



**PRESS RELEASE**

(For immediate release)

## **GVB Reacts to New7Wonders Deletion of Blue Hole as Candidate**

(Tuesday, May 26, 2009; Tumon, Guam) The Guam Visitors Bureau has withdrawn its nomination of The Blue Hole, a popular dive site, in an online competition to determine the seven wonders of nature. GVB's decision was based on concerns over the methodology being used to determine the final list. The competition is sponsored by the New7Wonders Foundation, which also hosts the website [www.new7wonders.com](http://www.new7wonders.com), where people vote online for their favorite site.

"At first, we were very flattered with this organization's recognition of Guam's most popular diving site and attracted to the opportunity of garnering exposure to a global audience," said General Manager Gerald S.A. Perez. GVB submitted the appropriate paperwork to become an Official Supporting Committee, a requirement for the Blue Hole to be allowed to continue in the competition. However, when GVB received the contract, it was accompanied by a payment request.

"We were very enthusiastic to participate and understood that the only investment was the time to fill out forms and gather official support for the endeavor from our local government," Perez said, "We did not expect that the amount of financial contribution to the organization determined the level of voting responses that Guam would get, rather than the merit of the site."

Upon further investigation of the organization, GVB determined that the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), a specialized program of the United Nations, had issued a press release (see attached) stating that they were not in support of the program. GVB also discovered that governments could purchase additional votes for their respective sites, disputing the claim that competition results are determined by individual voters.

"We have since decided to align GVB with UNESCO, where worthwhile sites are selected based on objective, scientific, and educational attributes that merit world recognition rather than take part in a popularity contest," said Perez.

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