

TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH
LEGISLATURE
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION, 2025

H. L. B. 24-29

A LOCAL BILL FOR AN ACT
FOR THE THIRD SENATORIAL DISTRICT

To rename the “Smiling Cove Marina” the “Diego T. Benavente
Smiling Cove Marina” in honor of former Legislator and former
Lieutenant Governor Diego Tenorio Benavente.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE THIRD SENATORIAL DISTRICT
DELEGATION PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 4, DIVISION 1, TITLE 1 OF
THE COMMONWEALTH CODE:

1 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

2 Devoted to public service for decades, the Honorable Diego Tenorio
3 Benavente began his career in the CNMI House of Representatives, first
4 representing Precinct II before later serving Precinct I on Saipan. Elected in 1989,
5 he served six consecutive terms through 2000, demonstrating principled leadership
6 and earning the respect of colleagues and constituents alike. As Speaker during the
7 9th, 10th, and 11th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislatures, he guided the
8 passage of critical measures that strengthened the Commonwealth’s economy,
9 infrastructure, and educational systems, leaving a legacy of legislative achievement
10 that continues to benefit the community.

1 Influential in advancing the CNMI's standing throughout the Pacific region,
2 Diego Tenorio Benavente has worked to strengthen ties between island
3 governments and promote cooperative development. In addition to his service in
4 the Legislature, he also served one term from 2002-2006 as Lieutenant Governor
5 of the CNMI under the administration of Former Governor Juan Nekai Babauta,
6 where his leadership extended to the executive branch and reinforced his reputation
7 for integrity and dedication. Following his term, he was once again elected to the
8 House of Representatives, serving in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Northern
9 Marianas Commonwealth Legislatures, where he continued to champion tourism,
10 economic development, and resource management. Today, he continues to serve
11 the region as a member of the Board of Directors of the Pacific Islands
12 Development Bank and, since 2018, as the Honorary Consul of the Federated States
13 of Micronesia to the CNMI, roles through which he champions the growth and
14 prosperity of island communities.

15 Exceptional in his accomplishments beyond the halls of government, Diego
16 Tenorio Benavente is an avid fisherman who has worked to persevere and has
17 earned victories in several fishing derby categories, including twice being named
18 Grand Champion of the annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament. Many of
19 these marine activities begin at the Smiling Cove Marina on Saipan, a central harbor
20 and landmark for the fishing community. Smiling Cove has long been a gathering
21 place for fishermen, families, and visitors alike, and it is fitting that this landmark

1 be named in honor of a leader who both shaped public policy and lived the culture
2 of the sea. His life-long membership in the Saipan Fishermen's Association reflects
3 his deep connection to the maritime traditions of the Commonwealth and his
4 commitment to preserving them for future generations. Through both competition
5 and advocacy, he has helped foster pride in the CNMI's fishing heritage and
6 inspired others to carry it forward.

7 Generous with his time, wisdom, and compassion, he has been a source of
8 guidance and support for countless individuals across the Commonwealth. As a
9 devoted husband, loving father, proud grandfather, supportive brother, and caring
10 uncle, Diego Tenorio Benavente is admired not only for his public service but for
11 the humility and kindness that define his character. These personal qualities have
12 made him as beloved in private life as he is respected in public life, creating a legacy
13 built on both achievement and service to humanity.

14 Owing to the Diego Tenorio Benavente's long-standing legacy as a
15 distinguished public servant and devoted fisherman, it is only fitting that the
16 relevant Smiling Cove Marina bears his name. This designation will serve as a
17 lasting tribute to his leadership, his contributions to the Commonwealth, and the
18 example he has set for future generations. By renaming Smiling Cove Marina, as
19 the "Diego T. Benavente Smiling Cove Marina," the Delegation affirms its
20 recognition of a lifetime dedicated to service, community, and the enduring values
21 that bind the Commonwealth together.

1 **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.**

2 Notwithstanding any CNMI laws, regulations, or rules to the contrary, Title
3 1. Government, Chapter 4. Honoring Special Persons, Article 2. Naming of Public
4 Buildings, Roads and Facilities: Saipan, is hereby amended to add a new Section
5 430.02 that shall read as follows:

6 “Diego T. Benavente Smiling Cove Marina.

7 The designated harbor/marina located between the “American Memorial
8 Park” and the “Eloy S. Inos Peace Park” in Puerto Rico on Saipan,
9 Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, shall be henceforth known
10 as the “Diego T. Benavente Smiling Cove Marina.”

11 **SECTION 3. ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY.**

12 The Department of Lands and Natural Resources, through the Division of
13 Fish and Wildlife, shall continue to administer the Smiling Cove Marina facility,
14 which shall be henceforth known as the “Diego T. Benavente Smiling Cove
15 Marina”.

16 **SECTION 4. SEVERABILITY.**

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

1 **SECTION 5. SAVINGS CLAUSE.**

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

9 **SECTION 6. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

10 This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the Governor or it becoming
11 law without such approval.

Prefiled: 9/29/2025

Date: _____

Introduced by: _____

Rep. Vincent R. Aldan

Reviewed for legal sufficiency by:

John S. D. O'J
House Legal Counsel
Date: 9-29-25

