



OFFICE OF SENATOR
Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao

38th Guam Legislature | *I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan*

Gumataotao on Emergency Management Modernization and Homeland Security Bills: **We Can and Must Do Better.**

MEDIA STATEMENT

October 14, 2025

Senator Shawn Gumataotao issued the following statement regarding today's public hearing on his emergency management and homeland security related measures. Bill 184 requires the Office of Homeland Security (OHS) Grants Manager and Marianas Regional Fusion Center (MRFC) positions to be in the classified service and Bill 179 modernizes emergency management responsibilities through the creation of a new Bureau of Emergency Management within the Guam Fire Department (GFD).

“Through the creation of classified leadership positions, Bill 184 is critical to helping repair the damage that has been done when policies are disregarded, and oversight is not prioritized by those in charge. This Bill was introduced in direct response to the 2024 audit findings by our Office of Public Accountability – and recommendations offered by leaders of our regional and national homeland security and emergency management communities who continue to engage with OHS. Bill 184 safeguards federal and local taxpayer investments that are made in support of a more secure Guam, Micronesia, and United States of America.

In Bill 179, we must see this effort for what it is – a modernization of a critical government of Guam mandate. Our emergency response entities like GFD manage disaster planning, recovery planning, and many other plans year-round. GFD works directly at facilities such as fire stations and rescue stations, they manage specialty vehicles and equipment and oversee human capital – the men and women of the Guam Fire Department. They also coordinate and network with partners, our neighbors, and other territorial, regional and federal officials to secure necessary contacts in an emergency when and where it happens. In 2025, this has never been a more important combination of skill sets needed to serve our island community in a new role and in a new time in emergency management.

Less than flattering audits by the Office of Public Accountability have led to more questions than answers on how critical emergency management dollars were spent by those in charge. Also, a “mission check” on May 6, 2025, of the Emergency Operations Center was evidence that our readiness was not where we wanted it to be. Though there has been great progress on issues identified in that visit to the EOC five months ago, confidence in such a critical agency has been shaken to its very core.

I thank the leadership of our emergency management and homeland security agencies and community stakeholders for contributing to the discussion on Bills 184 and 179. I am also grateful to Finance Committee Chairman Chris Duenas for assisting with today's public hearings. I look forward to continue working with him and our colleagues during the markup process as we consider amendments to strengthen both bills before they are considered by the full legislature.”

For more information, please contact Senator Gumataotao's office at (671) 647-1409/1411 or via email at office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov.