

ACTING DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY NIK PULA'S CLOSING REMARKS  
at the  
CONFERENCE ON BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN THE ISLANDS  
APRIL 6 – 8, 2009

The time has come for our part of the program to end. Over the last day and a half you've heard about developments across the Pacific and the Caribbean. Before I finish this part of our Conference, I'd like to take a little bit of your time and acknowledge a few of our people. This has been a real great Conference here in Hawaii for our Islands and it's particularly grateful because of the times. These are tough times economically, and I just want to tell you how much I certainly appreciate each and everyone of you for being here today to help out, support and do business with our communities in the Insular Areas, in the Pacific as well as the Caribbean. But before I close, I just want to acknowledge a few people. Could I kindly ask the staff of the Office of Insular Affairs who are here to please stand up - Tom, Angie and Lydia. Thank you very much for a job well done. I'm impressed that there are only three of our staff in the room; that means the rest are still working. That's wonderful.

I would also like to ask my friend David Cohen to please stand. I want to acknowledge David Cohen because he is the man who started these Conferences and this is the fifth conference in seven years. I know he's a republican, but when it comes to the insular areas we're republicans, and democrats and independents who share the goal of improving the standard of living in our islands by developing stronger economies and more jobs for our people.

Later this afternoon you will hear directly from many of the island delegations about opportunities and priorities specific to their areas. This is a new program element of this conference this year, and I'm looking forward to it and I hope you are too.

Tomorrow many of you will have meetings with one another to discuss opportunities you've heard about the last day and a half. I hope some of you from the mainland and other areas will develop partnerships with our folks in the islands.

I would like to thank the leaders of the delegations – President Mori, our Governors and our members of Congress and all the other dignitaries who have traveled so far to be here at our conference today. We appreciate your participation and your support. I'd especially like to thank all the businesses and organizations from the islands and around the world who were able to come here over the past few days. Your presence here is all the more impressive in these tough economic times and it gives us all great encouragement as we face these challenges and opportunities together. As a friend of mine who was sending his son on a religious mission said to him at the airport, "Son, go do the Lords work -- and give them hell!" Lets get some business going -- and thank you very much!