



HOUSE JOURNAL THIRD REGULAR SESSION, 2026

1st Day, Third Regular Session

Friday, January 16, 2026

The House of Representatives of the Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature convened its First Day, Third Regular Session on Friday, January 16, 2026, at 2:39 p.m., in the House Chamber on Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth Northern Mariana Islands.

The Honorable Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez, Speaker of the House, presided.

A moment of silence was observed.

ROLL CALL

The Clerk called the roll for attendance with the following results:

Representative Roy Christopher Aldan Ada	Present
Representative Vincent Raymond Alda	Present
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.	Present
Representative Blas Jonathan "BJ" Tenorio Attao	Present
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Present
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Absent (Excused)
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Present
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Present
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Present
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Present
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Present
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Present
Representative Malcom Jason Omar	Present
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Present
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Present
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Present
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Present
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Present
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Present
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Present

Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, we have 19 members present and 1 member absent.

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villgomez: Thank you, Clerk. With 19 members present, a quorum is duly established. Let the record reflect that Representative Angelo Camacho is excused from today's session. I now recognized the Floor Leader for the motion to amend today's agenda.

The Floor Leader moved to suspend Rule III, Section 6.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion to suspend Rule III, Section 6 with the following results:

Representative Roy Christopher Aldan Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Alda	Yes
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao	Yes
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Absent (Excused)
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Yes
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Yes
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Yes
Representative Malcom Jason Omar	Yes
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Yes
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Yes
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, all 19 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With 19 members present voting “yes,” the motion carries. We now proceed to Item No. 2, Public Comments. The podium is open to receive any comments. Please state your name and the entity you represent, you have five minutes. If you have prepared statements, please submit them to the Sergeant-at-Arms for forwarding to the Clerk’s office.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments were presented by two individuals on the following items:

[READ 10/24/2025] GOV. COMM. 24-69: (10/21/2025) Informing the House of his nomination of Mr. James Ushio Miyahara Mendiola, Jr. to serve as a member of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) representing the Second Senatorial District. [Deadline: 1/19/2026]

[READ 12/5/2025] GOV. COMM. 24-84: (12/2/2025) Transmittal of Mr. James Ushio Miyahara Mendiola Jr.'s résumé, police clearance, statement of financial interest, and drug test results as part of the required documentation for his pending nomination. Action deadline: January 19, 2026.

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you. The podium is still open. With nothing further, colleagues, and with no objections, I would like to move down to Item No. 6, Messages from the Governor.

Several members of the House voiced “no objection,” and the Chair recognized the Clerk.

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

The Clerk announced the following Messages from the Governor:

[READ 10/24/2025] GOV. COMM. 24-69: (10/21/2025) Informing the House of his nomination of Mr. James Ushio Miyahara Mendiola, Jr. to serve as a member of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) representing the Second Senatorial District. [Deadline: 1/19/2026]

[READ 12/5/2025] GOV. COMM. 24-84: (12/2/2025) Transmittal of Mr. James Ushio Miyahara Mendiola Jr.'s résumé, police clearance, statement of financial interest, and drug test results as part of the required documentation for his pending nomination. Action deadline: January 19, 2026.

GOV. COMM. 24-93: (12/29/2025) Informing the House that he signed into law, S. L. B. No. 24-02 (To rename part of Routes 30 and Route 33 “Governor Arnold I. Palacios Memorial Highway” in honor of the former late Governor Arnold I. Palacios; and for other purposes.). Became Saipan Local Law 24-16 [For info]

GOV. COMM. 24-94: (12/29/2025) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. L. B. No. 24-29 (To rename the “Smiling Cove Marina” the “Diego T. Benavente Smiling Cove Marina” in honor of former Legislator and former Lieutenant Governor Diego T. Benavente.). Became Saipan Local Law 24-17 [For info]

GOV. COMM. 24-95: (12/30/2025) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. L. B. No. 24- 34, D1 (To establish the “Saipan Economic Incentive District” within the Third Senatorial District, and to authorize the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority and other relevant agencies to administer and regulate investment activities within the designated district.). Became Saipan Local Law 24-18 [For info]

