

## FSM Information Services

### Press Release

#### **FSM State of Yap Joins Chuuk & Pohnpei in Prohibiting Aircraft Disembarkation; 14-Day Delay for Cargo Shipping Rescinded in Favor of Strengthened Health & Port Security Protocols**

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020, His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), upon the conclusion of agreeable discussion with the Honorable Henry S. Falan, Governor of the FSM State of Yap, has consented to an official request that Yap State shall join the FSM States of Chuuk & Pohnpei in prohibiting the disembarkation of aircraft passengers until further notice. While aircraft may continue to arrive in Yap State for the delivery of cargo—and such continued cargo services are encouraged and welcomed—no individual regardless of origin may disembark from aircraft into the FSM States of Yap (as well as Chuuk and Pohnpei). The FSM State of Kosrae is not presently receiving air traffic passengers.

“It has become clear that Yap State requires the same assistance to strengthen its quarantine facility capacity as Chuuk and Pohnpei,” President Panuelo said. “For this reason, among others, and in the best interest of protecting the Nation and its citizens, no travelers may disembark in the State of Yap until further notice.”

Per the March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020 declaration by President Panuelo, FSM citizens are still prohibited from outbound travel to COVID-19 countries, states, and territories. Citizens wishing to travel outbound must acquire the Government’s approval for special circumstances such as returning to a place of employment abroad, returning to a place of education abroad, and attending the funeral for a death in the family.

Additionally, in an effort to ensure the continued supply of essential goods and services, the 14-day delay for cargo and tanker vessels prior to entering the Nation is now rescinded. In lieu of the 14-day delay requirement, shipping lines must comply with extra health precaution measures supervised by the FSM State Departments of Health and Port Authorities. Fishing vessels licensed in the FSM and arriving into the Nation’s borders are still subject to their requirements, including 14-day quarantines.

The Honorable Carlson D. Apis, Secretary of the Department of Transportation, Communication, & Infrastructure wrote a letter to the Nation’s shipping entities regarding this issue which can be found here: [https://gov.fm/files/TCI-Letter-to-Ship-Operators\\_March\\_25\\_2020.pdf](https://gov.fm/files/TCI-Letter-to-Ship-Operators_March_25_2020.pdf)

“These expanded health precaution measures will help to ensure the safety of our Nation’s citizens,” the President said, “The 14-day delay for cargo and tanker vessels is presently more of a danger to the FSM’s security than if it were to be rescinded. Thus, I rescind the 14-day delay for cargo and tanker vessels only. This will help ensure the continued supply of essential goods and services, including the Nation’s health and food security.”

“Hospitals will continue to receive medical supplies just as supermarkets will continue to receive food,” the President advised. “Citizens are urged to keep their food purchases at the same level as if there wasn’t a pandemic, so as to ensure everyone is able to buy plenty. I respectfully request all

citizens to shop with kind consideration of others and their families. Our supply lines are not in any jeopardy.”

As of March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020, there are still no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the FSM. The President, who remains in quarantine along with individuals such as Chief of Staff and the Secretary of Transportation, Communication & Infrastructure, urges all citizens to work together to keep each other safe (e.g. by washing their hands) and to keep the Nation COVID-19 free.

All FSM citizens and residents are encouraged to avoid large gatherings and abide by their State’s relevant declaration or emergency order throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. “Be safe and be with your family,” President Panuelo said. “Above all else, stay put—this isn’t the time for travel or large gatherings, but it is precisely the time to be safe, be healthy, and be with your loved ones.”