DEC 0 9 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

We write to express the Administration's strong support for the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act of 2010 (S. 3945).

This legislation establishes a process for Native Hawaiians to organize a government roughly akin to the government of an American Indian tribe. Once the Native Hawaiian government is created and its leaders elected, the United States would officially recognize the new governing entity and work with it on a government-to-government basis, just as the United States works with federally recognized Indian tribes in other States.

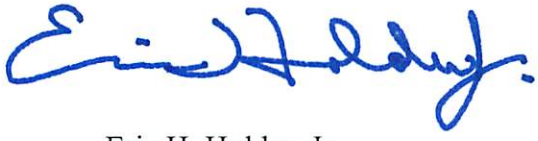
Senator Akaka first introduced a version of this legislation more than a decade ago. Since 1999, Senator Akaka, Senator Inouye, and other members of Hawaii's congressional delegation have worked tirelessly with the last three Administrations — and especially with our Departments — to greatly improve the bill, which has now received bipartisan support from the House of Representatives, the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, and Hawaii's Governor and Attorney General.

Of the Nation's three major indigenous groups, Native Hawaiians — unlike American Indians and Alaska Natives — are the only one that currently lacks a government-to-government relationship with the United States. This bill provides Native Hawaiians a means by which to exercise the inherent rights to local self-government, self-determination, and economic self-sufficiency that other Native Americans enjoy.

For these reasons, we urge the Senate to pass the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act of 2010 and send it to the President for his signature.

The Office of Management and Budget has advised that enactment of this legislation would be in accord with the Administration's program.

Sincerely,



Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Attorney General

Ken Salazar
Secretary of the Interior

cc: The Honorable Byron L. Dorgan
Chair
Committee on Indian Affairs
United States Senate

The Honorable John Barrasso
Vice Chair
Committee on Indian Affairs
United States Senate