

TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION, 2025

SEN. COMMEMORATIVE RES. NO. 24-06

A SENATE COMMEMORATIVE RESOLUTION

To recognize and honor the Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente for his exemplary lifetime of public service and profound contributions to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and its People, and to convey the Senate's sincere condolences, prayers, and appreciation to his family.

1 **WHEREAS**, this Legislative Body is pleased to acknowledge and commend
2 esteemed residents of the Commonwealth for their remarkable contributions and
3 willingness to devote themselves to public service in the Commonwealth of the Northern
4 Mariana Islands; and

5 **WHEREAS**, the Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente was born on April 21, 1959,
6 in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to proud parents, †Roman
7 Manahane Benavente and †Dolores Tenorio Benavente; and

8 **WHEREAS**, the Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente graduated from Mount
9 Carmel High School in 1977 and subsequently continued his education at the College of
10 Southern Idaho in Twin Falls, Idaho, in the field of electrical engineering. Upon his return
11 from Idaho, the Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente followed in his father's footsteps and
12 started his business in Diego's Mart, Inc., which he operated from 1983-2001; and

13 **WHEREAS**, the Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente married his best friend
14 Victoria Iriarte Benavente and through their union, he and his wife were blessed with four
15 wonderful children, namely: Jacob, Diana, James, and Dolores; and

16 **WHEREAS**, the Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente began his distinguished
17 public service when he was first elected in 1990 to the Seventh Northern Marianas
18 Commonwealth Legislature, representing Saipan - Election District II, and thereafter this
19 freshman Legislator went on to devotedly serve continuously through the Twelfth

1 Legislature, holding leadership positions including Vice Speaker of the Eighth Legislature
2 and Speaker of the Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh Legislatures, where he guided landmark
3 measures that strengthened the Commonwealth's economy, modernized infrastructure, and
4 advanced education; and

5 **WHEREAS**, having served as a reputable Legislator for more than 12 years, the
6 Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente altered course and was elected Lieutenant Governor
7 of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, serving with Governor Juan N.
8 Babauta from 2002 until 2006. This administration established the Water Task Force,
9 which was placed under the very capable leadership of the Honorable Diego Tenorio
10 Benavente. The Water Task Force created a plan of action based in part on the reports
11 generated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which was later adopted by the
12 Commonwealth Utilities Corporation Board of Directors. With this, there was an
13 agreement with the Administration's assessment that it is vital for the CNMI Government
14 to prioritize providing 24-hour, pressurized water. This effort, under his leadership, led to
15 many efforts to improve the CNMI's water system; and

16 **WHEREAS**, the Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente later returned to the House
17 of Representatives as a member of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Northern Marianas
18 Commonwealth Legislatures, where he chaired and served on key committees until his
19 retirement from governmental service in 2011; and

20 **WHEREAS**, upon his retirement from the Legislature on July 16, 2011, after more
21 than nineteen years of elected service, the Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente was
22 recognized as one of the Commonwealth's most experienced and respected leaders, having
23 faithfully served as Vice Speaker, Speaker, Lieutenant Governor, and Minority Leader, and
24 having earned the lasting gratitude and admiration of the people of the Northern Mariana
25 Islands; and

26 **WHEREAS**, the Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente's public service extended
27 into regional leadership. He was a long-standing member of the Board of Directors of the
28 Association of Pacific Island Legislatures (APIL) and instrumental in advancing many of
29 the initiatives embraced by the Association, through which this beloved statesman sought
30 to explore and to articulate our common goals and then to strengthen our shared priorities

1 in a multitude of fields such as economic growth, financial self-reliance and responsible
2 governance across the Blue Continent encompassing the Pacific Island nations, Micronesia
3 and their peoples; and

4 **WHEREAS**, the Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente chaired the Task Force that
5 led to the enduring formation of the Pacific Islands Development Bank (PIDB) in 1989,
6 where he later served as Chairman of the PIDB's Board of Governors as well as a Member
7 of the PIDB's Board of Directors from 2000 to 2011. Subsequently, in recognition of his
8 devotion to the formation and growth of the PIDB, he was appointed as the first-ever PIDB
9 Director Emeritus in 2023; and

10 **WHEREAS**, in 2018, the Federated States of Micronesia's former President, Peter
11 Christian, appointed the Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente as Honorary Consul of the
12 Federated States of Micronesia to the CNMI, where he assisted and advocated for FSM
13 citizens and the common goals of both island jurisdictions; and

14 **WHEREAS**, a passionate advocate for environmental stewardship, the Honorable
15 Diego Tenorio Benavente demonstrated visionary leadership in championing marine
16 conservation and authored the Commonwealth's landmark shark-protection legislation,
17 which drew regional and international recognition, including acknowledgment by the PEW
18 Environment Group for his decisive role in advancing shark preservation efforts throughout
19 the Pacific; and

20 **WHEREAS**, the Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente's passion for the
21 environment did not stop at the shores of the Northern Mariana Islands, for during his
22 fruitful years of public service, he has shared his passions and valuable expertise with
23 environmentalists throughout the Micronesian Islands, serving as a vital member of the
24 Board of the Micronesian Conservation Trust and a proud and effective advocate of the
25 Micronesian Challenge; and

26 **WHEREAS**, in addition to his outstanding public service accomplishments, the
27 Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente was also well known as a passionate and zealous
28 fisherman who spent a lot of his free time fishing with his family and friends. He was also
29 a devoted lifetime member of the Saipan Fishermen's Association, twice earning the title

1 of Grand Champion of the Saipan International Fishing Tournament, reflecting his lifelong
2 connection to the sea and the people whose livelihoods depend on it; and

3 **WHEREAS**, the Honorable Deigo Tenorio Benavente was a proud graduate of
4 Mount Carmel School, where he first developed the values of faith, service, and community
5 that would guide his lifelong dedication to the people of the Commonwealth; and in 2002,
6 his alma mater honored him with the Distinguished Graduate Award in recognition of his
7 professional achievements and his continued support for Catholic education; and

8 **WHEREAS**, the Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente has devoted his life to public
9 service and to the advancement of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and
10 the Blue Continent, earning enduring respect for his principled leadership, integrity, and
11 dedication; and

12 **WHEREAS**, in every capacity — as a public official, statesman, fisherman,
13 husband, father, grandfather, and friend — the Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente has
14 exemplified humility, service, and perseverance, living the very values that define the
15 Commonwealth's spirit and the island way of life; and

16 **WHEREAS**, the Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente passed away on November
17 20, 2025, on Saipan and is survived by his beloved wife Vicky, his children, grandchildren,
18 and extended family;

19 **NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Senate of the Twenty-Fourth
20 Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature that the Senate hereby joins the people in
21 recognizing and commending the Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente for his
22 distinguished lifetime of public service and exemplary contributions to the Commonwealth
23 of the Northern Mariana Islands and its People. His enduring legacy of preserving,
24 protecting and promoting the advancement and welfare of our people throughout the Blue
25 Continent will not be forgotten; and

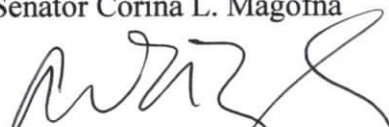
26 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Senate further extends its deepest
27 condolences, prayers, love, and gratitude to his wife, Vicky, their children, grandchildren,
28 and extended family, in recognition of the Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente's lifelong
29 devotion and steadfast commitment to the Northern Marianas and the Blue Continent; and

1 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the President of the Senate shall certify, and
2 the Senate Legislative Secretary shall attest to the adoption of this resolution and thereafter
3 the Senate Clerk shall transmit a certified copy to the family of Diego Tenorio Benavente;
4 the Honorable David M. Apatang, Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern
5 Mariana Islands; the Honorable Edmund S. Villagomez, Speaker of the House of
6 Representatives, Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature; the
7 Honorable Kimberlyn King-Hinds, CNMI Delegate to the House of Representatives
8 Washington, 119th United States Congress; the Honorable Mayor Aubry M. Hocog, Mayor
9 of the Municipality of Rota; the Honorable Edwin P. Aldan, Mayor of Tinian & Aguiguan;
10 the Honorable Ramon B. Camacho, Mayor of the Municipality of Saipan; and the
11 Honorable Valentino N. Taisacan, Jr., Mayor of the Northern Islands.

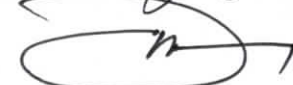
Date: 11/25/25

Introduced By: 
Senator Karl R. King-Nabors

Senator Corina L. Magofna




Senator Donald M. Manglona



Senator Francisco Q. Cruz

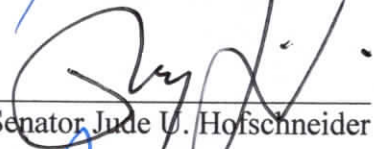
Senator Celina R. Babauta



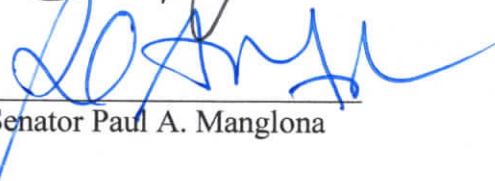
Senator Manny T. Castro



Senator Ronnie M. Calvo



Senator Jude U. Hofschneider



Senator Paul A. Manglona