From: Teddy Ryerson
To: Jared At Home
Subject: Fw: Islands Conference - Additional Information?
Date: 07/22/2011 01:15 PM

Keith's input

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▼ Keith Takata

----- Original Message -----
From: Keith Takata
Sent: 07/22/2011 08:21 AM PDT
To: Laura Mayo; Teddy Ryerson
Subject: Re: Islands Conference - Additional Information?

Thanks. I am aware of all of this. I mentioned most to Jared, but I'm not sure how much sunk in. (I didn't mention the impact on the island economy because I didn't know until yesterady.) Even though each island chooses to spend money on the conference, the money does come from EPA. I suggested to Jared that **we have a low key, government conference**, that **we use only the money the islands choose to spend (i.e. no other EPA money and no private funding)**, that **EPA remove its name as a sponsor**, and that **the conference be re-cast as a conference for and by the islands**. EPA would only be an invitee and to remove the appearance problems, only John and some of his team would travel to the conference. Jared suggested having the conference here in San Francisco. John didn't think he could pull it off this year (nor did he think it was a good idea). Having said all that, I believe in the approach that I suggested (**see bold**) and, if you two can talk Jared into it, please do.

Keith

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▼ Laura Mayo---07/21/2011 10:29:51 PM---Keith: You'd reported at End of Day that the Pacific Islands Conference scheduled in Palau has been

From: Laura Mayo/R9/USEPA/US
To: Keith Takata/R9/USEPA/US@EPA, Teddy Ryerson/R9/USEPA/US@EPA
Date: 07/21/2011 10:29 PM
Subject: Islands Conference - Additional Information?

Keith:

You'd reported at End of Day that the Pacific Islands Conference scheduled in Palau has been postponed to 2012 per Jared's instruction. Having participated in the planning meetings, I was curious about the concerns that lead to the postponement and followed up with a discussion with Teddy this evening.

Michael Mann was unable to raise management at Palau this evening (he attempted sometime between 4 and 5 today our time, which was mid-morning Friday in Palau), and before John pushes "send" on an email to Palau, I wanted to provide some additional information about the concerns Teddy outlined. If none of this information is news and the decision remains the same, we haven't lost any time, since the management at Palau won't be back in the office until Sunday afternoon our time, so I hope you will bear this email providing additional info with good humor.

Issue/Question 1: regarding travel and budget. The Conference is, per notes from John, not funded via a separate grant from EPA. Rather, each island chooses to spend a portion ($20,000) of its management funding on the conference, and transfers that amount to the entity that manages the conference fund (in this case, American Samoa). In the past, ORA did contribute an additional amount as a supplement, but in recent years as discretionary funds in ORA have declined, the conference has been entirely funded by contributions from each island.

"Can the funds be better spent on projects in the pacific islands/is this the highest use of the funding?" John McCarroll reports that the funds from which the islands support the conference are not implementation dollars, and are intended for support of the environmental administration in each island government. If not spent on the conference, the funds will fund some other budget item, he specifically mentioned training or equipment or

travel. The conference itself is a training event/opportunity, so it could be surmised that the funds would be spent on a similar function this fiscal year if the conference is postponed this year into the next.

"Is there some urgent/timely topic this conference will address that should not wait until 2012?" Each conference agenda is designed to address timely topics, so John believes that the topics are timely, but that there would also be timely topics covered in a postponed conference.

"Is EPA a co-host of the conference?" In name only. While we were, in the past when ORA contributed funding, an official financial co-host of the conference, we have assumed a supporting and participatory role in recent years. In the planning sessions, John underscored that the conference is hosted by the islands, funded through each of their allocations, and the agenda is designed to primarily address interests and needs of islands residents and staff.

Additional note: The conference provides approximately $250,000 in revenue to the host island from meals, hotel stays, and support of the approximately 300 attendees; this amount does not include airfare.

Issue 2: ORA travel. Understanding that Jared's travel is under scrutiny, especially, his participation and public speaking could potentially be accomplished via videoconference. I do realize this isn't ideal. Additional EPA staff could also participate using this method.

Issue 3: Sponsorships. Even without the sponsorships or additional funding sources for portions of the conference that were identified in the documents provided by John in the planning sessions, he did identify that a successful conference commensurate with years past could be had using only the funding contributed by the islands.

I understand that in this budget climate, we need to be especially sensitive to optics; I additionally understand the strong desire to make this the most informative and dynamic conference possible. That said, I know you all have a lot on your plates, and didn't know if any of this additional clarifying information is useful before John sends the postponement email off to Palau.

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