GOV. COMM. 24-96: (12/23/2025) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. B. No. 24-75, (To authorize the continued payment of employer premiums for the Group Health & Life Insurance (GHLI) Program by permitting expenditure of

\$3,747,585.00 recently identified by the Governor that shall be appropriated by the Legislature for FY 2026.). Became Public Law No. 24-19. [For info]

GOV. COMM. 24-97: (12/23/2025 received 12/29/2025) Informing the House that he signed into law and line item vetoed in parts, H. B. No. 24-80, HS1, (To Repeal and Re-Enact Public Law 24-14 to further Define and Identify General Revenues and approve revenues and resources of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands as identified pursuant to Article III, Section 9 (a) of the CNMI Constitution, as amended, and 1 CMC Division 7, for Fiscal Year 2026 and make appropriations for the operations and activities of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, its agencies, instrumentalities, and independent programs, and to provide budget authority for government corporations for Fiscal Year 2026; and for other purposes.). Became Public Law No. 24-20 [Item Veto Deadline: 2/27/2026]

GOV. COMM. 24-98: (1/5/2026) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. B. No. 24-82, HD1, (To amend Section 704(k) of Public Law 24-20 to prevent disruption or delay of allotments, payments, or expenditures of the Legislative Branch by adding a transition period of up to 273 days for the implementation of the Legislature's Finance Department; and for other purposes.). Became Public Law No. 24-21. [For info]

GOV. COMM. 24-99: (12/30/2025) Certifying and granting approval for Ms. Emily Howell Thomsen, Assistant Public Defender, at the Office of the Public Defender to receive an annual salary of \$75,000. [For info]

GOV. COMM. 24-100: (12/31/2025) Transmitting Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Report (period ending September 30, 2025). [For info]

GOV. COMM. 24-101: (1/8/2026) Informing the House that he signed into law, S. B. No. 24-31, SD1, (To ensure food safety and support small food entrepreneurs sell non-time/temperature control (TCS) for safety food and home-cooked meals; and for other purposes.). Became Public Law No. 24-22. [For info]

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. I would like to proceed to Governor's Communication No. 24-84, which refers to the transmit of Mr. James Ushio Miyahara Mendiola, Jr.'s resume, police clearance statements, financial interest, and drug results as part of the required documentation for this pending nomination. This is also reflected on Governor's Communication No. 24-69. They pertain to the nomination of Mr. Mendiola Jr. to serve as a member of the Public Utilities Commission, representing the Second Senatorial District. This matter has been duly noticed pursuant to the open government act and is properly before the House. For the record, the House Committee on Judicial and Governmental Operations has met this morning and discussed the nomination. And at this time, I recognize the Chair of the Committee on Judicial and Governmental Operations, Representative Joel Camacho.

Representative Joel Castro Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The House Committee on Judicial and Governmental Operations met earlier today. We conducted a committee meeting and discussed the nomination of Mr. Jame Ushio Miyahara Mendiola, Jr. to serve as a member of the Public Utilities Commission representing the Second Senatorial District. The committee has reviewed the nominees' qualifications and background, and has had the opportunity to deliberate on the nomination. Based on the committee's discussion, I respectfully request the support of the whole House in confirming the nominee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.

The Floor Leader moved to confirm the nomination of James Ushio Miyahara Mendiola, Jr. to serve as a member of the Public Utilities Commission representing the Second Senatorial District.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion to confirm the nomination of James Ushio Miyahara Mendiola, Jr. with the following results:

Representative Roy Christopher Aldan Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Alda	Yes
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan "BJ" Tenorio Attao	Yes
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Absent (Excused)
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Yes
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Yes
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Yes
Representative Malcom Jason Omar	Yes
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Yes
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Yes
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, all 19 members present voted "yes."

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With 19 members present voting "yes," the House hereby confirms Mr. James Ushio Miyahara Mendiola, Jr. to serve as a member

of the Public Utilities Commission representing the Second Senatorial District. Congratulations, sir. I now call for recess.

