

Bordallo urges 'silent majority' to speak up

By Amritha Alladi

Pacific Daily News
aalladi@guampdn.com

The comment period is over and now Guam residents must wait to hear how the Defense Department will address the issues residents have raised in response to the draft Environmental Impact Statement, one of which is the suggestion to extend the time line for bringing Marines from Okinawa to Guam.

Guam Delegate Madeleine Bordallo, Gov. Felix Camacho and the Guam Legislature have supported the extension of the time line.

However, some of Guam's business community yesterday said that suggestion doesn't represent what a majority of Guam residents want and they're hoping the buildup plans materialize at a swifter pace.

During a Rotary Club meeting at the Marriott Guam Resort yesterday afternoon, Bordallo, who was the guest speaker for the luncheon, responded to information presented in the Defense Department's draft En-

"What I'm really concerned about is how far we push on that brake pedal. Because so many of us are hurting in this economy today and we'd like to see you move your foot over to the other pedal pretty soon."

— Triple J President Bob Jones

vironmental Impact Statement, including her stance against the use of eminent domain to acquire non-Defense Department lands, her questions about what will be done with the dredged material from Apra Harbor, and her suggestion for an extended time line for the military buildup.

In response, Triple J President Bob Jones asked her just how far back the 2014 deadline would be extended, because he's been getting antsy for the buildup to get under way.

"What I'm really concerned about is how far we push on that brake pedal," he said. "Because so many of us are hurting in this economy today and we'd like to see you move

your foot over to the other pedal pretty soon."

"The accelerator?" Bordallo responded. "I got you."

Bordallo added that those who are quietly in support of the buildup to get started weren't as well represented at several of the buildup hearings and her

own town hall meetings on the island. If those with different views on the buildup don't speak up, then Guam leaders, too, can't represent the island's residents properly, she said.

"I would like for some of you once in awhile to write a letter to the editor, get involved. Sometimes it confuses leaders too because they

think, 'Well that's the whole island,' but we know it's not," she said. "There is a strong silent majority here that is supporting this buildup if it's done right."

Ronald Young, an authorized street buildings and structural steel dealer with Parker Bros. International, couldn't have agreed more.

He said he attended the draft EIS public hearings and noticed the turnout at the meetings consisted of the same crowd attending and voicing their opinions repeatedly.

"I think what's important to point out though is 174,500 people did not come to the meetings," he said, adding that the people who produce things and want Guam's economy to

grow from that production, are "not getting any input in this process."

According to Carl Peterson, a member on the Guam Chamber of Commerce, the majority looking forward to the buildup has sat in "silence" during the public hearings probably because they didn't want to go to a public venue and face confrontation.

"They want to avoid ... being attacked or ridiculed," he said. "The

silent majority just wants to go about their business, doing good each day, producing a product or service at a price the public is willing to exchange their money for."

And for those still silent, Bordallo urges them to speak up because it's not too late.

"There's gotta be different views on this, I know," she said. "If you're concerned about it, let me know about it, write to me. ... It is a draft, and so these changes can be made."

ON THE NET

▲ To view the Guam Chamber of Commerce's Opportunities Paper on the military buildup, go to www.GuamPDN.com.



In Your Voice
Post your comment on
www.guampdn.com