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Calendared
3/25/2021

TWENTY-SECOND NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH

LEGISLATURE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 25, 2021

FIRST Regular SESSION, 2021

C. Res. 22-4

A HOUSE COMMEMORATIVE RESOLUTION

To commemorate and celebrate the 10th birthday of the 47-foot indigenous Chamorro sakman called "Che'lu".

1 **WHEREAS**, Che'lu began as a dream in 2006 when the nonprofit Sakman
2 Chamorro Inc. was formed and in-depth research was collected about Chamorro
3 canoes, especially the large "sakman"; and

4 **WHEREAS**, the dream to make the sakman a reality was bolstered by a
5 fundraiser hosted by the Dolphin Club San Francisco to support the Chamorro
6 Flying Proa Relay Team, which successfully swam from England to France in 2007
7 to raise funds to build a sakman; and

8 **WHEREAS**, a chance meeting at a Chamorro event brought master
9 carpenter Mr. Mario Borja and canoe researcher Mr. Pete Perez together and led
10 them to an in-depth conversation about the 1742 Anson drawing of a sakman that
11 was drawn on Tinian by Englishman Piercy Brett; and

12 **WHEREAS**, Sakman Chamorro Inc., who was initially supposed to
13 spearhead the project, was not able to do so, so an alternative plan was needed and
14 sought after. After much discussions and deliberations, an agreement was put in

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1 place to transfer the project to CHE'LU Inc., a San Diego nonprofit organization
2 that was willing to spearhead the project; and

3 **WHEREAS**, the Chamorro Hands in Education Links Unity (CHE'LU)
4 organization, led by Mr. Mario Borja and the sakman team, decided to take on this
5 tremendous and spiritually cultured venture for the revival of local Chamorro
6 maritime traditions as well as to inspire people to join in the revival of canoe culture
7 as well as help the people of the Marianas learn how to become mariners again; and

8 **WHEREAS**, the Sakman Chamorro Project was initiated in 2009 by San
9 Diego-based CHE'LU Inc., who built the sailing sakman based on the 1742
10 drawings by Sir George Anson; and

11 **WHEREAS**, the search for the right wood led the CHE'LU Inc.
12 organization to a forest in Mendocino, California where they purchased a
13 Mendocino redwood log that was shipped back to San Diego and blessed to begin
14 the construction of the Sakman in March 2010; and

15 **WHEREAS**, on March 25, 2011, the Chamorro sakman called "Che'lu"
16 was finished and was built mirroring the same sakman that the ancient Chamorros
17 used in their seafaring voyages; and

18 **WHEREAS**, on August 26, 2011, Che'lu, being a 47-foot replica of the
19 Anson single outrigger sailing canoe, set sail for the first time through San Diego
20 Bay, proving itself seaworthy; and

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1 **WHEREAS**, Che'lu was then shipped to Guam in preparation for the 2016
2 Festival of the Pacific Arts, where she first touched the waters of Guam, joining
3 canoes from all over Micronesia; and

4 **WHEREAS**, Che'lu was then shipped by Matson Guam/Micronesia to
5 Guåhan in preparation for the 2016 Festival of the Pacific Arts, where she first
6 touched the waters of Guåhan, joining canoes from all over Micronesia; and

7 **WHEREAS**, Guåhan became Che'lu's new home port where Ambros, Inc.,
8 under Mr. Frank SN Shimizu's leadership; provided Che'lu and her crew needed
9 maintenance and logistical support; and

10 **WHEREAS**, Che'lu is a beautiful 47-foot wooden sakman that weighs
11 5600 pounds and is painted in the traditional colors of achote red and black; and

12 **WHEREAS**, in December 2019, Che'lu came to Saipan from Guåhan,
13 under the watchful eyes of Master Navigator Cecilio Raiukiulipiy to be prepared
14 for regular open ocean voyaging between all the Mariana Islands, becoming part of
15 the 500 sails fleet alongside canoes Neni, Richard Seman, Ladahao, I Marianas,
16 Anaguan, Auntie Oba, Dee Dee, Animiyu, Dinga, and Hagåtña; and

17 **WHEREAS**, Che'lu was brought to Saipan in agreement with Mr. Mario
18 Borja and CHE'LU Inc. for the revival of local indigenous maritime traditions and
19 to unite and teach the people of the CNMI how to become sea voyagers again; and

20 **WHEREAS**, Che'lu has been welcomed with open arms and appreciation
21 by the CNMI community and will be cared for and maintained by 500 Sails with

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1 the support of the CNMI Indigenous Affairs Office, Indigenous cultural
2 organizations, and IT&E CNMI; and

3 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the House of
4 Representatives of the Twenty-Second Northern Marianas Commonwealth
5 Legislature that it is with great honor and privilege to commemorate and celebrate
6 the 10th birthday of the 47-foot indigenous Chamorro sakman called “Che’lu” on
7 March 25, 2021.

8 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Sponsor of this Resolution or the
9 designee of the Speaker of the House shall present a certified original copy of this
10 House Commemorative Resolution; and

11 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Speaker of the House of
12 Representatives shall certify, and the House Clerk shall attest to the adoption of this
13 resolution and thereafter the House Clerk shall transmit a certified copy to Mr.
14 Mario Borja, Master Carver, Senior Cultural Advisor, CHE’LU Inc.; Mr. Peter J.
15 Perez, Executive Director, 500 Sails; Honorable Ralph DLG. Torres, Governor,
16 Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; Honorable Gregorio “Kilili” C.
17 Sablan, U.S. Delegate to the United States Congress, 117th United States Congress;
18 Debra Anne Haaland, Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior; Michelle Suave,
19 Acting Commissioner, Administration for Native Americans (ANA); Honorable
20 David M. Apatang, Mayor of Saipan; Honorable Edwin P. Aldan, Mayor of Tinian
21 and Aguiquan; Honorable Efraim Atalig, Mayor of Rota; Honorable Vicente C.
22 Santos, Jr., Mayor of the Northern Islands; Roman Tudela Jr, Director, Indigenous

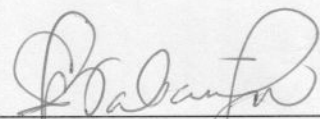
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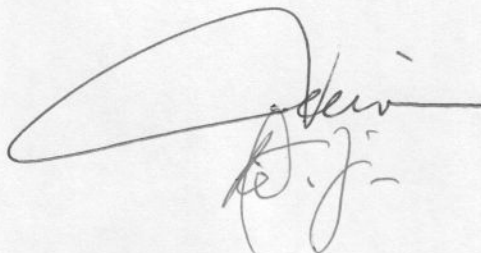
1 Affairs Office; John Tagabuel, Executive Director, Carolinian Affairs Office;
2 Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero, Secretary, Department of Community and Cultural
3 Affairs; Eli D. Cabrera, Administrator, CNMI Bureau of Environmental and
4 Coastal Quality (BECQ); Anthony T. Benavente, Secretary, Department of Lands
5 and Natural Resources; Dr. Theresa "Isa" Arriola, Chair, Northern Marianas
6 Humanities Council; Liana M.S. Hofschneider, President, Matua Council for
7 Chamorro Advancement; Gordon Marciano, Chair, Chamolinian Cultural Village
8 Inc. (CCVI)/Canoe Federation; Frank M. Rabauliman, President, United Carolinian
9 Association; Ward Bushee, President, San Francisco Dolphin Swimming and
10 Boating Club; Mr. Danny Blas, Chair, Chamorro Hands in Education Links Unity;
11 Vic S. Angoco, Senior Vice President, Pacific, Matson; Frank SN Shimizu, CEO,
12 Ambros Inc.; and Rose Soledad, General Manager, IT&E CNMI.

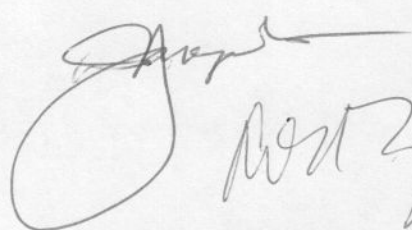

Prefiled: 3/25/2021

Date: 3/25/2024

Introduced by:


Rep. Sheila J. Babauta

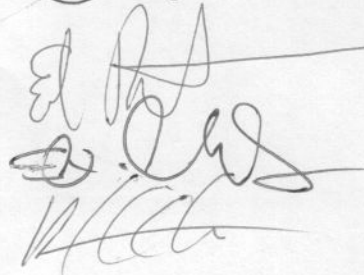


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**Public Statement in support of House Commemorative Resolution to celebrate the 10th
birthday of 47-foot indigenous Chamorro Sakman named "Che'lu"**

March 25, 2021

By Pete and Emma Perez, Co-Founders 500 Sails



What is the significance of this canoe?

It is well built and beautiful.

Its design is based on the Anson drawing of one of the last large Chamorro canoes before they disappeared for over 265 years.

It is a continuation of one of the world's most successful sailing vessel designs.

But it is much more. This canoe represents many thousands of Chamorros in many places over many years.

It represents our ancestors who designed and perfected the canoe - the people who sailed them and relied on them for thousands of years.

It represents Chamorros in the CNMI, in the US mainland who set out to build a genuine Chamorro voyaging canoe. The people who did the research, raised money, planned the construction, and built the canoe.

It represents the Chamorros in Guahan who welcomed Che'lu home to her islands and to her ocean. At the 2016 Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture in Guahan, Che'lu welcomed canoes from across Micronesia as the representative of Chamorros in Guahan and the Diaspora.

This canoe has a mission: to restore and strengthen traditional maritime culture in the Marianas.

Che'lu has been entrusted to us to be used to carry out her mission. She has been entrusted to us because we have the resources to do this important work. We have the facilities to maintain Che'lu. We have the programs to teach people to sail. We have the seafaring knowledge of our Carolinian voyages and navigators. Here in the CNMI we have Chamorros and Carolinians working together to ensure that our maritime traditions are not lost and that our youth will always have canoes in their lives.

This is the significance of this beautiful canoe. This is the opportunity this canoe represents. Recognizing the 10 year anniversary of the birth of Che'lu is our statement to those who have entrusted us with this canoe and with her mission that we are up to the task - that we know what this canoe represents, that we are proud to take the lead on this important work, that we will do this work proudly and out of love for our islands, for our ocean, for our culture, and for our people of the Marianas, past, present and future, wherever they live.