



**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE PULA'ALPI NIKOLAO PULA**  
**GOVERNOR OF AMERICAN SAMOA**  
**UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL**  
**RESOURCES**

**June 17, 2026**

**INTRODUCTION**

Chairman Lee, Ranking Member Heinrich, and distinguished Members of the Committee:

Talofa Lava and warm greetings from the people of American Samoa.

Thank you for the invitation to submit written testimony regarding the opportunities, challenges, and strategic importance of American Samoa. Our territory values its longstanding partnership with the Congress and the federal government for 126 years. Through sustained investments from the Department of the Interior and various federal agencies, the United States has strengthened critical infrastructure, improved public services, and enhanced resilience throughout our islands. These investments have improved the quality of life for our people while reinforcing America's presence and strategic posture in the Indo-Pacific region.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to High Chief Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen, including her fellow territorial colleagues, for their steadfast leadership, advocacy, and unwavering commitment to advancing the interests of the U.S. territories they represent at the House of Representatives. Her efforts in Congress have been instrumental in securing federal support and ensuring that the unique needs and priorities of our territory continue to be represented at the national level.

Deep appreciation is also extended to the Interagency Group on Insular Areas (IGIA), the administration coordinating body established to strengthen collaboration between U.S. territories and federal agencies, for its continued partnership in addressing critical infrastructure, economic development, and public service needs throughout American Samoa. Their collective support has helped advance initiatives that improve opportunities and quality of life for the people of our territory.

As global attention increasingly shifts toward the Pacific, American Samoa's importance to the United States continues to grow. Located in the heart of the South Pacific, our territory serves as America's only sovereign foothold in this strategically significant region. While modest in size, our geographic position provides the United States with a forward presence that supports maritime security, disaster response, regional stability, and broader national security objectives.

American Samoa's energy, transportation, port, healthcare, and communications systems operate as a single islanded infrastructure network in which failure in any one sector produces cascading system-wide disruption. This integrated reality underscores the importance of coordinated local and federal investment across all critical infrastructure sectors.

### **AMERICAN SAMOA'S STRATEGIC ROLE IN THE INDO-PACIFIC**

American Samoa, alongside Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, forms a central pillar of the United States' territorial presence in the Indo-Pacific, anchoring the nation's strategic posture in the region together with the Freely Associated States (FAS). American Samoa provides the United States with a permanent sovereign foothold south of the equator that supports regional stability, humanitarian assistance and disaster response operations, and sustained engagement with Pacific partners.

The Pacific area has become increasingly central to global commerce, communications infrastructure, fisheries management, and geopolitical competition. Within this environment, American Samoa contributes to a distributed U.S. territorial network that enhances maritime domain awareness, strengthens regional partnerships, and reinforces broader national security and economic interests across a vast ocean region.

Like its fellow U.S. territories, American Samoa has demonstrated an enduring commitment to the United States through military service. The territory has consistently ranked among the nation's highest jurisdictions in per-capita military enlistment, reflecting a deep tradition of patriotism, sacrifice, and service to the country.

### **SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES**

Despite its strategic importance, American Samoa faces persistent structural challenges that limit economic growth and development.

American Samoa encompasses a population of approximately 50,000 residents, with a gross domestic product of nearly \$634 million. Notwithstanding the inherent resilience of our community, the territory confronts substantial socioeconomic hurdles. The per capita income in American Samoa is just \$18,017, compared to \$31,549 in the U.S. state with the lowest per capita income. At the same time, more than 54 percent of American Samoa's population lives below the poverty line, underscoring the territory's severe economic challenges and limited fiscal capacity. Unemployment is at approximately 13 percent, geographic isolation, limited land availability, elevated transportation expenditures, and a reliance on imported commodities continue to impede economic prospects.

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These challenges are not the result of a lack of ambition or effort. Rather, they reflect the realities of operating a small island economy thousands of miles from major markets. Sustained federal investment in infrastructure remains essential to reducing these structural barriers, attracting private-sector investment, and creating opportunities for long-term economic diversification.

