

**TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH
LEGISLATURE**

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Regular Session, 2026

H. B. 24-92

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To appropriate \$63,000.00 from Schedule A of Public Law 24-20 that was vetoed for the Soil and Water Conservation Districts; and for other purposes.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE 24TH NORTHERN MARIANAS
COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:**

1 **Section 1.** The Legislature finds that Schedule A of Public Law 24-20, the
2 Revised Fiscal Year 2026 Appropriations Act, attempted to appropriate \$63,000.00
3 to the CNMI Soil and Water Conservation Districts established by Public Law 4-
4 44, which included District one – composed of Saipan and the Northern Islands,
5 District two – Tinian, and District three - Rota. Governor David Apatang vetoed
6 the \$63,000.00 appropriation funding allocation for CNMI State Soil and Water
7 Conservation Districts included under the Independent Program heading in
8 Schedule A of Public Law 24-20 stating that there isn't any express provision
9 clarifying the intent behind its inclusion. Moreover, the Governor stated that the
10 program is already embedded within all three senatorial districts, and the creation

1 of a centralized office would be duplicative and administratively redundant.

2 The Legislature finds that the \$63,000.00 was intended to fund the CNMI
3 Soil and Water Conservations Districts which have been established pursuant to
4 Public Law 4-44 in all three senatorial districts, not create a duplicative centralized
5 office as stated by the Governor in his veto message. The Legislature further finds
6 that food security and sustainability initiative is a critical policy for the islands.
7 With the global climate change being an issue affecting the CNMI, environmental
8 protection and conservation programs and practices must be encouraged and
9 supported. It is imperative to provide funds to the three respective Soil and Water
10 Conservation Districts to assist the districts with their operations and mission in the
11 CNMI.

12 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate \$63,000.00 from
13 Schedule A of Public Law 24-20 that was vetoed for the Soil and Water
14 Conservation Districts of the CNMI under the Independent Program heading.

15 **SECTION 2. APPROPRIATION.**

16 Notwithstanding any provisions, statutes, laws or regulations to the
17 contrary, the amount of Sixty-Three Thousand Dollars (63,000.00) under Schedule
18 A of Public Law 20-20, specifically under the Independent Programs heading is
19 hereby appropriated as follows:

20 (a) \$25,000.00 to the Saipan Soil and Water Conservation District
21 for operations under the expenditure authority of the Secretary of the

1 Department of Lands and Natural Resources (DLNR) CNMI, in
2 consultation with the Chairman of Saipan & Northern Islands Soil & Water
3 Conservation District.

4 (b) \$19,000.00 to the Tinian Soil and Water Conservation District
5 for operations under the expenditure authority of the Resident Department
6 Head of DLNR, Tinian in consultation with Chairperson of the Tinian Soil
7 and Water Conservation District.

8 (c) \$19,000.00 to the Rota Soil and Water Conservation District for
9 operations under the expenditure authority of the Resident Department
10 Head of DLNR, Rota in consultation with Chairperson of the Rota Soil and
11 Water Conservation District.

12 **SECTION 3. FISCAL YEAR LIMITATION AND REPROGRAMMING.**

13 Notwithstanding any laws, provisions or regulations to the contrary, the
14 funds appropriated under Section 2 of this Act shall not be reprogrammed for any
15 other purpose and due to the operational and project based nature of conservation
16 activities all the funds shall be available for expenditure without fiscal year
17 limitations. The Department of Lands and Natural Resources shall serve as fiscal
18 agent for the funds appropriated herein.

19 **SECTION 4. REPORTING OF EXPENDITURES.**

20 The recipient of the funds allocated under Section 2 of this Act shall be
21 responsible to report all expenses to the Secretary of the Department of Finance by

1 the end of the 2026 calendar year. Provided further that failure to provide all
2 expenses, entities that were afforded funds under this Act shall not be able to
3 avail to any future funds appropriated by the Legislature.

4 **SECTION 5. SEVERABILITY.**

5 If any provision of this Act or the application of any such provision to any
6 person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction,
7 the remainder of this Act or the application of its provisions to persons or
8 circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid shall not be affected
9 thereby.

10 **SECTION 6. SAVINGS CLAUSE.**

11 This Act and any repealer contained herein shall not be construed as
12 affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired under statutes
13 repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted under the statutes.
14 Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted under or
15 pursuant to prior law. The enactment of the Act shall not have the effect of
16 terminating, or in any way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal, which shall
17 already be in existence on the date this Act becomes effective.

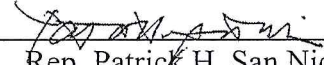
18 **SECTION 7. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

19 This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the Governor or it becoming
20 law without such approval.

Prefiled: 11/30/2020

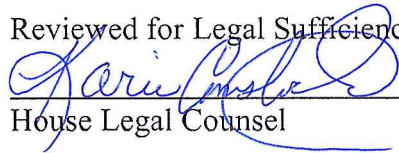
Date: _____

Introduced by: _____



Rep. Patrick H. San Nicolas

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:



House Legal Counsel