

But it won't all fit. Last Friday's papers printed my letter which consisted mainly of a list of 40+ suggestions of where/how funds could be found to help pay the Retirement Fund debt. It's a very uneven list, the result of informal "brainstorming," that has been put together and is being circulated via e-mail. It was not my list - and I did not edit it. I sent it in hopes that putting it in the paper would inspire someone to do more than just talk about the situation.

The Fund has two streams of loss, as I see it - the on-going current loss as it uses more and more of its assets in order to keep up the payment to retirees, and the accumulated debt that stems from past non-payments to the Fund. If implemented sooner rather than later, some of the items on the list could at least "cure" the current on-going loss, while the negotiating teams work out how to meet the accumulated debt.

But with no action taken on any front, as both the administration and the legislature drag their heels and engage in endless debate, the Retirement Fund only falls into more and more debt, making the situation ever worse.

In the letter, I challenged the administration and the legislature to come up, by month's end, not with a plan but with actual legislation that will at the very least cover the Retirement Fund's monthly payments to retirees and the associated monthly costs and expenses and at least stop the continuing on-going drain on the Retirement Fund's assets.

This week, on Tuesday, the papers printed a follow-up letter I wrote after someone claimed I supported cancelling housing for outside hirees, in which I explained that while I don't think outside hirees should expect, or automatically get, the same salaries they earn stateside, because there are significant differences in life styles, laws, etc., (like the income tax) that keep costs lower, I did think housing was a different issue.

The third letter I intend to send off to the papers is one I wrote in response to a call for comments on the Environmental Impact Statement prepared by the U.S. Department of Transportation in support of re-opening the road between Bird Island Lookout and Kingfisher golf course. The "availability for comment" appeared last week, with the comment period open until August 19.

I am including the full text of the letter because I believe the project should be scrapped, and hope that enough others would agree and would join me in working against its ever being implemented. There was a road in the 1970's. Some connecting bridges collapsed, and in the 40 years since, this area has been untouched. Because it is so remote, it has become a "wilderness" of sorts - a rare, unspoiled, richly diverse and natural forest area that exists only there; there is no equivalent anywhere else on Saipan.

Whoever decided that the road should be re-constructed has probably left the CNMI long

since. But the fact remains that plans were drawn up and now, years later, the plans have been dusted off, and an attempt is being made to carry them out. It has gone so far as to have generated an environmental impact statement from the U.S. DOT, which is now out and up for comment.....

; DPL re clearing?