



GOV. COMM. 24-168
(HOUSE)

David M. Apatang
Governor

Dennis James C. Mendiola
Lieutenant Governor

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

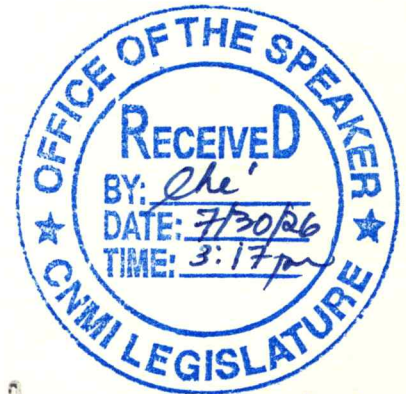
July 30, 2026

GOV2026-469

The Honorable Karl R. King-Nabors
President
The Senate; 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. President and Mr. Speaker:



RECEIVED BY [Signature] 7/31/26
DATE 8/2/2026 TIME 3:24

This is to inform you that I have signed into law **Senate Bill No. 24-21, HD1**, entitled, "To amend 9 CMC § 2103 to require execution of a Notice of Transfer and Release of Liability by the appropriate parties upon the ownership transfer of a vehicle.", which was passed by the Senate of and the House of Representatives of the Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

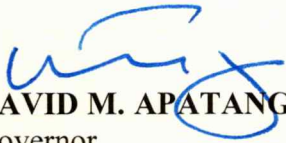
I applaud the intent of this bill to clarify transfer of vehicle ownership records.

The Attorney General has flagged what appears to be a clerical error in the bill, which may be subject to correction by the Commonwealth Law Revision Commission pursuant to 1 CMC § 3806(g).

The deletion of the word "vehicle" from amended statutory language in Section 2(c), line 1, page 3 of the bill appears to be a typo; I encourage the Law Revision Commission to consider correcting this likely error.

This bill becomes **Public Law No. 24-35**. Copies bearing my signature are forwarded for your reference.

Sincerely,



DAVID M. APATANG
Governor

cc: Lieutenant Governor; Attorney General; Commonwealth Law Revision Commission;
Public Auditor; Department of Public Safety; Bureau of Motor Vehicle;
Special Assistant for Administration; Programs and Legislative Review



**THE SENATE
TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH
LEGISLATURE**

SENATE BILL NO. 24-21, HD1

AN ACT

To amend 9 CMC § 2103 to require execution of a Notice of Transfer and Release of Liability by the appropriate parties upon the ownership transfer of a vehicle.

SENATE ACTION

Offered by Senator(s): Francisco Q. Cruz

Date: February 11, 2025

Referred to: Committee on Judiciary, Government and Law

Standing Committee Report No.: 24-17 adopted on 07/14/2025

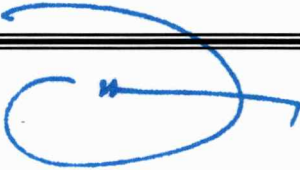
Final Reading: July 14, 2025

HOUSE ACTION

Referred to: Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations

Standing Committee Report No.: 24-52 adopted on 05/22/2026

Final Reading: May 22, 2026



**SENATOR FRANCISCO Q. CRUZ
SENATE LEGISLATIVE SECRETARY**



THE SENATE
TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE
FIRST REGULAR SESSION, 2025 **S.B. NO. 24-21, HD1**

AN ACT

To amend 9 CMC § 2103 to require execution of a Notice of Transfer and Release of Liability by the appropriate parties upon the ownership transfer of a vehicle.

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

Section 1. Findings and Purpose.

The Legislature acknowledges that 9 CMC § 1205 provides that the Director of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) shall develop and provide suitable forms of applications, certificates of title, registration cards, operators' licenses, and all other required and necessary forms. The Legislature finds that in most States it is necessary to execute a Notice of Transfer and Release of Liability between the parties that lets the Department of Motor Vehicle know that the former motor vehicle owner is no longer responsible for parking/traffic violations or civil or criminal liability associated with the motor vehicle after the date of the sale.

The Legislature finds that releasing the liability of the former owner of a motor vehicle upon the sale of the motor vehicle is necessary. Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to require the execution of a Notice and Release of Liability upon the transfer of a motor vehicle.

Section 2. Amendment. 9 CMC § 2103 is amended to read:

“§ 2103. Registration: Transfer of Motor Vehicle.

SENATE BILL NO. 24-21, HD1

(a) An owner upon transferring a registered motor vehicle ~~or bicycle~~ shall endorse the name and address of the transferee and the date of transfer upon the reverse side of the registration card issued for the motor vehicle ~~or bicycle~~ and immediately forward the card to the bureau. ~~The transferee, before operating or permitting the operation of the vehicle or bicycle upon a highway, shall apply and obtain the registration thereof as upon an original registration. In the event of a transfer by inheritance, devise, bequest, execution, sale or repossession upon default of performance of an agreement of sale of a registered vehicle or bicycle, the registration shall expire and the vehicle or bicycle may not be operated upon the highways until and unless the person entitled to it applies for and obtain the registration thereof.~~ At the same time, the owner (transferor) and the new owner (transferee) shall sign a Notice of Transfer and Release of Liability (NTRL). The Director shall develop the NTRL and make it readily available. Upon execution and filing of the NTRL with the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, the transferor shall not be liable for any parking citation, traffic infraction, or administrative penalty arising under this title that occurs after the date and time of transfer stated on the NTRL.

(b) An owner upon transferring a registered motor vehicle, shall state on the form provided by the bureau:

“I certify that I am the legal owner entitled to transfer ownership of this vehicle and that its odometer reading is _____ miles and, to the best of my knowledge, reflects the actual mileage of the vehicle described herein, unless one of the following statements is checked.

(1) The amount of mileage stated is in excess of 99,999 miles.

(2) The mileage stated is not the actual mileage.

SENATE BILL NO. 24-21, HD1

(3) The motor vehicle is a truck with a gross vehicle weight rating of 16,000 pounds or more.”

(c) The transferee, before operating or permitting the operation of the motor vehicle or bicycle upon a highway, shall apply and obtain the registration thereof as upon an original registration. In the event of a transfer by inheritance, devise, bequest, execution, sale or repossession upon default of performance of an agreement of sale of a registered motor vehicle or bicycle, the registration shall expire and the motor vehicle or bicycle may not be operated upon the highways until and unless the person entitled to it applies for and obtains the registration thereof.

(e d) Notwithstanding any provision of the Uniform Commercial Code (title 5 of this code [5 CMC § 1101 et seq.]), until the chief has issued the new registration card, delivery of the vehicle shall be deemed not to have been made, title to it shall be deemed not to have passed, and the intended transfer shall be deemed not to be valid or effective for any purpose.

(d e) A security interest in a motor vehicle required to be registered under this title may be perfected only by registration of the security interest by notation upon the certificate of title of the motor vehicle. The validity, attachment, priority, and enforcement of the perfected security interest shall be governed by article 9 of title 5 of this code (the Uniform Commercial Code) [5 CMC § 9101 et seq.]”

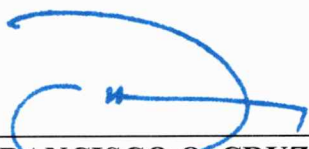
Section 3. Severability. If any provision of this Act or the application of any such provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its provisions to persons or circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid shall not be affected thereby.

SENATE BILL NO. 24-21, HD1

1 **Section 4. Savings Clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein shall not be
2 construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired under statutes
3 repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted under the statutes. Repealers
4 contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted under or pursuant to prior law.
5 The enactment of the Act shall not have the effect of terminating, or in any way modifying,
6 any liability, civil or criminal, which shall already be in existence on the date this Act
7 becomes effective.

8 **Section 5. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the
9 Governor or becoming law without such approval.

CERTIFIED BY:**ATTESTED BY:**

KARL R. KING-NABORS
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

FRANCISCO Q. CRUZ
SENATE LEGISLATIVE SECRETARY

Approved this 30th day of July, 2026



DAVID M. APATANG
Governor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Attorney General

2nd Floor Hon. Juan A. Sablan Memorial Bldg.
Caller Box 10007, Capitol Hill
Saipan, MP 96950

EDWARD MANIBUSAN
Attorney General

Review of Pending Legislation¹

July 27, 2026

OAGGOV: 2026-044
LSR No. 26-347

Hon. David M. Apatang
Governor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Caller Box 10007
Saipan, MP 96950

Re: Senate Bill No. 24-21, HD1, entitled: "To amend 9 CMC § 2103 to require execution of a Notice of Transfer and Release of Liability by the appropriate parties upon the ownership transfer of a vehicle."

Dear Governor Apatang:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on Senate Bill No. 24-21, HD1, which is pending for your action.

I have reviewed the above-referenced legislation and advise as follows:

 X The Bill MAY BE SIGNED
 FURTHER CONSIDERATION IS ADVISED
 The Bill SHOULD NOT BE SIGNED

S.B. 24-21, HD1:

Senate Bill No. 24-21, HD1 amends 9 CMC § 2103 to require the execution of a Notice of Transfer and Release of Liability upon the transfer of ownership of a motor vehicle. The amendment is intended to ensure ownership records are updated and to protect the former owner from future liability once the transfer is complete.

¹ The information contained in this document is legally privileged and confidential information intended only for the use of the individual or entity named herein. If the reader of this document is not the intended recipient, you are notified that any dissemination, distribution or copy of this document is strictly prohibited. If you have received this document in error, please immediately notify the Office of the Attorney General by telephone and return the original document to the above address via the US Postal Service. Thank you.

Hon. David M. Apatang, Governor
Re: Comments on S.B. 24-21, HD1
OAGGOV: 2026-044
July 27, 2026
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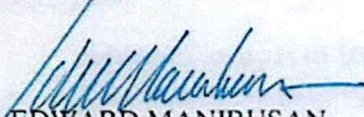
Legal:

As drafted, the bill appears to inadvertently delete the word "vehicle" from the amended statutory language found in Section 2(c), line 1, page 3 of the Senate Bill. If unintended, this omission may create ambiguity regarding the scope and application of the statute. The Legislature may wish to restore the term "vehicle" through corrective legislation.

Conclusion

The Bill may be signed and the Legislature should be informed of the potential drafting issue identified above.

Sincerely,


EDWARD MANIBUSAN
Attorney General