



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

NOLAN P. ESPINDA
DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 17, 2019

GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY DEPUTY DIRECTOR APPOINTMENTS

HONOLULU – Gov. David Ige and Department of Public Safety (PSD) Director Nolan Espinda announced the appointment of Maria C. Cook as the Department of Public Safety Deputy Director for Administration. Cook will begin her new position, effective February 1, 2019.

“Maria will bring valuable insight and experience to the Department in her new role,” said PSD Director Nolan Espinda. “She has a wealth of employment and labor relations experience and will provide effective leadership and accountability to ensure that the division operates efficiently.”

Maria C. Cook is a veteran Deputy Attorney General with 20 years of experience working in the Employment Law Division of the Department of the Attorney General representing the interests of the State’s Executive, Legislative, Judiciary, and other State agencies in all employment and labor matters.

Ms. Cook has a wide range of experience in public employment and labor matters, including civil litigation and related appeals, agency appeals, workers’ compensation, and collective bargaining, including interest arbitrations relating to new collective bargaining focused on presentation and analyses of the State finances. Ms. Cook also provides advice and counsel to all State departments and agencies relating to personnel, employment, and labor matters.

She earned her law degree from Loyola Law School in California, with membership in the Phi Delta Phi Law Honor Society, and an undergraduate degree from the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Director Espinda reappointed Renee Sonobe Hong as Deputy Director of Law Enforcement, a position she's held since January 2017.

"I am humbled and grateful for the honor and privilege to continue to serve our community as part of the public safety team, said Sonobe Hong, Deputy Director for Law Enforcement. "I am excited to continue working with our law enforcement, judicial, and other partners to promote the safety and well-being of the people of the State of Hawaii."

Sonobe Hong most recently served as State Sheriff for the Public Safety Department. Prior to that she was Deputy Attorney General for the Public Safety Department, Hawaiian Home Lands and the Housing Division, as well as Deputy Corporation Counsel and a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney.

Director Espinda also announced the reappointment of Jodie Maesaka-Hirata as Deputy Director of Corrections, a position she's held since January 2016.

"It has been an honor and privilege to serve in Gov. Ige's administration these past three years. I thank him and Director Nolan Espinda for providing me the opportunity to continue to work with the Department Public Safety to improve the lives of those incarcerated through meaningful rehabilitative services," said Deputy Director Maesaka-Hirata.

Maesaka-Hirata previously worked for the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney from 2014 until her appointment to Deputy Director for Corrections. Prior to that she worked for the Public Safety Department from 1992 to 2014 in various capacities.

These appointments are not subject to Senate confirmation.

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