



COPY

THE SENATE  
Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature  
P. O. Box 500129  
Saipan, MP 96950

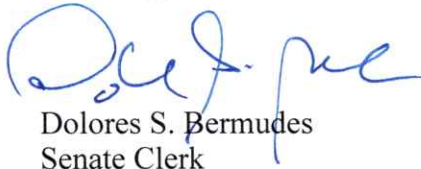
February 05, 2026

The Honorable Edmund S. Villagomez  
Speaker  
House of Representatives  
24<sup>th</sup> Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature  
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Speaker Villagomez:

I have the honor of transmitting for your House action **Senate Bill No. 24-05**, entitled, "To establish a Fire Reserve Corps to assist the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DFEMS) and the Commonwealth Ports Authority-Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (CPA-ARFF) in fire prevention and suppression, rescue operations, basic and advanced life support; and for other purposes." The Senate passed on Final Reading S.B. No. 24-05 by the unanimous vote, a quorum being present, in its 2<sup>nd</sup> Day, Third Regular Session on February 04, 2026.


Sincerely,



Dolores S. Bermudes  
Senate Clerk

attachment


**Transmitted to HOUSE:**

Received by:  Date: 2/5/2026 Time: 2:13 p



**The Senate**  
NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE  
P.O. BOX 500129  
SAIPAN, MP 96950

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. **24-50**  
**Date: December 2, 2025**  
**RE: Senate Bill No. 24-05**

*S. Adopted 2/4/25* 

Honorable Karl R. King-Nabors  
President of the Senate  
Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas  
Commonwealth Legislature  
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Mr. President:

Your Committee on Judiciary, Government, and Law, to which Senate Bill No. 24-05 was referred, entitled:

“To establish a Fire Reserve Corps to assist the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DFEMS) and the Commonwealth Ports Authority-Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (CPA-ARFF) in fire prevention and suppression, rescue operations, basic and advanced life support; and for other purposes,”

begs leave to report as follows:

**I. RECOMMENDATION:**

After considerable discussion and deliberation, your Committee recommends the passage of Senate Bill No. 24-05 in its current form.

**II. ANALYSIS:**

A. Purpose:

The purpose of Senate Bill No. 24-05 is to further assist in fire prevention and suppression, rescue operations, basic and advanced life support by establishing a Fire Reserve Corps for the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DFEMS) and the Commonwealth Ports Authority-Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (CPA-ARFF).

B. Committee Findings:

Your Committee finds that the Fire Reserve Corps is composed of volunteers who have met the minimum qualifications necessary to serve their communities as reservists, supporting fire and emergency services by handling non-emergency tasks.

Your Committee further finds that Senate Bill No. 24-05 intends to enhance the operations of firefighters in the Commonwealth, particularly in fire prevention and suppression, rescue operations, and basic and advanced life support by establishing a CNMI Fire Reserve Corps for the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DFEMS) and the Commonwealth Ports Authority-Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (CPA-ARFF).

Your Committee met on December 2, 2025, to formally discuss the proposed legislation. Recognizing the significant support that the CNMI Fire Reserve Corps would provide to active firefighter personnel in the Commonwealth, your Committee strongly supports the intent of the proposed legislation and recommends the passage of Senate Bill No. 24-05 in its current form.

C. Legislative History:

Senate Bill No. 24-05 was formally introduced by Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro on January 22, 2025, and was subsequently referred to the Senate Standing Committee on Judiciary, Government, and Law for disposition.

D. Public Hearing and Comment:

1. Public Hearing. No public hearing was scheduled for Senate Bill No. 24-05. However, a committee meeting, which is open to the public, was held on December 2, 2025. See below for further details.
2. Committee Meeting. The proposed legislation made its first appearance during the scheduled committee meeting on Tuesday, May 6, 2025. The committee meeting notices and agenda were officially posted on May 1, 2025, on various legislative forums and social media sites to invite members of the general public to provide comments as indicated under *Item No. IV. Public Comment* on the Committee Agenda. However, no oral testimonies in support or in opposition of the proposed legislation were presented to your Committee.

The proposed legislation made its second appearance during the scheduled committee meeting on Friday, June 20, 2025. The committee meeting notice was posted on June 12, 2025, and the agenda was officially posted on June 17, 2025, on various legislative forums and social media sites to invite members of the general public to provide comments as indicated under *Item No. IV. Public Comment* on the Committee Agenda. However, no oral testimonies in support or in opposition of the proposed legislation were presented to your Committee.

