



Partial solution for foreign labor hopefully in sight

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A sense of urgency remains over the foreign labor crisis, but government officials are cautiously optimistic that at least a partial solution is in sight. Congress could act soon on legislation that would provide workers for military projects, but the Calvo Administration wants answers for the civilian side as well.

Labor's alien worker certification program administrator Greg Massey briefed the Rotary Club on the latest. The number of foreign workers here now less than sixty and large construction projects sitting idle without any bidders. "Kind of unheard of," he commented. "Typically don't hear someone saying we're not gonna take you know a \$10 million or \$30 million project."

Massey says the national defense authorization act has provisions to allow foreign workers for military construction projects. But the governor has proposed expanding his authority to allow him not only to certify alien workers, but to define Guam's temporary needs. Massey explains that could reverse recent USCIS policy that's resulted in a nearly 100-percent labor visa denial rate.

"Since that's a Guam only regulation it wouldn't be affecting the whole mainland, it would be just for Guam, and that would be a holistic fix."

Until then officials fear what they're calling a chilling effect on local projects will continue. Massey, a long-time labor certification official, is hoping to hear back soon, saying, "We know that they're going to have their legal people look at it. We're hoping soon; I can't really comment on how long it will take."

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