## **FEDERAL PARTNERSHIPS AND ONGOING INVESTMENTS**

The American Samoa Government (ASG) values its enduring and productive collaboration with the Congress and our federal partners. We are particularly grateful for the legislative enactment of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021, which established the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. These historic capital infusions served as a vital lifeline, not only stabilizing our isolated economy during the global pandemic but also authorizing the rehabilitation of fragile infrastructure. These investments continue to fortify territorial resilience and elevate the basic quality-of-life standards for the American citizens and nationals residing in our islands.

Federal investments have supported a wide range of critical sectors across American Samoa, including transportation systems, healthcare facilities, energy infrastructure, water and wastewater systems, education facilities, emergency response capabilities, and telecommunications systems. These investments have been essential in maintaining basic services, strengthening resilience, and enabling long-term development across the territory.

Among the most consequential of these partnerships has been the implementation of ARPA funding. American Samoa obligated its full allocation ahead of the December 31, 2024, federal deadline—a record of disciplined, accountable stewardship. Those funds, reinforced by investments from the Department of the Interior and FEMA, are financing the most significant modernization of our health system in the territory’s history.

At the LBJ Tropical Medical Center—American Samoa’s only hospital and the sole acute care facility for nearly 50,000 local residents—a remodeled Emergency Room, Intensive Care Unit, and the territory’s first on-island MRI are under construction, alongside a modern central power plant that will secure reliable, resilient operations. A new CT scanner, expanded backup generation, a full roof replacement, storm-shutter protection, and energy-efficient systems are already complete and in service—each reducing our reliance on costly off-island care and strengthening emergency readiness in a region where the nearest alternative hospital lies thousands of miles away.

In parallel, the American Samoa Department of Health is extending care into every district and to our most isolated communities. A new medical vessel, a new medevac facility, a modernized public health laboratory that strengthens local diagnostic and testing capacity, a reopened community health center, and a dedicated Pandemic Response Headquarters are already serving residents, with new and renovated clinics underway across the territory. These investments build lasting local capacity and bring quality care closer to the people who need it, advancing a healthier and more resilient territory. Matched by rigorous local stewardship, these federal partnerships

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demonstrate the return that responsible investment delivers for the health and well-being of our community.

These partnerships demonstrate the federal government's continued commitment to ensuring that American Samoa remains safe, resilient, and capable of supporting both local and national strategic initiatives and objectives, short-term and long-term.

## **ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE**

Energy security remains one of the most significant economic and national security challenges facing American Samoa.

The territory imports approximately 32 to 34 million gallons of fuel annually, and electricity generation remains approximately 95 to 98 percent dependent on diesel fuel. Unlike most states, American Samoa has no access to interstate energy networks, pipeline systems, or neighboring electric grids. Every gallon of fuel required to power homes, the only hospital, schools, businesses, ports, airport, and government facilities must be shipped thousands of miles across the Pacific.

As a result, American Samoa remains highly vulnerable to global fuel price fluctuations and supply chain disruptions. Fuel currently accounts for approximately 53 percent of utility operating costs, contributing to electricity rates that have risen from an average of \$0.37 per kilowatt-hour to \$0.54 per kilowatt-hour—nearly three times the national average. These costs place significant burdens on families, businesses, and government operations alike.

Recognizing these challenges, American Samoa is advancing the most ambitious energy transformation in its history. The territory's first utility-scale Independent Power Producer project—a 20-megawatt solar facility paired with a 19-megawatt-hour battery storage system—is expected to come online in the coming months. This project represents an important step toward reducing fuel dependence and improving grid reliability.

However, local resources alone cannot overcome the barriers created by isolation, limited land availability, and the high cost of infrastructure development. Continued federal partnership is essential to support renewable energy deployment, battery storage, grid modernization, transmission upgrades, and emerging technologies that can strengthen long-term energy security.

For American Samoa, energy resilience is not simply an infrastructure issue. It is an economic necessity, a public safety imperative, and a matter of national strategic importance.

## **DIGITAL AND COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE**

The Le Vasa Submarine Cable Project (Google Initiative) represents a foundational component of American Samoa's broader critical infrastructure system, alongside ongoing investments in energy, healthcare, and port modernization.

