

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 14, 2022

The Honorable Masatsugu Asakawa
President
Asian Development Bank
6 ADB Avenue
Mandaluyong City 1550
Metro Manila, Philippines

Dear President Asakawa,

As Asian American Members of Congress and members of the Congressional LGBTQ+ Equality Caucus, we write to express our strong support for the creation of a standalone Gender and Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) safeguard in the Asian Development Bank (ADB)'s updated Safeguard Policy Statement. The inclusion of such a safeguard presents an opportunity for the ADB to lead by example among multilateral development banks (MDBs) in a region of the world where civil society has been at the fore of pushing positive change for sexual and gender minorities.

The explicit inclusion and protections for sexual and gender minorities in this proposed safeguard are not only beneficial for the economic and social development of the region, but would also open further opportunities for investment. Studies conducted at both the international and country-specific levels have shown that greater inclusion of sexual and gender minorities in the workforce benefits the economy at large, and that countries with greater inclusion and protections for LGBTQI+ people attract more global trading partners. Visibility of the LGBTQI+ community also signals to the global community that these countries welcome diversity and new ideas, making them attractive to immigration and investment. From the perspective of localized economies, greater inclusivity and protections for gender and sexual minorities create a healthier, more productive workforce. When workers are free from barriers to getting an education, participating in vocational training, or receiving healthcare, they are better able to participate in their communities and economies.


The scope of the proposed safeguard extends beyond just investors, borrowers, and workers; the establishment of frameworks to ensure the equitable delivery of benefits will create stronger regional protections for LGBTQI+ individuals and strengthen partnerships with organizations at the local and international levels. The standards would require the ADB to assess development projects for particular risks and impacts, specifically the risks of discrimination, gender-based violence, exclusion, and other factors that disproportionately affect the LGBTQI+ community. With these standards in place, development projects would incorporate meaningful consultation with groups in civil society organizations and networks, include accountability and grievance redress, and build out monitoring, evaluation, and disclosure processes. This is a chance to create

and strengthen partnerships with other international and civil society organizations, as well as inviting new and innovative programming to the region.

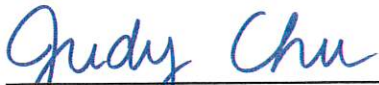
Finally, this is an opportunity for the ADB to be a leader among MDBs globally. The ADB would be the first of the MDBs to adopt a SOGIESC safeguard as extensive as this proposal. As Asian Americans and advocates for the LGBTQI+ population here in the United States, we are eager to see the ADB spearhead the establishment of necessary protections for the international LGBTQI+ community that will allow them to participate in civic life more fully.

We applaud the ADB's commitment to inclusivity, resiliency, and sustainability in the Asia Pacific region and look forward to seeing the continued growth of the institution.

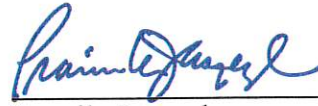
Sincerely,



MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress



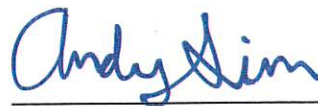
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
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Andy Kim
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Raja Krishnamoorthi
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Ted W. Lieu
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