The proposed legislation made its third appearance during the scheduled committee meeting on Wednesday, July 2, 2025. The committee meeting notices and agenda were officially posted on June 26, 2025, on various legislative forums and social media sites to invite members of the general public to provide comments as indicated under *Item No. IV. Public Comment* on the Committee Agenda. However, no oral testimonies in support or in opposition of the proposed legislation were presented to your Committee.

The proposed legislation made its fourth appearance during the scheduled committee meeting on Tuesday, December 2, 2025. The committee meeting notices and agenda were officially posted on November 26, 2025, on various legislative forums and social media sites to invite members of the general public to provide comments as indicated under *Item No. IV. Public Comment* on the Committee Agenda. However, no oral testimonies in support or in opposition of the proposed legislation were presented to your Committee.

3. Written Comment. Your Committee sent out several requests for comments on the proposed legislation. To date, the status of comments received from the following government and private entities is as follows:
  - a. Office of the Attorney General, *no comment received*
  - b. Honorable Aubry M. Hocog, Mayor of the Municipality of Rota, *letter dated March 27, 2025*
  - c. Mayor of the Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan, *no comment received*
  - d. Mayor of the Municipality of Saipan, *no comment received*
  - e. Mayor of the Northern Islands, *no comment received*
  - f. Rota Municipal Council, *no comment received*
  - g. Tinian Municipal Council, *no comment received*
  - h. Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council, *no comment received*
  - i. Department of Public Safety, *no comment received*
  - j. Department of Corrections, *no comment received*
  - k. Juan A. Pua, Commissioner, Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, *letter dated March 12, 2025*
  - l. Commonwealth Ports Authority, *no comment received*
  - m. Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting, *no comment received*

E. Estimated Fiscal Cost:

Please see the attached financial impact prepared by Fiscal Analyst David Demapan, dated July 18, 2025.

F. Summary of Committee Amendments:

Your Committee agreed that no further amendments were needed. However, several technical amendments were made in the proposed legislation.

**III. CONCLUSION:**

Your Committee agrees with the intent and purpose of the proposed legislation and recommends the passage of Senate Bill No. 24-05 in its current form.

Respectfully submitted,

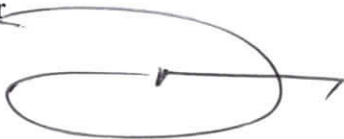


\_\_\_\_\_  
Senator Donald M. Manglona  
Chairperson



\_\_\_\_\_  
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro  
Vice Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Senator Celina R. Babauta  
Member



\_\_\_\_\_  
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo  
Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz  
Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Senator Corina L. Magofna  
Member

Reviewed by:



\_\_\_\_\_  
Senate Legal Counsel

Attachment(s):

1. Written Testimonies:

- a. Honorable Aubry M. Hocog, Mayor of the Municipality of Rota, *letter dated March 27, 2025*
- b. Juan A. Pua, Commissioner, Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, *letter dated March 12, 2025*

2. Financial Impact of Senate Bill No. 24-05, dated July 18, 2025



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS  
**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**  
THE HONORABLE AUBRY MANGLONA HOCOG  
Mayor of the Municipality of Rota  
Mailing Address: Post Office Box 537 Rota, MP 96951  
Phone: 670.532.9451 / 9452 \* Email: [mayor.ahocog@gmail.com](mailto:mayor.ahocog@gmail.com)



MOR-2025-130

March 27, 2025

The Honorable Senators  
Senate Standing Committee on Judiciary, Government and Law  
24th CNMI Legislature  
Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950



***Subject: Strong Support for Senate Bill No. 24-05***

Dear Honorable Senators,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill No. 24-05, which intends "To establish a Fire Reserve Corps to assist the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DFEMS) and the Commonwealth Ports Authority-Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (CPAARFF) in fire prevention and suppression, rescue operations, basic and advanced life support; and for other purposes." This legislative initiative addresses a critical need within our community and demonstrates a proactive approach to enhancing our emergency response capabilities.

The establishment of a volunteer-based CNMI Fire Reserve Corps, as outlined in this bill, will provide invaluable assistance to the CNMI DFEMS and CPA-ARFF. The proposed reserve corps will significantly augment our existing resources in fire prevention and suppression, rescue operations, and emergency medical services. This is particularly important given the increasing demands on our public services.

Furthermore, the provisions for training, certification, and the management of accreditation programs will ensure that our fire and emergency services meet the highest professional standards. This will enhance the effectiveness and reliability of our emergency response systems, ultimately benefiting the safety and well-being of all residents.

Senate Bill No. 24-05 is a vital piece of legislation that will strengthen our community's ability to respond to emergencies effectively. I urge the Committee to give it full consideration and support. Thank you for your dedication to serving the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

  
Aubry M. Hocog



Arnold I. Palacios  
Governor

**DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND  
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**  
Ascension Ct  
Capitol Hill BLDG # 1342



David M. Apatang  
Lt. Governor

**DFEMS 2025-069**

March 12, 2025

Juan A. Pua  
Commissioner  
Ascension Ct Capitol Hill BLDG# 1342  
Saipan, MP 96950

Karl R. King-Nabors  
Senate Vice President  
Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Judiciary, Government, and Law  
24<sup>th</sup> Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature  
Jesus P. Mafnas Building  
Saipan, MP 96950



**Reference: S.B. No. 24-05 - “To establish a Fire Reserve Corps to assist the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DFEMS) and the Commonwealth Ports Authority-Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (CPA-ARFF) in fire prevention and suppression, rescue operations, basic and advanced life support; and for other purposes.”**

Greetings, Hafa Adai and Tirow Senate Vice President Nabors:

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to provide our comments on the proposed Senate Bill No.: 24-05. This bill represents a significant step forward, and DFEMS recognizes the need for additional personnel in fire prevention and suppression, rescue operations, basic and advanced life support, and other related areas.

Please include this in S.B. No. 24-05 **Rulemaking Authority**. The Commissioner shall prescribe and promulgate reasonably necessary rules and regulations to implement and enforce the provisions of this Chapter for the Fire Reserve Corps.

We would like to express our support for this legislation. The Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DFEMS) fully endorses this initiative because it will create job opportunities, address the manpower shortage, and providing the necessary training, thereby enhancing emergency services for our community.

Your utmost understanding and support of this matter is greatly appreciated.



Arnold I. Palacios  
Governor

**DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND  
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**  
Ascension Ct  
Capitol Hill BLDG # 1342



David M. Apatang  
Lt. Governor

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Juan A. Pua".

Juan A. Pua  
Cc: Deputy Commissioners  
Division/Section OICs  
File

**From:** demapand@cnmileg.net  
**Sent:** Friday, July 18, 2025 3:24 PM  
**To:** 'Karl King-Nabors'  
**Cc:** 'japua@dfemscnmi.com'; 'skmesngon@dfemscnmi.com'  
**Subject:** Financial Impact of Senate Bill No. 24-05 (CNMI Fire and Emergency Medical Services Reserve Corps)  
**Attachments:** FINANCIAL IMPACT.pdf

Good evening Honorable Chairman (SKK-N),

I am reporting to you the financial impact for the establishment of the (CNMI Fire and Emergency Medical Services Reserve Corps) that will facilitate the operations of both the CNMI DFEMS and CPA ARFF. Based on our analysis, the annual budget is \$1.04 million and here is the breakdown of the annual budget (see attached analysis for details):

- Personnel Cost:
  - \$1,036,223 of resources will be used to fund 15 members of the Reserve Corps, which includes salaries, benefits, and OPA 1% fee.
- Uniforms, personal protective equipment and response equipment:
  - \$4,500 of resources will be used to fund the uniforms of the Reserve Corps. An estimate of \$300 cost for each member;
  - \$15K of resources will be used to fund the food of the Reserve Corps. An estimate of \$1,000 cost for each member;
  - \$390K of resources will be used to fund the equipment of the Reserve Corps; below is the cost for each unit for a member:
    - \$5K (Turn-out-gear);
    - \$15K (Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA));
    - \$6K (Land Mobil Radio)
- All Others:
  - \$100K of resources will be needed for certifications, academy, overtime, fuel, etc.)

The CNMI Fire and Emergency Medical Services Reserve Corps will make a big impact to the operations of both the CNMI DFEMS and CPA ARFF in times of catastrophic or disaster events (i.e., inter-island shortage of workforce, declaration of war, unexpected CNMI-wide wildfires, which is the major source of carbon dioxide emissions).

Before closing, we extend our gratitude to Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner ( Mr. Pua and Mr. Mesngon), respectively) for their support and assistance in providing this Committee the information that we need to complete our analysis.

Please call on me to discuss the analysis at your convenience should you need any clarifications.

Thank you,

David

JUDICIARY, GOVERNMENT, AND LAW COMMITTEE  
 Financial Impact of S.B. No. 24-05 (CNMI Fire and Emergency Medical Services Reserve Corps)

Line Items	FTEs	Annual Salary	Gross Salary	Health	Life	FICA	Medicare	Total Benefits	Total Impact
<b>1. Personnel Costs:</b>									
Firefighter I	15	\$28,115	\$421,725	\$54,885	\$7,591	\$26,147	\$6,115	\$94,738	<u>\$516,463</u>
<b>2. Operational Supplies:</b>									
This amount will be used to cover the officers' operational needs for the year (15 \$300 = \$4,500)									\$4,500
<b>3. Food Items:</b>									
This amount will provide food for the 15 officers during the year with an estimate of \$15,000 (15 x \$1,000 = \$15,000)									\$15,000
<b>4. Equipment (personal protective equipment , rescue equipment)(i.e., Turn- Out-Gear, Radio, Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA), etc).</b>									\$390,000
An anticipation of \$26K for each officer times 15 equals \$390,000. Detail breakdown include \$5K each (Turn-out-gear); \$15K each (SCBA) per set; and \$6K each for (Land Mobil Radio).									
<b>5. All Other (i.e., accreditation, academy costs, overtime, fuel, etc.)</b>									\$100,000
Subtotal									<u>\$1,025,963</u>
OPA 1% Fee									<u>\$10,260</u>
Total Financial Impact									<u><u>\$1,036,223</u></u>

**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

To establish a Fire Reserve Corps to assist the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DFEMS) and the Commonwealth Ports Authority-Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (CPA-ARFF) in fire prevention and suppression, rescue operations, basic and advanced life support; and for other purposes.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS  
COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:**

1           **Section 1. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature further finds that first  
2 responders risk their lives daily in order to protect all life, property, and the environment;  
3 endure lengthy hours in high-pressured and dangerous situations, and ensure that peace and  
4 tranquility are maintained despite the lack of manpower, training, equipment, and sufficient  
5 financial resources to adequately perform its mission. With society and the population  
6 continuing to grow, so does the request and the demand for public services.

7           In continuing its efforts, CNMI DFEMS is committed to the highest standards in  
8 order to protect the lives and property of the people of the Commonwealth from fires,  
9 natural disasters, and hazardous material incidents, and in providing emergency medical  
10 services, fire prevention, and fire suppression, and conducting educational programs to its  
11 personnel and the community. The Legislature finds the need to establish the following:  
12 (1) CNMI Fire and Emergency Medical Services Reserve Corps shall be hereinafter  
13 referred to as the “CNMI Fire Reserve Corps” or the “CNMI FRC”; and (2) CNMI DFEMS  
14 and CPA-ARFF shall attain and maintain accreditation by the Commission on Fire  
15 Accreditation International and Commission on Professional Credentialing, Commission  
16 on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs and Committee on Accreditation of  
17 Educational Programs for the Emergency Medical Services Professions, and the  
18 Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services.

1           Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to establish a volunteer-based CNMI Fire  
2 Reserve Corps (“CNMI FRC”) to assist the CNMI DFEMS and CPA-ARFF in fire  
3 prevention and suppression to include wildland, aircraft, and shipboard firefighting, rescue  
4 operations to include land and sea rescues, basic and advanced life support in EMS  
5 response, and for other purposes.

6           **Section 2. Amendment.** Title 1, Division 2, Part 1, Chapter 18, of the  
7 Commonwealth Code is hereby amended to add a new Article 8 to read as follows:

8           **“Article 8. CNMI Fire Reserve Corps Authorized.**

9           § 801. CNMI Fire Reserve Corps Established. The Commonwealth authorizes  
10 CNMI DFEMS to establish and maintain a CNMI Fire Reserve Corps or “CNMI FRC”.  
11 This reserve corps shall be authorized to have a sufficient number of reservists as  
12 determined reasonably necessary to meet mission requirements. It shall be staffed by  
13 citizen volunteers unless funding is otherwise provided, who will assist CNMI DFEMS  
14 and CPA-ARFF in fire prevention and suppression, rescue operations, and basic and  
15 advanced life support. CNMI DFEMS shall partner with the Commonwealth Ports  
16 Authority (CPA) – Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) Pacific Region ARFF  
17 Training Center (PRATC) to obtain and maintain professional firefighter certification  
18 through the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications, herein referred to  
19 as the “Pro-Board” for the CNMI FRC. This training and certification requirement shall  
20 apply to all CNMI DFEMS firefighters and the CNMI FRC.

21           § 802. Requirements. CNMI DFEMS Commissioner has overall authority over the  
22 CNMI FRC and is responsible to the CNMI Governor for the conduct of the reserve corps.  
23 The CNMI DFEMS Commissioner shall appoint or designate an Officer in Charge (OIC)  
24 from the Division of Emergency Services to manage the CNMI FRC Program. Reservists  
25 will be selected through a comprehensive screening and selection process from a list of  
26 qualified applicants who have successfully met minimum requirements through a CNMI  
27 FRC Academy through PRATC.

28           § 803. Response Authority. FRC personnel shall have response authority after  
29 officially being sworn in and only while on official duty.

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1           § 804. On-Duty. A reservist will be considered on-duty when the FRC as a whole  
2 has been activated, or when he or she has been specifically assigned to a task or duty by  
3 the OIC on special assignments or missions, during times of natural disasters or man-made  
4 catastrophic events, or to backfill manpower assignments during extreme shortage or  
5 unavailability of personnel. A reservist will also be considered on-duty when performing  
6 firefighting or EMS duties, ride-along for skill maintenance and sustainment, attending  
7 training to fulfill recertification requirements.

8           § 805. Compensation. Reservists may be compensated during times of declared  
9 disasters by the US and/or CNMI governments when performing official duties and at any  
10 time should funding be made available through federal grants or through local  
11 appropriations.

12           § 806. Reservist Rules. CNMI FRC personnel shall be subject to all lawful rules  
13 and regulations as may be promulgated by the CNMI DFEMS Commissioner and adhere  
14 to standard operating procedures, protocols, policies, and directives as established by the  
15 CNMI FRC program.

16           § 807. Dismissal. CNMI FRC personnel may be dismissed from their reserve status  
17 by the CNMI DFEMS Commissioner for violating any law, rule, or regulation. The OIC  
18 may suspend a reservist from duty status pending final review by the CNMI DFEMS  
19 Commissioner for allegations of misconduct that may lead to removal from the reserve  
20 corps program.

21           § 808. Equipment Issue. CNMI DFEMS and CPA-ARFF shall provide necessary  
22 uniforms, personal protective equipment, response equipment, and supplies for the  
23 reservists.

24           § 809. Priority Placement Program. CNMI DFEMS and CPA-ARFF shall work  
25 with the CNMI Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to establish a priority placement  
26 hiring program for CNMI DFEMS reservists.

27           § 810. Employment of Reserve Firefighters. Any government agency,  
28 instrumentality, or independent program in the Commonwealth, or as defined under 29  
29 USC § 203(c) and (x) employing the reserve firefighters, including those covered under §

1 203(y), shall comply with 29 CFR § 553.230 which relates to maximum hours for work  
2 periods of 7 to 28 days.

3 § 811. Emergency Essential Employees. Reserve firefighters shall be considered  
4 key and emergency essential employees performing key and emergency essential functions  
5 during times of natural or man-made disasters or any catastrophic events.”

6 **Section 3. Amendment**. Title 1, Division 2, Part 1, Chapter 18 of the  
7 Commonwealth Code is hereby amended to add a new Article 9 to read as follows:

8 “**Article 9. CNMI DFEMS and CPA-ARFF Accreditation Program Managers**.

9 § 901. CNMI DFEMS and CPA-ARFF Accreditation Program Managers: Duties  
10 and Responsibilities.

11 (a) CNMI DFEMS Commissioner shall appoint or designate an Officer-in-Charge  
12 (OIC) from the Division of Emergency Medical Services to manage the CNMI DFEMS  
13 Accreditation Program. CPA-ARFF Fire Chief shall likewise appoint or designate an  
14 Officer-in-Charge (OIC) from the Training and Administration Section to manage the  
15 CPA-ARFF Accreditation Program.

16 (b) CNMI DFEMS and CPA-ARFF Accreditation Program Managers shall be  
17 responsible for ensuring that fire department accreditation and firefighter professional  
18 credentialing, EMS education accreditation and professional EMS certification, and  
19 ambulance services accreditation are obtained and maintained.”

20 **Section 4. Severability**. If any provision of this Act or the application of any such  
21 provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court of competent  
22 jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its provisions to persons or  
23 circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid shall not be affected thereby.

24 **Section 5. Savings Clause**. This Act and any repealer contained herein shall not  
25 be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired under  
26 statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted under the statutes.  
27 Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted under or pursuant  
28 to prior law. The enactment of the Act shall not have the effect of terminating, or in any  
29 way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal, which shall already be in existence on the

- 1 date this Act becomes effective.
- 2 **Section 6. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the
- 3 Governor or becoming law without such approval.

Date: 01/22/25

Introduced By: /s/  
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:

/s/ Jose A. Bermudes  
Senate Legal Counsel