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Funded through a partnership involving the Department of War, ARPA, the Capital Projects Fund, and Google, the project represents a combined investment of approximately \$45 million in next-generation communications infrastructure. It will deliver approximately 800 Gbps of new telecommunications capacity through the American Samoa Telecommunications Authority's (ASTCA) participation in the Google-supported Bulikula submarine cable system, while also establishing a new resilient international communications route linking American Samoa, Guam, and San Diego, California.

This investment significantly strengthens communications redundancy, cybersecurity resilience, and system reliability in a jurisdiction where all critical infrastructure systems depend on stable digital connectivity for real-time operation and coordination.

In practical terms, digital infrastructure functions as a force multiplier across all core public systems in American Samoa:

- In the **energy sector**, communications capacity is essential for grid monitoring, system operations, and the future integration of renewable generation and advanced control systems.
- In **healthcare**, expanded bandwidth strengthens telemedicine, remote diagnostics, medical data transfer, and coordination with off-island specialty providers, directly supporting continuity of care for LBJ Tropical Medical Center and the territorial health system.
- In **port and maritime operations**, reliable communications support logistics coordination, supply chain management, customs processing, and emergency response functions at the Port of Pago Pago—the territory's sole maritime gateway.
- In **government and emergency management**, resilient connectivity ensures continuity of operations, disaster response coordination, and public safety communications during severe weather events and infrastructure disruptions.

Beyond its local impact, the Le Vasa Cable advances broader U.S. national security and strategic objectives in the Indo-Pacific by strengthening communications resilience across a key transpacific corridor and reinforcing American infrastructure presence in a region of growing geopolitical significance.

When viewed alongside parallel investments in energy modernization, healthcare system expansion, and port infrastructure rehabilitation, the Le Vasa Cable completes a unified and interdependent infrastructure framework. In American Samoa, these systems are not independent sectors—they are a single operational ecosystem that determines economic stability, public safety, and national strategic presence.

Collectively, these investments position American Samoa to move from a highly constrained island system toward a resilient, interconnected infrastructure platform capable of supporting modern healthcare delivery, reliable energy systems, efficient maritime logistics, and participation in the global digital economy.

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## **CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES (IGIA FRAMEWORK)**

Through the IGIA, American Samoa has identified 59 critical infrastructure projects totaling approximately \$2.6 billion.

These projects span ten priority sectors: energy systems, healthcare facilities, educational facilities, ports and maritime infrastructure, airports and aviation, water and wastewater infrastructure, transportation networks, telecommunications, emergency response systems, and flood mitigation.

These are not discretionary projects. They represent the foundational investments necessary to maintain essential services, strengthen resilience, support economic development, and improve quality of life for American citizens and nationals residing in the territory.

Among these priorities, five projects warrant particular attention from this Committee:

- Port of Pago Pago
- Energy Grid Reliability and System Modernization
- Healthcare Systems
- Air Traffic Control Capabilities
- Transportation Resilience and Strategic Redundancy

## **PORT OF PAGO PAGO**

The Port of Pago Pago is American Samoa's sole maritime gateway and the foundation of the territory's economy, supply chain, and disaster response capability. Virtually all food, fuel, medicine, building materials, and consumer goods enter the territory through this port.

Today, the port faces significant infrastructure deterioration resulting from decades of service in a harsh marine environment. Recent engineering assessments indicate that major components of the facility require substantial rehabilitation and modernization to ensure long-term operational reliability and safety.

The consequences of inaction are significant. Operational inefficiencies increase costs for consumers and businesses throughout the territory while reducing the competitiveness of American Samoa relative to other ports in the Pacific region. As geopolitical and economic activity throughout the Indo-Pacific continues to expand, maintaining a modern and efficient maritime gateway is increasingly important to both territorial and national interests.

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Modernization of the Port of Pago Pago presents opportunities that extend beyond infrastructure preservation. A modernized port would strengthen regional supply chain resilience, enhance disaster response capabilities, support the territory's fishing industry, and create opportunities for expanded maritime commerce and logistics services. Given American Samoa's strategic location in the South Pacific and status as the only U.S. territory in the Southern Hemisphere, the port is well-positioned to support future cargo distribution, warehousing, cold-storage operations, and transshipment activities serving regional markets.

