I MINA'TRENTAI SAIS NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN
2021 (FIRST) Regular Session
VOTING RECORD

Resolution No. 94-36 (LS) As amended on the Floor.	**Speaker Antonio R. Unpingco Legislative Session Hall** **Guam Congress Building** **July 8, 2021**					
NAME	**Aye**	**Nay**	**Not Voting/ Abstained**	**Out During Roll Call**	**Absent**	**Excused**
Senator V. Anthony Ada					✓	✓
Senator Frank Blas Jr.	✓					
Senator Joanne Brown	✓					
Senator Christopher M. Dueñas	✓					
Senator James C. Moylan	✓					
Vice Speaker Tina Rose Muña Barnes	✓					
Senator Telena Cruz Nelson	✓					
Senator Sabina Flores Perez	✓					
Senator Clynton E. Ridgell	✓					
Senator Joe S. San Agustin	✓					
Senator Amanda L. Shelton	✓					
Senator Telo T. Taitague	✓					
Senator Jose "Pedo" Terlaje	✓					
Speaker Therese M. Terlaje	✓					
Senator Mary Camacho Torres	✓					
TOTAL	**14** **Aye**	**0** **Nay**	**Not Voting/ Abstained**	**Out During Roll Call**	**1** **Absent**	**1** **Excused**

CERTIFIED TRUE AND CORRECT:

RENNAE V. C. MENO
Clerk of the Legislature

I = Pass

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2021 (FIRST) Regular Session

Resolution No. 94-36 (LS)
As amended on the Floor.

*****

Introduced by: Sabina Flores Perez
Clynton E. Ridgell
Telo T. Taitague
Joanne Brown
Tina Rose Muña Barnes
Therese M. Terlaje
Joe S. San Agustin
Amanda L. Shelton
Jose "Pedo" Terlaje
Frank Blas Jr.

Relative to supporting the Government of Guam's efforts to secure federal technical assistance and funding to eradicate brown tree snakes from *Dåno'*, also known as Cocos Island, to protect and recover *Guåhan's* native species, and to commit to removing brown tree snakes from *Guåhan*.

BE IT RESOLVED BY *I MINA'TRENTAI SAIS NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN*:

WHEREAS, the species of snake identified as *Boiga irregularis* or brown tree snake (BTS), known locally as *kulepbla*, is invasive to Guam, having been brought to the island as a stowaway in cargo transported by U.S. military vessels following the end of World War II, and it has been a major factor in a modern extinction episode beyond its native range and unprecedented in its scope, with the extirpation of most of Guam's

endemic and native terrestrial vertebrates, including fruit bats, lizards, and thirteen (13) of the island's twenty-two (22) native breeding birds, with the most significant impact on native forest birds, of which ten (10) of twelve (12) have become locally extinct; and

WHEREAS, after more than seventy (70) years since the initial discovery of the BTS on Guam, the BTS continues to pose a major threat not only to the island, but to the surrounding islands and atolls in the region; and

WHEREAS, the absence of natural population controls, an abundance of vulnerable prey on the island, and a climate that allows the BTS to reproduce year-round has caused the BTS to have devastating ecological impacts, and, it poses a significant threat to the wildlife of *Dåno'*, also known as Cocos Island; and

WHEREAS, BTS predation on native and endemic species has resulted in a severe decline in Guam's biodiversity, making the island more prone to climate change impacts, such as storm surge activities which directly impact *Dåno'* and other low-lying areas of Guam; and

WHEREAS, *Dåno'* is an eighty-three (83)-acre atoll located one and a half (1.5) miles off southern Guam within the Merizo Barrier Reef, and is part of the *Malesso'* village municipality; and

WHEREAS, *Dåno'* is a culturally and historically significant place to the *Malesso'* community, which relies on the health of the Cocos Lagoon and other natural habitats for subsistence; and

WHEREAS, *Dåno'* had remained relatively snake-free seventy (70) years after Guam was invaded by the BTS, and is also free of cats, rodents, feral pigs, and deer, allowing for native fauna to flourish and provide habitat for endemic and native species; and, it is home to the only free-living population of the endemic *ko'ko'* (Guam Rail, *Gallirallus owstoni*) on the island of Guam; and

