

David M. Apatang  
Governor



GOV. COMM. 24-94  
(HOUSE)

Dennis James C. Mendiola  
Lieutenant Governor

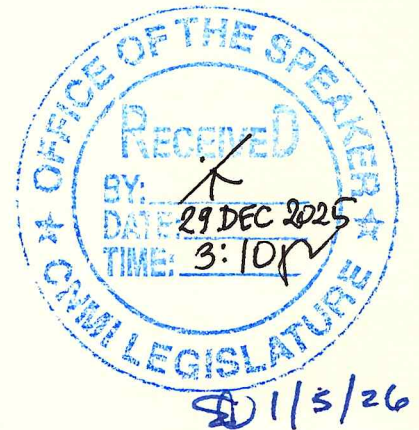
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS  
**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

December 29, 2025

GOV2025-625

The Honorable John Paul P. Sablan  
Chairman  
Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation  
Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature  
Saipan, MP 96950

The Honorable Edmund S. Villagomez  
Speaker  
House of Representatives  
Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature  
Saipan, MP 96950




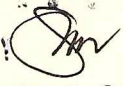

Dear Mr. Chairman and Mr. Speaker:

This is to inform you that I have signed into law **House Local Bill No. 24-29**, entitled "To rename the "Smiling Cove Marina" the "Diego T. Benavente Smiling Cove Marina" in honor of former Legislator and former Lieutenant Governor Diego Tenorio Benavente.," which was passed by the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation of the Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

This Bill becomes **Saipan Local Law No. 24-17**. Copies bearing my signature are forwarded for your reference.

Sincerely,

  
**DAVID M. APATANG**  
Governor

RECEIVED BY:   
DATE: 1/5/2026 TIME: 3:10 PM  


cc: Lieutenant Governor; Attorney General; Commonwealth Law Revision Commission;  
Public Auditor; Special Assistant for Administration; Mayor of Saipan;  
Mayor of the Northern Islands; Programs and Legislative Review



**SAIPAN AND NORTHERN ISLANDS LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION  
THIRD SENATORIAL DISTRICT  
TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE**

**SECOND REGULAR SESSION, 2025**

**HOUSE LOCAL BILL NO. 24-29**

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**A LOCAL BILL FOR AN ACT  
FOR THE THIRD SENATORIAL DISTRICT**

To rename the "Smiling Cove Marina" the "Diego T. Benavente Smiling Cove Marina" in honor of former Legislator and former Lieutenant Governor Diego Tenorio Benavente.

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**OFFERED BY**

Representatives Vincent R. Aldan, Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao, Angelo A. Camacho, Thomas J. DLC. Manglona, John Paul P. Sablan, and Ralph N. Yumul

**Introduced on October 9, 2025**

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**HOUSE ACTION**

Transmitted to the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation for action on

**November 7, 2025**

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**DELEGATION ACTION**

<b>Referred to:</b>	None
<b>Comments Solicited:</b>	11/10/25 Mayor of Saipan [Del. Matters 24-60] Mayor of Northern Islands [Del. Matters 24-61] 18 <sup>th</sup> SNIMC [Del. Matters 24-62]
<b>Comments Received:</b>	None
<b>Standing Committee Report:</b>	None
<b>Passed First &amp; Final Reading:</b>	November 21, 2025

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Frances", is written over a horizontal line.

**Frances Joan P. Kaipat  
Delegation Clerk**



**SAIPAN AND NORTHERN ISLANDS LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION  
THIRD SENATORIAL DISTRICT  
TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE**

**SECOND REGULAR SESSION, 2025**

**H. L. B. NO. 24-29**

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**A LOCAL BILL FOR AN ACT  
FOR THE THIRD SENATORIAL DISTRICT**

To rename the "Smiling Cove Marina" the "Diego T. Benavente Smiling Cove Marina" in honor of former Legislator and former Lieutenant Governor Diego Tenorio Benavente.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE THIRD SENATORIAL DISTRICT DELEGATION PURSUANT TO  
CHAPTER 4, DIVISION 1, TITLE 1 OF THE COMMONWEALTH CODE:**

**SECTION 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

Devoted to public service for decades, the Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente began his career in the CNMI House of Representatives, first representing Precinct II before later serving Precinct I on Saipan. Elected in 1989, he served six consecutive terms through 2000, demonstrating principled leadership and earning the respect of colleagues and constituents alike. As Speaker during the 9th, 10th, and 11th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislatures, he guided the passage of critical measures that strengthened the Commonwealth's economy, infrastructure, and educational systems, leaving a legacy of legislative achievement that continues to benefit the community.