To fully modernize the facility and meet future operational requirements, American Samoa estimates that approximately over \$200 million in infrastructure investment will be required. Demonstrating our commitment to this effort, the American Samoa Government has already secured \$10 million toward emergency stabilization measures.

We respectfully request federal partnership to help close the remaining funding gap and ensure that this critical maritime asset continues to support both the economic security of our territory and the strategic interests of the United States in the South Pacific.

## **ENERGY GRID RELIABILITY AND SYSTEM MODERNIZATION**

American Samoa operates an isolated electric grid with no interconnection to regional transmission systems, making system stability entirely dependent on local generation, fuel logistics, and internal grid management capabilities.

In FY2025, the system recorded a System Average Interruption Duration Index (SAIDI) of 311.16 minutes and a System Average Interruption Frequency Index (SAIFI) of 2.97, reflecting frequent and prolonged service interruptions. While performance improved in FY2026 to a SAIDI of 86.03 minutes and a SAIFI of 2.19, reliability remains constrained by limited system visibility, aging distribution infrastructure, and insufficient real-time grid control capability.

These reliability challenges have directly affected critical infrastructure. Outages have impacted LBJ Tropical Medical Center, Pago Pago International Airport, and port facilities, with repeated disruptions across FY2025 and FY2026. The longest recorded outage over the past three years lasted 5 hours and 45 minutes on Feeder 1 (February 19, 2025), underscoring the vulnerability of radial feeders in an islanded system with limited redundancy.

From a generation and capacity standpoint, American Samoa maintains approximately 10.5 MW of diesel reserve generation, while total system reliability remains heavily dependent on imported fuel, which accounted for approximately 13.0 million gallons of diesel consumption in FY2025. This structure exposes the grid to both fuel price volatility and supply chain disruptions.

At the same time, the territory is actively transitioning its generation portfolio, with 25.7 MWdc of installed solar capacity and approximately 20 percent of peak demand currently served by renewable resources.

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However, integration of these resources into a stable and reliable grid is constrained by the absence of a modern centralized control and monitoring system capable of managing a high-renewable, islanded grid in real time.

To address these structural limitations, the American Samoa Power Authority (ASPA) is seeking federal support for a comprehensive grid modernization and hardening program, including the development of a National Control Center (NCC).

This proposed NCC would integrate:

1. Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) for real-time system monitoring
2. Distribution Management System (DMS) for automated distribution control and outage isolation
3. Energy Management System (EMS) for generation dispatch optimization, renewable integration, and fuel efficiency

Together, these systems would significantly enhance situational awareness, improve fault response times, reduce outage duration, and enable safe scaling of renewable energy penetration without compromising grid stability.

This investment is essential for transforming American Samoa's grid from a manually operated, geographically constrained system into a modern, digitally controlled energy network capable of supporting high renewable penetration, improved reliability, and hardened critical infrastructure performance.

While the territory has made significant progress toward renewable energy deployment, additional federal support remains essential to achieving long-term energy security.

Continued investment in grid modernization and energy resilience will reduce dependence on imported fuel, strengthen disaster preparedness, lower long-term utility costs, and support critical civilian and federal operations throughout the territory.

## **HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS**

Healthcare infrastructure remains one of American Samoa's most significant long-term challenges. Recent investments through ARPA, FEMA, and the Department of the Interior have transformed healthcare delivery across the territory, including new emergency, diagnostic, public health, and community healthcare facilities. However, substantial modernization needs remain to ensure our healthcare system can meet future demand and maintain readiness during emergencies and natural disasters.

Among the most critical priorities is the comprehensive renovation of LBJ Tropical Medical Center's inpatient wards. Many of its inpatient facilities continue to face challenges associated with aging infrastructure, deteriorating structural components, outdated mechanical and electrical systems, water intrusion, and clinical layouts that no longer support modern healthcare delivery.

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Modernizing these facilities would improve patient capacity, strengthen infection-control capabilities, enhance facility resilience, and ensure continuity of care during both routine operations and emergency events.

