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## **American Samoa Government meets with White House CEQ Director of Ocean Quality**

The 13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture (FestPAC) brought together people from across the world, offering American Samoa Government (ASG) representatives another opportunity to advocate for the people of American Samoa. During the event, the Office of the Governor's Chief of Staff, Loa Tuimavave Tauapa'i Laupola, and Deputy Chief Legal Counsel, Terry VanEaton, met with Miriam Goldstein, Director for Ocean Policy at the White House Council on Environmental Quality, at the ASG Office in Honolulu. Taotasi Archie Soliai, Director of the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources, and Rachel Sanford, Governor's Legal Counsel, also participated remotely from American Samoa.

Director Goldstein said that while she was in Hawaii for FestPAC, she wanted to reach out to continue discussions initiated at a workshop about the proposed National Marine Sanctuary Designation in Pago Pago last September. This week's meeting provided an opportunity for the parties to discuss ongoing and emerging ocean-related topics.

"It is always good to have a chance to meet and advocate for American Samoa with our federal partners. Issues at this level can often take a long time to resolve and we need to communicate throughout the process. Communication between the federal agencies and ASG can play a key role in reaching the best solution for all concerned," Chief Loa said, "We appreciate Director Goldstein very much and her willingness to reach out and continue this conversation while we are all in Hawaii together celebrating our Pacific home."

"Advocating for American Samoa alongside our federal partners is crucial. These issues often take time to resolve, highlighting the importance of continuous communication. Director Goldstein's outreach during our time in Hawaii is greatly appreciated," Chief Loa expressed.

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