, fixtures, and other items throughout the building.

The leaders discussed funding both the short-term measures and long-term solutions, which are installation of a new system and extensive remediation. The Governor and Lt. Governor indicated that they would meet with their finance and budget professionals to determine availability of funds to immediately accomplish the short-term measures and to plan for the funding of the long-term solutions to replace the air-conditioning system and fully restore the Guma' Hustisia. Senate President Palacios and Speaker Demapan assured the Judiciary that the Senate and House stand ready to assist with addressing legislation to fund the measures to enable the Guma' Hustisia to re-open.

Although the Guma' Hustisia has remained closed to the public since March 16, 2018, the Judiciary continues to move forward with court matters and provide services to the public at alternate locations—the U.S. District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands, Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center, Department of Public Safety training room, and the Office of Adult Probation and Supervision satellite office behind the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. The Judiciary has information posted on the front door of the Guma' Hustisia regarding the location of these services. Court schedule and notices are also posted on the Judiciary website ([www.justice.gov.mp](http://www.justice.gov.mp)), Facebook (CNMI Judiciary), and Instagram (@cnmijudiciary).