Equally important is the proposed \$145.7 million renovation and expansion of LBJ Tropical Medical Center's outpatient clinics. The project would modernize facilities serving medical, surgical, orthopedic, OB/GYN, pediatric, ophthalmology, ENT, chronic kidney disease, dental, pharmacy, and laboratory services. Planned improvements include structural rehabilitation, modernization of mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and life-safety systems, telehealth integration, enhanced infection-control measures, improved accessibility, and expanded clinical capacity to better serve the healthcare needs of the territory.

These investments are especially important given American Samoa's geographic isolation and limited healthcare alternatives. When specialized care is unavailable on-island, patients must travel more than 2,500 miles across the Pacific to Hawaii for treatment, often at significant cost and disruption to families. In a territory where no healthcare redundancy exists, strengthening local healthcare capacity reduces dependence on off-island referrals, improves continuity of care, enhances emergency preparedness, and ensures that residents can access critical services closer to home.

Healthcare access challenges extend beyond infrastructure. Last year, Congress committed \$50 billion through the Rural Health Transformation Program to address geographic isolation, workforce shortages, hospitals at risk of closure, and barriers to care. In its first year, every state received between approximately \$147 million and \$281 million to strengthen rural healthcare systems. American Samoa faces these same challenges as acutely as any jurisdiction in the nation, and we respectfully request that the territories be included as Congress and CMS expand implementation of this program.

We also respectfully request additional Medicaid flexibility. With Congress's support, American Samoa secured a permanent 83 percent federal Medicaid match in 2023, for which we remain deeply grateful. The remaining 17 percent local share continues to strain our limited resources. In prior years, federal Medicaid funds available to the territory went unclaimed because we could not provide the required local match. We respectfully ask Congress to build upon previous precedent and waive the local match requirement for American Samoa so that federal healthcare dollars already appropriated can fully reach the people they were intended to serve.

#### **AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL CAPABILITIES**

American Samoa respectfully requests federal assistance to establish a U.S.-operated air traffic control tower at Pago Pago International Airport.

At present, air traffic services for American Samoa are provided from neighboring Samoa. While this arrangement has allowed continued operations, it leaves the only U.S. territory in the South Pacific dependent upon foreign-based infrastructure for a critical aviation function.

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This dependency presents concerns related to operational resilience, emergency response, aviation safety, and national security. Pago Pago International Airport serves as a vital transportation lifeline for residents, medical evacuations, disaster response operations, and federal activities throughout the region.

A locally operated FAA-approved air traffic control tower would strengthen safety, improve operational reliability, enhance emergency response coordination, and restore direct U.S. control over this critical component of territorial infrastructure.

Accordingly, the American Samoa Government respectfully requests \$40 million in federal funding to construct and equip a local air traffic control tower at Pago Pago International Airport.

### **TRANSPORTATION RESILIENCE AND STRATEGIC REDUNDANCY**

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) has provided historic and much-needed investments across the United States territories. In American Samoa, these resources have helped stabilize aging transportation infrastructure, improve roadway safety, and strengthen resilience against increasingly severe weather events.

However, transportation in American Samoa cannot be evaluated in isolation. It functions as part of a single, interdependent critical infrastructure system that includes energy generation, port operations, telecommunications, healthcare access, and emergency response. When one component is disrupted, the effects cascade across the entire territory.

Within this system, American Samoa's transportation network is highly constrained and heavily dependent on a limited number of primary corridors, including Route 1, which serves as the principal connection between population centers, the Port, Airport, and LBJ Tropical Medical Center. In practical terms, this corridor functions as a system-wide lifeline, linking all major critical infrastructure nodes.

This structural dependence is compounded by physical infrastructure degradation and climate-driven stressors. The territory is experiencing increasing instances of:

- Structurally deficient bridges requiring critical replacement
- Coastal erosion undermining roadway integrity due to climate change
- Flooding in low-lying residential and transportation corridors
- Slope instability and landslide risk in steep terrain areas

These conditions are not isolated failures—they represent progressive system stress across interconnected infrastructure assets.

