

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To amend 4 CMC § 5611 to modernize and clarify the general business licensing framework to promote economic efficiency, business growth, and administrative consistency.

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

1 **Section 1. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that under existing law, a
2 person must obtain a general business license before engaging in business in the
3 Commonwealth pursuant to 4 CMC § 5611. Although existing law contains language
4 intended to prevent duplicative licenses, ambiguity remains regarding licensing
5 requirements for businesses operating multiple locations under the same line of business.
6 Requiring multiple licenses for the same line of business creates unnecessary
7 administrative and financial burdens on businesses and government agencies. The intent of
8 this Act is also to clarify that one general business license per line of business is valid
9 Commonwealth-wide, which will streamline regulatory compliance while preserving
10 location-specific oversight through disclosure and permitting requirements.

11 The Legislature finds that this Act is expected to have minimal to no negative fiscal
12 impact on the General Fund, as it clarifies existing law and does not reduce the fee required
13 for a general business license per line of business. This Act is expected to result
14 in administrative cost savings for the Commonwealth by reducing duplicative license
15 processing, renewals, and enforcement activities by the Department of Finance and related
16 agencies. By reducing regulatory burdens on businesses operating multiple locations, this
17 Act may promote business expansion, improved compliance, and long-term economic
18 activity, which may positively affect tax revenues.

19 Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to modernize and clarify the general business
20 licensing framework to promote economic efficiency, business growth, and administrative
21 consistency.

1 **Section 2. Amendment.** 4 CMC § 5611 is hereby amended to read as follows:

2 “§ 5611. Business License ~~Fees~~ Required; Commonwealth-Wide License; Fees.

3 (a) Business License Required. Before engaging in or continuing in a business, a
4 person shall first obtain from the Secretary of the Department of Finance, or successor
5 agency, a license to engage in or conduct that business.

6 (b) Commonwealth-Wide License Per Line of Business.

7 (1) A general business shall be required to purchase one general business
8 license for each line of business for each location in issued for each distinct line of
9 business conducted by the applicant within the Commonwealth.

10 (2) A general business license issued under this section shall authorize the
11 licensee to conduct the licensed line of business throughout the Commonwealth of
12 the Northern Mariana Islands (Commonwealth), regardless of the number of
13 physical locations operated.

14 (3) No additional business license shall be required solely because a
15 business entity operates the same line of business at more than one location within
16 the Commonwealth. Provided that the same line of business must be under the same
17 name of the business entity.

18 (4) The Secretary may require disclosure of all business locations for
19 regulatory and record-keeping purposes; provided, however, that such disclosure
20 shall not require the issuance of additional general business licenses.

21 (c) Terms and Transferability. ~~Licenses issued under this section are~~ A general
22 business license, which shall be valid for one year and are shall not be transferable.

23 (1) Temporary licenses may be issued for public and community events for
24 not more than thirty consecutive days. Temporary licenses shall not be transferred
25 nor renewed.

26 (d) Fees. Annual and Temporary license fees and late fees shall be established by
27 regulation promulgated by the Secretary of Finance.

28 (e) Renewal. A licensee may renew a license upon its expiration by the payment of
29 the annual license fee.

1 (f) All businesses licensed under this section shall only do business under the name
2 duly licensed and shall advertise this name in Romanized lettering in addition to any other
3 lettering.

4 (g) Conditions for Revocation or Suspension.

5 (1) The Secretary of the Department of Finance may revoke or suspend any
6 license issued under this section upon finding, after two weeks' public notice and a
7 hearing conducted pursuant to 1 CMC §§ 9108-9111, that:

8 (i) The application of the licensee contained false or fraudulent
9 information;

10 (ii) The licensee bribed or otherwise unlawfully influenced any
11 person to issue the permit other than on the merits of the application;

12 (iii) The licensee presented false or fraudulent information to any
13 person in support of his application;

14 (iv) The licensee violated subsection (f) of this section; or

15 (v) The licensee violated any provision of Commonwealth law,
16 including but not limited to non-compliance with the tax laws, or any rule
17 or regulation issued thereunder.

18 (2) Any person aggrieved by a license suspension or revocation shall be
19 entitled to a review of the same by the Commonwealth Superior Court upon written
20 appeal made within 30 days from the date the license suspension or revocation
21 decision is issued. Such review shall be brought pursuant to 1 CMC §§ 9112 and
22 9113.

23 (h) Unless the Secretary of Finance provides otherwise, this section shall not ~~effect~~
24 affect public health or alcoholic beverage control licensing.

25 (i) There is hereby established a revolving account for the Department of
26 Commerce for which the Secretary of Commerce shall have expenditure authority. The
27 account shall be established by the Department of Finance, and the account shall serve
28 strictly to pay for the Department of Commerce's annual membership dues to the National
29 Association of Insurance Commissioners. Fees collected under subsection (d)(4) above
30 shall be deposited into the revolving account to accumulate enough funds to cover for the

1 annual membership dues. Any funding lapses from this account shall be transferred to the
2 CNMI general fund.

3 (j) Conforming Amendments. All provisions of the Commonwealth Code,
4 administrative regulations, and official forms inconsistent with this Act are hereby
5 amended to conform with the provisions of this Act.”

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

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

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

Date: 01/23/26

Introduced By: /s/
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:

/s/ Jose A. Bermudes
Senate Legal Counsel