WHEREAS, *Dåno'* is considered by the residents of *Guåhan* and the scientific community to be an incredible sanctuary for wildlife that nest and reproduce there, including shorebirds and seabirds such as *chunge'* (White Tern, *Gygis alba*); *fåhang* (Black Noddy, *Anous minutus*; and Brown Noddy, *Anous stolidus*), which are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act; the locally-endangered *såli* (Micronesian Starling; *Aplonis opaca guami*); the endangered *haggan betde* (Green Sea Turtle, *Chelonia mydas*); and, on occasion, the endangered *fanihi* (Mariana Fruit Bat, *Pteropus marianus*); and notably, *Dåno'* is the site that was chosen to reintroduce the locally-extinct *sihek* (Guam Kingfisher, *Todiramphus cinnamominus*); and

WHEREAS, *Dåno'*, Cocos Island is one of the only safe refuge areas for geckos and skinks which are rare in the Marianas and no longer found on *Guåhan* due to predation by the BTS, including the endangered Mariana Skink (*Emoia slevini*), the Tide-pool Skink (*Emoia atrocostata*), the Azure-tail Skink (*Emoia cyanura*), the Micronesia Saw-tailed Gecko (*Perochirus ateles*), the Oceanic Gecko (*Gehyra oceanica*), and the Snake-eyed Skink (*Cryptoblepharis poecilopleurus*); and

WHEREAS, prospects for successful recovery are dependent on eradicating the BTS at various spatial scales; and, the presence of the BTS could negatively impact all wildlife that call *Dåno'* home, as both active (*e.g.*, geckos) and inactive (*e.g.*, eggs) prey are eaten opportunistically, including almost all vertebrates and carrion of a suitable size; and

WHEREAS, the Guam Department of Agriculture (DoAg) and the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) are responsible for managing the natural resources of *Dåno'* Park on Cocos Island, and DoAg is an active member of the BTS Technical Working Group, which coordinates BTS research and control activities to prevent the spread of the snake and restore *Guåhan's* native ecosystem; and

WHEREAS, a 2021 DoAg survey in *Dåno'* of the population of *såli*, which is one (1) of the two (2) remaining native forest birds in *Guåhan*, revealed an alarming eighty percent (80%) decline in population from an estimated two hundred (200) individuals to forty (40) individuals; and

WHEREAS, in January 2020, the discovery of BTS skin that was shed on *Dåno'*, Cocos Island was reported to DoAg and the United States Geological Survey (USGS) BTS Rapid Response Team (RRT), and in September 2020 local fishermen found and killed several BTS; and, further, in October 2020 a population of BTS was documented by the USGS RRT; and

WHEREAS, with the assistance of local and federal partners, an immediate response to remove the snakes was initiated to protect the native wildlife in *Dåno'*, and if it were not for the careful attention and reporting of local residents, this population of snakes would remain unknown and its expansion left unchecked; and

WHEREAS, while long-term planning for eradication efforts is ongoing, it is acknowledged that removing snakes from *Dåno'*, Cocos Island will be challenging and that the effort will require multi-year federal funding resources and community involvement that incorporates well-trained volunteers; and, that members of the BTS Technical Working Group recognize that eradication of snakes on Cocos Island is possible and can demonstrate how BTS control efforts may be integrated to protect native species from extinction; and

WHEREAS, in response to the invasive threat that the BTS poses to Guam, the United States Congress established the *Brown Tree Snake Control Committee* and included section 1209 of the *Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990*, and furthermore, a multi-agency Brown Tree Snake Control Memorandum of Agreement authorized a cooperative program to control the BTS outside of its historic range and to develop an integrated pest management approach that would

eradicate or contain new populations as soon as detected, was signed in 1992 and renewed in 1999 and 2011; and

WHEREAS, under the reporting requirement standards established by the 108th U.S. Congress and outlined in the *Brown Tree Snake Control and Eradication Act of 2004* (Public Law 108-384), the *Brown Tree Snake Technical Working Group* was subsequently created and tasked with ensuring that federal, state, territorial, and local agency efforts concerning the BTS are coordinated, effective, complementary, and cost-effective, to include preventing the escape of the BTS from Guam to other locations, suppressing and controlling BTS numbers to reduce their impact on *Guåhan* and restoring the island's ecosystem, and eradicating the BTS from Guam; and

WHEREAS, the last major directives regarding the *Brown Tree Snake Technical Working Group* were initiated in 2004, with the *Brown Tree Snake Control and Eradication Act* (Public Law 108-384); and in 2009, with the *Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act* for FY 2009 (Public Law 110-417 [Division A], Title III, Section 316, October 14, 2008, 122 Statute 4356), which required the U.S. Secretary of Defense to establish a comprehensive program to control and eradicate the BTS population from military facilities on Guam and to ensure that military activities do not contribute to the spread of the BTS; and

WHEREAS, *Dåno'*, Cocos Island is an invaluable educational and research destination for students and scientists to observe and study wildlife that is either scarce or non-existent on *Guåhan*, and is an important tourism destination for the village of *Malesso'* which sustains local business economies, provides jobs, and is part of the cultural heritage of southern Guam; and

WHEREAS, the training and capacity building of Government of Guam personnel and community partners to identify and respond to the BTS is a long-term investment into Guam's ability to combat the spread of the BTS; and

WHEREAS, plans for species and habitat recovery on *Dåno'* should also include climate change contingency plans to mitigate impacts of natural disasters; and

WHEREAS, the BTS is symptomatic of the legacy of military activities on Guam, and is a problem that now requires a sincere partnership between Guam and federal entities; and

WHEREAS, although current efforts have ensured that the BTS are actively being removed from Cocos Island and the snake population is being assessed to protect the extant native species, Guam's mission moving forward is to restore its environment and reclaim its connection to its lands; and

WHEREAS, the eradication of snakes from *Dåno',* Cocos Island is an environmental emergency that requires decisive, well-coordinated, and immediate action, with sincere and equitable partnership between federal and Guam agencies to avoid the tragic loss of endemic and native species, many of which are both locally and federally listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act; and

WHEREAS, such actions must include the direct and meaningful involvement of the *Malesso'* community, the Guam DoAg, and the free, prior and informed consent of the people of Guam to be effective and culturally responsible; and

WHEREAS, subsequent to the eradication of the BTS from *Dåno',* Cocos Island what must follow is consistent and thorough biosecurity, monitoring, analysis, prompt public reporting of native and endemic species counts, and active preservation work, to ensure that these species do not disappear from *Dåno',* Cocos Island as they did from *Guåhan*; and

WHEREAS, as the Guam DoAg is the lead agency in the effort to eradicate the BTS, new and significant federal findings regarding the BTS and other invasive species should be shared openly with the agency and the people of Guam; and

WHEREAS, *Dåno'*, Cocos Island does hold great potential to become a local, regional, and international example of successful endemic and native species recovery and conservation efforts, which would elevate and showcase the stewardship of the people of *Guåhan*; and

WHEREAS, the successful and rapid eradication of snakes from *Dåno'*, Cocos Island will provide a demonstration of how BTS control and eradication efforts can be integrated to protect endemic, native, and endangered species, and how such efforts could lead to eliminating the BTS from *Guåhan*, further expanding the possibilities of one day reintroducing the island's native birds back to their native forests and recovering the island's cultural heritage; and

WHEREAS, *I Mina'trentai Sais Na Liheslaturan Guåhan* recognizes the impact a singular invasive species can have on an environment and the ecosystem that sustains it, and further implores the larger community, both governmental and non-governmental, to mutually commit and work together to protect Guam's native endangered and threatened species from the catastrophic harm of the BTS, and develop more effective and environmentally sound control and eradication strategies and methods that will protect endangered species and other wildlife from BTS predation; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that *I Mina'trentai Sais Na Liheslaturan Guåhan* does hereby, on behalf of the people of Guam, support the eradication of snakes from *Dåno'*, Cocos Island, to include compliance by all persons accessing *Dåno'*, Cocos Island with the biosecurity protocols necessary to keep Cocos Island safe from further intrusions by snakes, rodents, cats, chickens, or any other organisms that would pose any risk to Guam's native species; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the eradication of the BTS from *Dåno'*, Cocos Island be determined as a priority legislative action, and that additional funding initiatives

through grants, contracts, reimbursable agreements, or other mechanisms locally and federally, be used to explore resources for the continued support of existing programs and the development of new programs surrounding the detection, control, monitoring, and eradication and interdiction of invasive species on Guam; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Speaker certify, and the Legislative Secretary attest to, the adoption hereof, and that copies of the same be thereafter transmitted to the Assistant Secretary of Insular and International Affairs; to the United States Department of Agriculture; to the United States Geological Survey; to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service; to the Guam Department of Agriculture; to the Guam Invasive Species Council; to the Brown Tree Snake Technical Working Group; and to the Honorable Lourdes A. Leon Guerrero, *I Maga'hågan Guåhan*.

DULY AND REGULARLY ADOPTED BY *I MINA'TRENTAI SAIS NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN* ON THE DAY OF JUNE 2021.

THERESE M. TERLAJE	**AMANDA L. SHELTON**
Speaker	**Legislative Secretary**