HOUSE LOCAL BILL NO. 24-29

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1 Influential in advancing the CNMI's standing throughout the Pacific region, Diego Tenorio  
2 Benavente has worked to strengthen ties between island governments and promote cooperative  
3 development. In addition to his service in the Legislature, he also served one term from 2002-2006  
4 as Lieutenant Governor of the CNMI under the administration of Former Governor Juan Nekai  
5 Babauta, where his leadership extended to the executive branch and reinforced his reputation for  
6 integrity and dedication. Following his term, he was once again elected to the House of  
7 Representatives, serving in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth  
8 Legislatures, where he continued to champion tourism, economic development, and resource  
9 management. Today, he continues to serve the region as a member of the Board of Directors of  
10 the Pacific Islands Development Bank and, since 2018, as the Honorary Consul of the Federated  
11 States of Micronesia to the CNMI, roles through which he champions the growth and prosperity  
12 of island communities.

13 Exceptional in his accomplishments beyond the halls of government, Diego Tenorio  
14 Benavente is an avid fisherman who has worked to persevere and has earned victories in several  
15 fishing derby categories, including twice being named Grand Champion of the annual Saipan  
16 International Fishing Tournament. Many of these marine activities begin at the Smiling Cove  
17 Marina on Saipan, a central harbor and landmark for the fishing community. Smiling Cove has  
18 long been a gathering place for fishermen, families, and visitors alike, and it is fitting that this  
19 landmark be named in honor of a leader who both shaped public policy and lived the culture of  
20 the sea. His life-long membership in the Saipan Fishermen's Association reflects his deep  
21 connection to the maritime traditions of the Commonwealth and his commitment to preserving

## HOUSE LOCAL BILL NO. 24-29

1 them for future generations. Through both competition and advocacy, he has helped foster pride  
2 in the CNMI's fishing heritage and inspired others to carry it forward.

3 Generous with his time, wisdom, and compassion, he has been a source of guidance and  
4 support for countless individuals across the Commonwealth. As a devoted husband, loving father,  
5 proud grandfather, supportive brother, and caring uncle, Diego Tenorio Benavente is admired not  
6 only for his public service but for the humility and kindness that define his character. These  
7 personal qualities have made him as beloved in private life as he is respected in public life, creating  
8 a legacy built on both achievement and service to humanity.

9 Owing to the Diego Tenorio Benavente's long-standing legacy as a distinguished public  
10 servant and devoted fisherman, it is only fitting that the relevant Smiling Cove Marina bears his  
11 name. This designation will serve as a lasting tribute to his leadership, his contributions to the  
12 Commonwealth, and the example he has set for future generations. By renaming Smiling Cove  
13 Marina, as the "Diego T. Benavente Smiling Cove Marina," the Delegation affirms its recognition  
14 of a lifetime dedicated to service, community, and the enduring values that bind the  
15 Commonwealth together.

16 **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.**

17 Notwithstanding any CNMI laws, regulations, or rules to the contrary, Title 1.  
18 Government, Chapter 4. Honoring Special Persons, Article 2. Naming of Public Buildings, Roads  
19 and Facilities: Saipan, is hereby amended to add a new Section 430.02 that shall read as follows:

20 "Diego T. Benavente Smiling Cove Marina.

21 The designated harbor/marina located between the "American Memorial Park" and the

HOUSE LOCAL BILL NO. 24-29

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1 “Eloy S. Inos Peace Park” in Puerto Rico on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern  
2 Mariana Islands, shall be henceforth known as the “Diego T. Benavente Smiling Cove  
3 Marina.”

4 **SECTION 3. ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY.**

5 The Department of Lands and Natural Resources, through the Division of Fish and  
6 Wildlife, shall continue to administer the Smiling Cove Marina facility, which shall be henceforth  
7 known as the “Diego T. Benavente Smiling Cove Marina”.

8 **SECTION 4. SEVERABILITY.**

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

13 **SECTION 5. SAVINGS CLAUSE.**

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

HOUSE LOCAL BILL NO. 24-29

**SECTION 6. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

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

**CERTIFIED BY:**

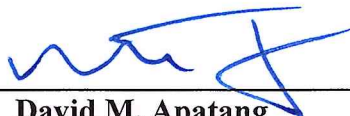


**John Paul P. Sablan**  
**Chairman**  
Saipan & Northern Islands Legislative Delegation



**Edmund S. Villagomez**  
**Speaker**  
24<sup>th</sup> House of Representatives

Approved this 29<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2025.



**David M. Apatang**  
**Governor**  
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands