



GOV. COMM. 24-98
(HOUSE)

David M. Apatang
Governor

Dennis James C. Mendiola
Lieutenant Governor

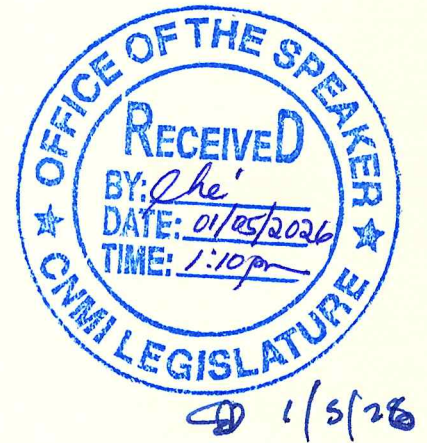
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

January 5, 2026

GOV2026-004

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

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




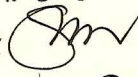
Dear Mr. Speaker and Mr. President:

This is to inform you that I have signed into law **House Bill No. 24-82, HD1** entitled, "To amend Section 704(k) of Public Law 24-20 to prevent disruption or delay of allotments, payments, or expenditures of the Legislative Branch by adding a transition period of up to 273 days for the implementation of the Legislature's Finance Department; and for other purposes.", which was passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

This bill becomes **Public Law No. 24-21**. Copies bearing my signature are forwarded for your reference.

Sincerely,


DAVID M. APATANG
Governor

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

cc: Lieutenant Governor; Attorney General; Commonwealth Law Revision;
Public Auditor; Secretary of Finance; Special Assistant for Management & Budget;
Special Assistant for Administration; Programs and Legislative Review



TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANA COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

DECEMBER 31, 2025

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN PAUL P. SABLAN OF SAIPAN, PRECINCT 2 (*for himself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Angelo A. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Malcolm J. Omar, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Denita Kaipat Yangetmai) in an open and public meeting with an opportunity for the public to comment, introduced the following Bill:

H. B. No. 24-82, HD1 AN ACT

TO AMEND SECTION 704(K) OF PUBLIC LAW 24-20 TO PREVENT DISRUPTION OR DELAY OF ALLOTMENTS, PAYMENTS, OR EXPENDITURES OF THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH BY ADDING A TRANSITION PERIOD OF UP TO 273 DAYS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEGISLATURE’S FINANCE DEPARTMENT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The Bill was not referred to a House Committee.

THE BILL WAS PASSED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON
FIRST AND FINAL READING, DECEMBER 31, 2025;

with amendments in the form of H. B. No. 24-82, HD1, and transmitted to THE SENATE.

IN THE SENATE

The Bill was not referred to a Senate Committee.

THE BILL WAS PASSED BY THE SENATE ON FIRST AND FINAL READING, DECEMBER 31, 2025;
without amendments and returned to THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

H. B. No. 24-82, HD1 IS DULY PASSED BY THE TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS
COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE.


Linda B. Muña, House Clerk



TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

THIRTEENTH DAY, SECOND REGULAR SESSION
DECEMBER 31, 2025

H. B. No. 24-82, HD1

AN ACT

**TO AMEND SECTION 704(K) OF PUBLIC LAW 24-20 TO PREVENT
DISRUPTION OR DELAY OF ALLOTMENTS, PAYMENTS, OR
EXPENDITURES OF THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH BY ADDING
A TRANSITION PERIOD OF UP TO 273 DAYS FOR THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEGISLATURE'S FINANCE
DEPARTMENT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

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

1 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

2 The Legislature finds that Public Law 24-20, Revised Appropriations and
3 Budget Authority Act of 2026, establishes the Legislature Operations Fund and
4 vests expenditure authority in the Director of the Legislative Bureau, thereby
5 fundamentally restructuring how legislative funds are administered and
6 disbursed. The Legislature further finds that implementation of this structure
7 requires independent banking, accounting, payroll, procurement, and reporting
8 systems that do not presently exist within the Legislative Bureau.

9 The Legislature finds that immediate execution of these requirements,

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1 without a transition period or implementation funding, would result in the
2 suspension or delay of legislative payments, including payroll, member
3 allowances, vendor payments, and other lawful obligations of the Legislature.
4 Preventing disruption of these payments is essential to maintaining continuity of
5 legislative operations and avoiding harm to employees, members, vendors, and
6 governmental functions.

7 The Legislature finds that the Department of Finance has acknowledged
8 that a transition of this scale typically requires between ninety and one hundred
9 eighty days and that continued use of existing financial systems during a
10 transition period is necessary to ensure uninterrupted payment processing and
11 audit compliance.

12 The purpose of this Act is to amend Section 704(k) of Public Law 24-20 to
13 prevent disruption or delay of allotments, payments, or expenditures of the
14 Legislative Branch by adding a transition period up to 273 days for the
15 implementation of the Legislature's Finance Department solely to prevent the
16 stoppage or delay of legislative payments, to allow sufficient time for the
17 Legislature to enact corrective legislation, authorize necessary funding, hire
18 personnel, and establish compliant financial systems, while preserving fiscal
19 accountability and continuity of government operations.

20 **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.**

21 The following amendment to Section 704(k) of Public Law 24-20 is hereby
22 enacted into law:

23 **“Subsection 106. Implementation/Gradual 273-Day Transition**
24 **Period.** Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Department of
25 Finance, working collaboratively with the CNMI Legislative Bureau and

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1 members of the Legislature, shall work to implement the provisions of
2 Section 704(k) of Public Law 24-20, Revised Appropriations and Budget
3 Authority Act of 2026, including but not limited to subsections 101 to 105,
4 and any other provisions directly related to the immediate operational
5 separation or exclusive execution of legislative expenditures under the
6 Legislature Operations Fund over a period not to exceed 273 calendar days.
7 During this 273-day period, there shall be no disruptions on the financial
8 obligations and payments of the Legislative Branch. The Department of
9 Finance shall continue to process and make payments with respect to all
10 obligations, debts, allocations, expenditures, and operations of the
11 Legislative Branch.”

12 SECTION 3. SEVERABILITY.

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

18 SECTION 4. SAVINGS CLAUSE.

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

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SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.

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

Attested to by:


Linda B. Muña, House Clerk

Certified by:


SPEAKER EDMUND S. VILLAGOMEZ
House of Representatives
24th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature

Approved this *5th* day of *January*, 202*5*


DAVID M. APATANG
Governor

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands