

Guam works to formalize food and accommodation exception for overseas Filipino workers

Staff Reports, Pacific Daily News/USA TODAY Network Published 8:57 p.m. ChT Aug. 26, 2019 | Updated 2:59 p.m. ChT Aug. 27, 2019



David Dell'Isola (Photo: Courtesy of the Guam Department of Labor)

The Leon Guerrero administration and Philippine Overseas Employment Administration are working toward a formal agreement that would give Guam a permanent exemption to the food and accommodation requirement for overseas Filipino workers, according to an announcement from Adelup Monday.

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration policy standards require overseas contractors to provide “food and accommodation or the monetary equivalent which shall be commensurate to the cost of living in the host country, or off-setting benefits” for overseas Filipino workers.

The agency allows for exemptions if the host country can demonstrate the ability to provide other benefits that will, at a minimum, offset costs of living, according to the announcement.

Sports: [Philippine hoops rivals to play on Guam \(/story/sports/2019/07/09/guam-philippine-basketball/1690056001/\)](https://www.guampdn.com/story/sports/2019/07/09/guam-philippine-basketball/1690056001/)

While there is no formal agreement in place between Guam and the Philippines, the Philippines agency has consistently approved Guam's applications for H-2B labor without contractors providing food and accommodation.

Without a formal agreement, in March 2019, enforcement of the food and accommodation requirement was initiated by the Philippine Consulate Office on Guam, raising concerns among contractors who urged Guam Department of Labor Director David Dell'Isola to intervene.

Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero's chief adviser on economic development, national and international affairs, Carl Gutierrez, led a delegation to engage in talks with the Philippine government.

Gutierrez coordinated the meetings with Philippine government officials while Dell'Isola led the presentation to seek the waiver for Guam. The discussions were held with Philippine officials: secretary of labor Silvestre Bello III; agency administrator Bernard Olalia; agency licensing and regulation office director Ria Land; and agency chief legal counsel Harvey Dumbab.

“Our Guam delegation has made it clear that we are pursuing this exemption industry-wide and our meetings with the labor officials proved to be very promising with all of them agreeing that a waiver for Guam benefits all of us,” Dell'Isola said. “Chief Advisor Gutierrez was instrumental in this process and without his expertise, we would not have been able to garner the immediate attention of the Philippine government.”

Read or Share this story: <https://www.guampdn.com/story/news/local/2019/08/26/guam-works-formalize-room-and-board-exception-filipino-workers/2118208001/>