

## **GAR SURVEY RESPONSE – Mary Camacho Torres**

### **A. Real Estate Industry Related**

1. The Governor's office has upgraded the classification of the real estate industry as an essential service during COVID-19 "Condition of Readiness" operating restrictions. However, Government of Guam agencies that are part and parcel of the real estate industry remain either closed or inactive. (The real estate industry encompasses private sector real estate activities as well as Government of Guam agencies that are involved in the processing of real estate transactions including taxation, recordation, land management interaction, construction and land use permitting, building inspections, building occupancy and document recordation.). Will you support the preparation and passage of legislation to classify the whole of the real estate industry encompassing both the private sector and related Government of Guam agencies as TRUE ESSENTIAL SERVICES?

**Yes. I have always supported continuing operations at the Department of Land Management to ensure we are not halting previously-approved transactions.**

**That is why I wrote the department in April of this year urging limited reopening as well as the consideration of an electronic recording system for the processing of real estate documents. While no one could have predicted the extensive closure we now find ourselves in, it is times like these that demonstrate the need for a more efficient system—one that does not unduly jeopardize the health and safety of employees, but nonetheless ensures that government services continue in an effort to aid an essential, suffering community.**

2. The Guam Land Use Commission (GLUC) application processing system has been rendered inactive by GovGuam COVID restrictions since March 2020 with no apparent urgency to restore the system to full operation. The estimated value of development projects currently awaiting Department of Land Management and GLUC-related action since March is nearly \$2 billion. Will you support the classification of the GLUC application processing system (critical to improving Guam's economic well-being) as an essential service during the COVID-19 Condition of Readiness operating restrictions?

**Yes, I believe government of Guam agencies such as the GLUC should be considered essential and currently operating to serve our community.**

### **B. General Government**

1. Will you support the creation, introduction and passage of a bill to change the operation of the Guam Legislature from full time to part time?

**No. While it makes for a nice sound bite, history has proven that it's harder to do your job if you're relying on big business for your bread and butter, instead of the people you swore to serve. To ensure a part-time legislature is free of further conflict, private entities that employ senators would need to be barred from any business relationship with the government—a provision that I have not seen in any part-time proposal thus far.**

2. Will you support the repeal of the 1% increase in the Business Privilege Tax/Gross Receipt Tax rate, i.e. restoring the BPT/GRT rate to 4%?

**Yes, I support a rollback of the GRT from 5% to 4%, provided that this reduction is accompanied by a publicly approved plan of the corresponding government agency cuts necessary to meet this reduction.**

3. Are you in favor of increasing taxes and/fees to deal with Government of Guam revenue shortfall caused by COVID-19 imposed restrictions on private sector business operations?

**No, I believe that the only acceptable way to address the government's revenue shortfall at this time is to reduce government spending. That is why I supported the Fiscal Year 2021 Appropriations Act, which cut GovGuam's budget by approximately \$65 million.**

4. Will you support a significant reduction in Government of Guam expenditures including payroll during COVID-19 lockdown and PCOR2 periods in order to keep the Government solvent?

**Due to reduced revenues, lawmakers knew we would need to adjust spending to match expectations while shoring up our most critical agencies. That is why an overwhelming number of senators, including myself, passed the Fiscal Year 2021 Appropriations Act which authorized a \$65 million cut to the government's budget and near across-the-board reductions to entities, such as the Legislature, the Office of the Governor, as well as the Judiciary of Guam.**

5. Are you in favor of increasing the local minimum wage and Why?

**While I have supported incrementally raising the minimum wage every time the question was asked—I would not support any decision which may exacerbate the current conditions of Guam's business community. Just as the Legislature tabled wage discussions following a decline in tourist arrivals in 2017, lawmakers must consider the state of our economy before proceeding with any wage talks.**

6. Are you in favor of reducing taxes and fees to assist in the start of small businesses and in maintaining their viability?

**Yes, supporting small businesses is critical to our economy's recovery. That is why I voted to expand tax exemptions for businesses along with every other relief package that has gone through the Body this term. Reducing the regulatory burden and barriers faced by community and family-based producers and providing exemptions for cottage industries and farmer-led cooperatives can also help invigorate our economy and get our people the independent income they need.**

7. What functions of the Government of Guam do you believe should be privatized?

**I believe basic services that residents need to function in modern life should remain in the hands and under the accountability of the public.**

8. Are you in support of the impending military buildup and the Marine relocation?

**As stated by nearly every Legislature before me, I support a plan that clearly addresses the concerns of the People of Guam, gives our community an equal place at the table, and leaves our island stronger and safer than we were before.**