



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HANMI “ECSTATIC” ABOUT RESUMED FLIGHTS FROM CHINA

SAIPAN, NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS – The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands (HANMI) is eagerly looking forward to the first flights to The Marianas from China since before the pandemic.

Hong Kong Airlines will resume direct Hong Kong-Saipan flights on Sunday (April 28), with the first flight arriving at Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport in the early morning hours of Monday (April 29).

“Our members are ecstatic about the reinstatement of Hong Kong Airlines' exclusive direct service to Saipan, marking another significant milestone in our destination's journey towards tourism recovery,” said HANMI Chairman Dennis Seo. “We hope this is just the start of the return of all the airlines we had serving Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland before the pandemic.”

Hong Kong Airlines will operate Airbus A330 aircraft with 280 seats twice weekly, a welcome boost to a beleaguered hotel industry which registered 36% average occupancy rate in March 2024 among 12 major hotels that are part of HANMI.

“We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Hong Kong Airlines for their commitment to The Marianas,” said Seo. “We also express gratitude to the government – including the MVA - for their strong initiatives aimed at expanding and diversifying our tourism market sources. The resumption of Hong Kong Airlines' service is the start of further boosting economic recovery for both the government and private sectors.”

Seo added it is important that the CNMI government remain focused on further developing and diversifying tourism market sources.

“While the Korean market currently dominates The Marianas tourism market and Japan's return to pre-pandemic levels remains uncertain, we must continue our efforts to broaden our reach and attract visitors from diverse regions, including China,” he said. “Of course, we can only return to pre-pandemic flight levels with the reinstatement the CNMI has requested of Annex VI under the US Department of State's “US-China Air Transport Agreement of July 9, 2007. This should remain a top priority of HANMI and

the private sector, the administration, Congressman Kilili's office, Commonwealth Ports Authority, and all parties.”

A total of 26,205 of 73,394 available room nights were sold by HANMI member hotels during March 2024 compared to 17,058 of 63,085 available rooms sold in March 2023. Average room rates were \$112.04 compared to \$132.69 last March.

Hotels included in HANMI's monthly statistical report are Aqua Resort Club, Aquarius Beach Tower, Century Hotel, Coral Ocean Resort, GrandVrio Resort Saipan, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Kensington Hotel Saipan, LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort, Pacific Islands Club Saipan, Saipan World Resort, and Surfrider Resort Hotel.

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