A single major disruption event—whether a bridge failure, coastal washout, landslide, or flood event—could sever access not only to communities, but also to the territory's port operations, airport access, energy supply chain logistics, and healthcare delivery system. In an island

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environment with no alternative interstate routing or external redundancy, such failures translate directly into system-wide isolation.

These vulnerabilities are further amplified by the interdependence of other critical infrastructure systems:

- The Port of Pago Pago serves as the sole maritime entry point for fuel, food, construction materials, and medical supplies that sustain both the transportation network and the broader economy.
- The energy system, heavily dependent on imported fuel, relies on transportation corridors for fuel distribution and maintenance logistics.
- The telecommunications system, including the Le Vasa submarine cable network, depends on stable physical access corridors for maintenance, repair response, and network resilience infrastructure.
- The healthcare system, anchored by LBJ Tropical Medical Center, depends entirely on roadway access for patient transport, medical supply delivery, and emergency response.

As a result, transportation infrastructure in American Samoa is not simply a mobility system—it is the physical backbone of all critical infrastructure operations in the territory.

While federal investments have improved segments of the existing roadway network, long-term resilience requires moving beyond maintenance and rehabilitation alone. The territory requires system redundancy, structural replacement of critical assets, and climate-adaptive infrastructure capable of sustaining multi-sector continuity under stress conditions.

Accordingly, the American Samoa Government respectfully requests continued and expanded federal partnership to:

- Sustain and increase Territorial Highway Program funding with emphasis on bridge replacement and structural rehabilitation of critical assets within the interdependent infrastructure network;
- Support the planning, engineering, and construction of alternative inland routes and strategic bypass corridors to reduce system-wide dependence on vulnerable coastal roadways;
- Expand eligibility and funding flexibility for climate adaptation and resilience investments, including coastal protection, shoreline stabilization, drainage systems, flood mitigation infrastructure, slope stabilization, and retaining systems; and
- Prioritize mitigation of flooding in low-lying residential and infrastructure corridors, where repeated inundation is increasingly disrupting not just mobility, but energy logistics, port access, and emergency response operations.

For isolated island jurisdictions such as American Samoa, transportation infrastructure is not a standalone asset class. It is the foundational physical layer of a fully integrated critical

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infrastructure system, where failure in one component produces cascading disruption across energy, ports, telecommunications, healthcare, and public safety systems.

## **DEEP-SEA MINING**

American Samoa's economy, food security, and cultural heritage are deeply connected to the Pacific Ocean. For this reason, the American Samoa Government has carefully evaluated ongoing discussions regarding deep-sea mining activities within the Pacific region.

**At this time, the American Samoa Government does not support deep-sea mining within its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) or territorial waters.**

Given the unresolved scientific questions regarding potential impacts to marine ecosystems, fisheries resources, and ocean biodiversity, we believe a precautionary approach remains warranted. Fisheries, particularly the tuna industry, remain central to our economy and any activity that threatens these resources carries significant risk.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY PRIORITIES**

The American Samoa Government respectfully requests a continued and robust partnership with Congress to address our most pressing infrastructure and economic development priorities.

Every federal dollar invested in American Samoa is an investment in America's strategic presence in the Indo-Pacific. These investments strengthen national security, improve disaster resilience, enhance supply chain reliability, support economic development, and improve the quality of life for American citizens and nationals residing in one of the nation's most remote jurisdictions.

As geopolitical competition throughout the Pacific continues to intensify, a resilient and economically secure American Samoa serves as a critical American asset and a forward presence that advances broader national interests throughout the region.

Accordingly, the American Samoa Government respectfully requests Congressional support in the following priority areas:

### **Priority Request #1: Modernization of the Port of Pago Pago**

We request federal partnership to modernize the Port of Pago Pago, American Samoa's sole maritime gateway and economic lifeline. The estimated cost of full modernization is over \$200 million. The American Samoa Government has already committed \$10 million toward emergency stabilization and seeks federal assistance to complete this critical investment. This investment will increase cargo-handling efficiency and help close the performance gap with our counterpart in Samoa, whose port processes more than twice the number of containers per hour. Improved throughput will lower freight costs, strengthen supply chains, support economic growth, and enhance disaster response capabilities. Modernization will preserve a strategically important U.S. maritime asset while preventing the far greater costs of infrastructure failure.

