

TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

Second Regular Session, 2025

S. B. 24-52

A BILL FOR AN ACT

Authorizing the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority to utilize its preferred dividend funds to carry out the mandates of Public Law 22-01.

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

1 **Section 1. Findings and Purpose.**

2 The legislature finds that the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority (CEDA)
3 was created and mandated to “be the primary agency tasked with economic development of the
4 Commonwealth” which entails actively promoting the CNMI as a location for private investment,
5 to promote and encourage development of new businesses with the Commonwealth, to promote
6 the retention and expansion of existing businesses, expand and develop markets for CNMI
7 products, and coordinate, develop, and participate in off-island investor missions to generate
8 interest and investment in the CNMI with emphasis on business investments from the United
9 States.

10 The legislature further finds that a tremendous financial burden has been placed upon
11 CEDA due to this mandate. To accomplish CEDA’s goals, it must expend significant financial
12 resources. Moreover, CEDA must hire personnel and create a new Economic Development
13 Department and fund all future needs. Public Law 22-01, as amended, did not identify or provide
14 a matching revenue source for CEDA to implement its mandate. CEDA may have been
15 empowered by law, but the financial means to achieve said mandated goals were not addressed.

16 Thus, the Legislature finds that CEDA is burdened with a significant unfunded liability to
17 carry out its mandated economic development obligations. Moreover, CEDA, in implementing
18 this mandate, has generated significant investment interest in The Marianas. As such, CEDA is
19 receiving invitations from United States Trade Offices from all over the world (Korea, Singapore,

1 Taiwan, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Turkey, India, United States, etc.).
2 Moreover, CEDA is actively entertaining investors outside the US Trade Office realm, as well.
3 These promotional events require funding, and in CEDA's case, these funds are an investment into
4 the economic recovery and diversification of The Marianas. It is the prerogative of the Legislature
5 to support investments and enhance the economy of The Marianas.

6 As such, the Legislature finds that CEDA must be given the authority and flexibility to
7 utilize its preferred dividend funds in its possession, as well as future dividend deposits, to fulfill
8 the mandate under 4 CMC § 10305.

9 **Section 2. Enactment.** Subject to the codification by the Commonwealth Law Revision,
10 the following is enacted to read:

11 "Section 101. Notwithstanding any law or regulation to the contrary, the Commonwealth
12 Economic Development Authority (CEDA) is authorized to utilize its preferred dividend funds to
13 carry out the mandates under 4 CMC § 10305, without legislative approval or limiting the scope
14 of the use of the funds for capital improvement projects. Such funds shall only be used by CEDA
15 for economic development activities.

16 Section 102. Expenditure Authority.

17 The expenditure authority for the funds provided under Section 101 shall be the
18 Chairperson of the CEDA Board of Directors."

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

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

1 **Section 5. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the Governor, or
2 it becoming law without such approval.

Prefiled:

Date: 11/19/28

Introduced by: 

Senator Manny T. Castro

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:



Legal Counsel