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November 14, 2013

Hon. Rand Beers
Acting Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Mr. Beers:

As the U.S. and others strive to get assistance and aid to the Philippines in the wake Typhoon Haiyan, hearts all over the world go out to the victims of this disaster. While that nation struggles to cope with the after-effects of one of the most powerful storms ever recorded on land, the United States can help in many ways, in addition to the aid that is already underway. One way we can help is to limit the strain on that country's resources by designating the Philippines for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) under §244(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

AILA is the national association of immigration lawyers with more than 13,000 members. It was established in 1946 to promote justice, advocate for fair and reasonable immigration law and policy, advance the quality of immigration and nationality law and practice, and enhance the professional development of its members. AILA has supported the judicious grant of TPS in limited cases in the past based on a studied consideration of the totality of the circumstances. Just less than four years ago, DHS and USCIS acted quickly in just such a circumstance to designate Haiti for TPS after a massive earthquake and in record time, stood up a procedure to process applications for nationals of that devastated nation. That response can and should be repeated for the Philippines.

While we do not yet know the full impact of Typhoon Haiyan on the Philippines, the facts that are emerging are chilling. The death toll is believed to be in the thousands, and it is estimated that nearly 7 million people have been affected. Reports are that every structure in Tacloban has been destroyed or seriously damaged. Tens of thousands are homeless, and food and water is scarce in the affected regions. Roads and transportation infrastructure are gone, not only delaying relief but presenting a massive rebuilding challenge to a nation already struggling financially. There is simply no way that the Philippines could absorb the return of its nationals under these conditions.

We therefore ask that the Philippines be designated for TPS with all due haste.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Douglas Stump', with a stylized flourish at the end.

T. Douglas Stump, President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Crystal Williams', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Crystal Williams, Executive Director