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**Priority Request #2: Energy Security and Grid Resilience**

We request continued federal support for renewable energy deployment, battery storage, grid modernization, transmission improvements, and emerging energy technologies suitable for island environments.

Reducing dependence on imported fuel is essential to lowering electricity costs, strengthening energy security, improving disaster resilience, and supporting long-term economic development.

**Priority Request #3: Healthcare System Modernization and Access**

We respectfully request continued federal partnership to modernize LBJ Tropical Medical Center and associated healthcare facilities, expand access to care, and strengthen healthcare resilience in one of the Nation's most geographically isolated jurisdictions.

**Priority Request #4: Medicaid and Rural Health Program Eligibility**

We respectfully request Congressional consideration of additional Medicaid flexibility, including relief from the local match requirement, and inclusion of the U.S. territories in future Rural Health Transformation Program funding opportunities.

**Priority Request #5: Air Traffic Control Tower Construction**

We respectfully request federal funding to establish a U.S.-operated air traffic control tower at Pago Pago International Airport.

This investment will strengthen aviation safety, improve emergency response coordination, enhance operational resilience, and restore direct U.S. control over a critical component of territorial infrastructure.

**Priority Request #6: Transportation Resilience and Strategic Redundancy**

We request continued post-Bipartisan Infrastructure Law investments to address transportation vulnerabilities throughout the Insular Areas.

Funding for alternative routes, climate adaptation measures, and transportation redundancy is essential to ensuring uninterrupted access to healthcare, ports, airports, emergency services, and economic centers throughout the territory.

**Priority Request #7: Support for IGIA Critical Infrastructure Priorities**

American Samoa respectfully requests sustained federal support for the 59 critical infrastructure projects identified through the Interagency Group on Insular Affairs, totaling approximately \$2.6 billion.

These investments span transportation, energy, healthcare, telecommunications, water systems, emergency response infrastructure, and other essential public facilities. Collectively, they represent a roadmap toward greater resilience, economic self-sufficiency, and long-term sustainability. Working with our delegate to Congress, my office provided a list of priority projects from the IGIA list of 11 projects totalling over \$45 million to be considered for Community Projects Funding (CPF).

**Priority Request #8: Responsible Deep-Sea Mining Policy**

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American Samoa maintains its opposition to deep-sea mining within its territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone at this time.

Should federal policymakers advance deep-sea mining initiatives, we request robust scientific review, meaningful consultation with Pacific jurisdictions, environmental safeguards, equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms, and dedicated support for monitoring and resilience activities.

**Priority Request #9: Extension of the ARPA Expenditure Deadline for Insular Area**

Finally, we respectfully request Congressional action to extend the December 31, 2026 expenditure deadline for American Rescue Plan Act State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds for the U.S. territories.

American Samoa and other insular jurisdictions continue to face extraordinary challenges associated with supply chain disruptions, shipping delays, workforce shortages, and lengthy procurement timelines. These conditions are fundamentally different from those faced by most states and make completion of major infrastructure projects within existing deadlines increasingly difficult.

Providing targeted flexibility would ensure that already-obligated federal investments are fully utilized for their intended purpose and are not forfeited due to geographic realities beyond the control of territorial governments.

**CLOSING**

The ASG stands ready to continue working with the Congress, federal agencies, and our national partners to strengthen our territory and advance shared national objectives.

We recognize that federal funding represents a significant investment by the American taxpayer, and we are deeply grateful for that. We remain committed to responsible stewardship, transparency, accountability, and measurable outcomes.

American Samoa is more than a remote island territory. It is an enduring American presence in the South Pacific, a strategic partner in the Indo-Pacific region, and home to thousands of loyal Americans who contribute to our nation's security and prosperity.

We thank the Committee for its continued leadership, its commitment to the US territories, and its partnership in securing a stronger and more resilient future for American Samoa and the United States.

Respectfully submitted,



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