



GOV. COMMISSION  
(HOUSE) 24-98

**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

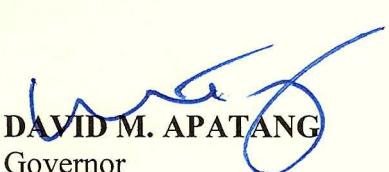
The Honorable Karl R. King-Nabors  
President  
The Senate; Twenty-Fourth Northern  
Marianas Commonwealth Legislature  
Saipan, MP 96950

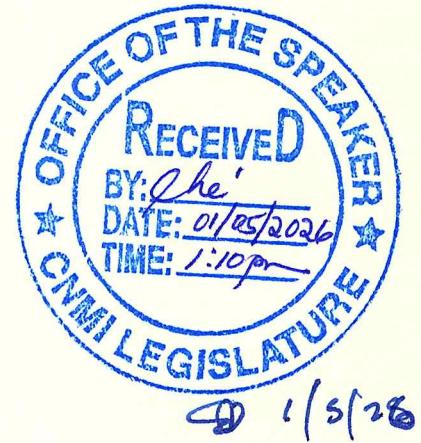
Dear Mr. Speaker and Mr. President:

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: 01/05/26 TIME: 3:10 pm

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. SABLAR 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

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**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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**HOUSE BILL 24-82, HD1**

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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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**HOUSE BILL 24-82, HD1**

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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.

HOUSE BILL 24-82, HD1

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1                   **SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

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

Attested to by:

  
*Linda B. Muña, House Clerk*

Certified by:

  
**SPEAKER EDMUND S. VILLAGOMEZ**  
House of Representatives  
24<sup>th</sup> Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature

*Approved* this 5<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2025<sup>6</sup>

  
**DAVID M. APATANG**  
Governor  
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands