

TWENTY-THIRD NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH

LEGISLATURE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

_____ Session, 2023

H. B. 23- 83

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To authorize the Secretary of the Department of Lands and Natural Resources to approve licensed veterinarians.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE 23RD NORTHERN MARIANAS
COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:**

1 **Section 1. Findings and Purpose.** The Commonwealth of the Northern
2 Mariana Islands (CNMI) currently lacks sufficient veterinarian services, especially
3 to address issues related to dog control. There also is a need for trained personnel
4 to support the work of a veterinarian and animal shelters.

5 This bill clarifies that the Secretary of the Department of Lands and Natural
6 Resources is authorized to approve a licensed veterinarian. In addition, the
7 Secretary may authorize a licensed veterinarian to supervise, directly or indirectly,
8 a qualified veterinary technician, veterinary professional associate and a foreign
9 licensed veterinarian.

10 The United States veterinary field is in the process of developing education
11 and licensing for the field of mid-level veterinary professionals, including a
12 position identified as a veterinary professional associate. Like the development of

1 the positions of physician assistant and nurse practitioner in the human medical
2 field, these developments are the result of a shortage of veterinary services,
3 particularly in the area of animal shelters and in rural areas. CNMI would benefit
4 from the addition of such professionals because of the difficulty of hiring and
5 maintaining full-time, licensed veterinary services on island.

6 **Section 2. Amendment.** 2 CMC section 5323(d) of the Commonwealth
7 Code is hereby amended as follows:

8 **“§ 5323. Chief of Animal Health and Industry: Established.**

9 (d) *Power to Approve and Issue Licenses to Practice Veterinary*
10 *Medicine and Surgery in the Commonwealth.* The Secretary of the
11 Department of Lands and Natural Resources ~~chief~~ is empowered under this
12 article to receive and review applications, and to approve and issue licenses
13 to qualified applicants to practice veterinary medicine and surgery in the
14 Commonwealth. Only graduates of schools and colleges accredited by the
15 American Veterinary Medical Association in the United States who have
16 passed the National Veterinary Medical Board examination and who are
17 currently licensed to practice the veterinary profession in at least one of the
18 50 states of the United States or its territories is qualified to apply to practice
19 said profession in the Commonwealth. The Secretary also may authorize the
20 following qualified professionals to practice under the supervision of an
21 approved veterinarian: foreign veterinarians, veterinary technicians and

1 veterinary professional associates. The Secretary ~~chief~~ shall promulgate
2 rules and regulations, ~~subject to approval by the director,~~ that are consistent
3 with the provisions of this article. Such rules and regulations shall include
4 a fee schedule for all services required under this article and a process for
5 the direct or indirect supervision of qualified professionals by an approved
6 veterinarian.”


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

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

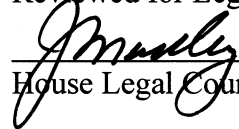
19 **Section 5. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by
20 the Governor, or it becoming law without such approval.

Filed: 10/23/2023

Date: 10-23-23

Introduced by: 
Rep. Edwin K. Propst

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:

 10-23-23
House Legal Counsel