

Position ID

L17-21

Position Title

Sea Grant Legislative Fellow

Office Name

U.S. Representative Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Northern Mariana Islands

Relevant Committee Memberships (if applicable)

Natural Resources Committee; Education and the Workforce Committee

Portfolio Summary

As part of the legislative team, the Knaus Sea Grant Fellow would be the lead on ocean environment issues and be responsible for staffing Congressman Sablan on the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans. Congressman Sablan is the House author of legislation banning trade in shark fins and expects to reintroduce that bill in the next, 115th Congress, beginning in January. The Fellow will be responsible for developing legislative proposals; drafting testimony, committee statements and hearing questions; reviewing and making recommendations on the full range of national environmental and resource issues; working with Committee staff, other Congressional offices and organizations such as the House Oceans Caucus, as well as NOAA and other federal agencies; and, responding to Congressional requests.

The Northern Mariana Islands include 14 islands with a land area of 184 square miles, set in an exclusive economic zone of 300,000 square miles, larger than the state of Texas. The vast majority of the population resides on Saipan, with the remainder of the population mostly on the islands of Tinian and Rota. The Northern Marianas also incorporates the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument, an area of unique geological and biological attributes such as volcanic seamounts, chemosynthetic life forms, and numerous threatened or endangered species. Congressman Sablan is actively pursuing the designation of the Monument area as a National Marine Sanctuary with the goal of establishing a facility in the Marianas for public education and for scientific research of the Monument area.

To date little federal oceans, fisheries, coastal, or climate change policy has been adopted with the specific concerns and conditions of the Northern Marianas in mind. The Knauss Sea Grant Fellow would, therefore, be in a position and responsible for assessing the full range of scientific, environmental, and economic circumstances in the islands and advising Congressman Sablan on policy changes and improvements that need to be adopted in order to preserve the distinctive characteristics of the islands and island cultures and set sustainable levels of use. Areas of particular immediate concern are the condition of coral reefs in the Marianas, which are now suffering from widespread bleaching, the possible increase in tropical storm frequency and intensity, drought, and other climatic changes associated with ocean warming, and the environmental impacts of proposed increased military training on the islands of Tinian, Pagan, and Farallon de Medinilla, as well as within the ocean areas surrounding the Marianas.

Expertise Desired

Broad knowledge of the environmental sciences and of national and international policies and laws designed to preserve and protect the natural environment. Commitment to assuming a leadership role in Congressman Sablan's office on issues of expertise. Possess a fine-tuned balance of urgency and tact in dealing with federal agencies and with individuals of varying viewpoints and persuasions. Fellow should be a self-starter who can work with guidance. Excellent written and oral communications skills, capability of explaining complex scientific and policy issues to the Congressman, other members of the congressional team, and constituents, and be adept at quickly producing letters, speeches and statements, or other forms of expression for the Congressman's use that are clear and precise. Ability to work in relatively cramped and public conditions and to stay focused on long-term goals, while responding to the unexpected needs of the moment. Some previous experience in the legislative and/or political milieu is welcome. Ties to or knowledge of the Pacific region and its cultures would be an asset.

Accepts Foreign Nationals

Yes