The House recessed at 2:51 a.m.

Recess

The House reconvened at 2:56 a.m.

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Before we went on recess, we just confirmed Mr. James Mendiola, Jr. to serve on the Public Utilities Commission representing the Second Senatorial District. We are still under Item No. 6, Messages from the Governor. We will finish up with this item and proceed to the beginning of the agenda. Are there any discussions under Messages from the Governor?

There were no discussions on the floor.

Pursuant to the action taken, Governor's Communication No. 24-97, referencing, "(12/23/2025 received 12/29/2025) Informing the House that he signed into law and line item vetoed in parts, H. B. No. 24-80, HSI, (To Repeal and Re-Enact Public Law 24-14 to further Define and Identify General Revenues and approve revenues and resources of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands as identified pursuant to Article III, Section 9 (a) of the CNMI Constitution, as amended, and 1 CMC Division 7, for Fiscal Year 2026 and make appropriations for the operations and activities of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, its agencies, instrumentalities, and independent programs, and to provide budget authority for government corporations for Fiscal Year 2026; and for other purposes.). Became Public Law No. 24-20 [Item Veto Deadline: 2/27/2026],” was referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.

There being no item under Item No. 3, Adoption of Journals, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 4, Introduction of Bills, and recognized the Floor Leader.

ADOPTION OF JOURNALS

None

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

House Bills:

Representative Marissa Renee Flores formally introduced the following bill, which was then referred to the House Committee on Judicial and Governmental Operations:

H. B. NO. 24-83: Requiring Disclosure of 501(c)(3) Status for Government Funding. **Prefiled by: REP. MARISSA R. FLORES** of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for herself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, and Roman C. Benavente)

Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao formally introduced the following bill and, with no objection, requested that it be introduced by the Committee of the Whole.

There being no objection on the floor, the bill was accordingly introduced by the Committee of the Whole. The author then subsequently requested that it be placed on the Bill Calendar.

H. B. NO. 24-84: To authorize the expenditure of \$2,105,563.00 identified by the Governor as a surplus from Fiscal Year 2025 revenues that shall be appropriated by the Legislature to the Public School System and to the 25% Retirees’ Pension Obligation. **Prefiled by: REP. BLAS JONATHAN “BJ” T. ATTAO** of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C. A. Ada, Vincent R. Aldan, Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Roman C. Benavente, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Thomas J. DIC. Manglona, Julie M. A. Ogo, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, Elias J. M. Rangamar, John Paul P. Sablan, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita K. Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul)

The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.

The Floor Leader moved to suspend Rule IX, Section 8.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to suspend Rule IX, Section 8 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao formally introduced the following bill, which was then referred to the House Committees on Ways and Means and, Judicial and Governmental Operations:

H. B. NO. 24-85: To amend 3 CMC § 1205, relating to the Chamorro and Carolinian Language Policy Commission’s authority to assess fees for translation services; to establish a revolving fund; and for other purposes. **Prefiled by: REP. BLAS JONATHAN “BJ” T. ATTAO** of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Vincent R. Aldan, Roman C. Benavente, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Marissa R. Flores, Elias J.M. Rangamar, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Ralph N. Yumul)

The Chair opened the floor for introductions of unnumbered House Bills and recognized Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.

Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr. formally introduced the following bill, which was then referred to the House Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure and, Ways and Means:

[Added 01/16/2026] H. B. NO. 24-86: To amend the Operator's License Fees as codified under 9 CMC § 2202 to establish 50% discount on all operator's license fees for CNMI government retirees, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and military veterans with disabilities; and for other purposes. **Introduced by: REP. DANIEL I. AQUINO, JR.** of Saipan, Precinct 2 (*for himself*, Representatives Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Julie M. A. Ogo, John Paul P. Sablan, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Ralph N. Yumul)

Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan formally introduced the following bill, which was then referred to the House Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure and, Judicial and Governmental Operations:

[Added 01/16/2026] H. B. NO. 24-87: To require an independent valuation of the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), restore constitutional and audit oversight, modernize procurement and review procedures, protect ratepayers, and clarify the economic framework for any privatization transaction; and for other purposes. **Introduced by: VINCENT R. ALDAN** of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*)

Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan formally introduced the following bill, which was then referred to the House Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure and, Judicial and Governmental Operations:

[Added 01/16/2026] H. B. NO. 24-88: To mandate that the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation undergo a comprehensive, independent, third-party utility expert audit; to require a formal Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission audit-review docket and transparent public review process; to require an enforceable corrective action plan, a ratepayer impact matrix, and a public audit implementation dashboard; to impose strict timeliness and narrowly limited extensions; to require mandatory decennial audits; to establish compliance reporting and civil penalties for missed deadlines payable to the CNMI Treasury; and for other purposes. **Introduced by: VINCENT R. ALDAN** of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*)

The Chair called for recess.

The House recessed at 3:03 p.m.

Recess

The House reconvened at 3:04 p.m.

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Before we went on recess, we just finished with the House Bills. We now proceed to House Local Bills and I recognize Representative Malcolm Jason Omar.

House Local Bills:

Representative Malcolm Jason Omar formally introduced the following bill:

H. L. B. NO. 24-38: To appropriate the fund remaining balance of \$48,450.33 under Section 2(t)(4) of Saipan Local Law 20-26 (Project Code 7190M) for the maintenance, repairs and improvements of Commonwealth parks and recreational facilities in Precinct IV; and for other purposes. **Prefiled by: REP. JOEL C. CAMACHO** and **REP. MALCOLM J. OMAR** of Saipan, Precinct 4 (for themselves)

Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas moved to withdraw the following bill:

H. L. B. NO. 24-39: To appropriate Fifty-four Thousand Dollars (\$54,000.00) from revenues collected from poker fees in the Second Senatorial District; and for other purposes. **Prefiled by: REP. PATRICK H. SAN NICOLAS** of Tinian, Precinct 6 (for himself)

The Chair called for recess.

The House recessed at 3:06 p.m.

Recess

The House reconvened at 3:06 p.m.

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Before we went on recess, we were under discussion on House Local Bill No. 24-39. I now recognize Representative Patrick San Nicolas.

Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas formally introduced the following bill:

H. L. B. NO. 24-39: To appropriate Fifty-four Thousand Dollars (\$54,000.00) from revenues collected from poker fees in the Second Senatorial District; and for other purposes. **Prefiled by: REP. PATRICK H. SAN NICOLAS** of Tinian, Precinct 6 (for himself)

Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas moved to withdraw the following bill:

H. L. B. NO. 24-40: To appropriate \$300,000.00 of the dividends collected by the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority (CEDA) from the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) to fund infrastructure projects in the Second Senatorial District. **Prefiled by: PATRICK H. SAN NICOLAS** of Tinian, Precinct 6 (*for himself*)

The Chair opened the floor for introductions of unnumbered House Local Bills and recognized Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.

Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr. formally introduced the following bill:

[Added 01/16/2026] H. L. B. NO. 24-41: To re-appropriate Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$80,000.00) allotted under Saipan Local Law 20-26; and for other purposes. **Introduced by: REP. DANIEL I. AQUINO, JR.** of Saipan, Precinct 2 (*for himself*, Representatives Vincent R. Aldan, Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao, Deigo V.F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Malcolm J. Omar, John Paul P. Sablan, and Ralph N. Yumul)

Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo formally introduced the following bills:

[Added 01/16/2026] H. L. B. NO. 24-42: To amend the Wedding Cake Mountain Wildlife Conservation Area, to authorize the Mayor of Rota to plan, construct, and maintain a pedestrian pathway at Wedding Cake Mountain and access to the Grotto, and to initiate actions necessary to qualify for federal grants, and for other purposes. **Introduced by: REP. JULIE M. A. OGO** of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for herself*)

[Added 01/16/2026] H. L. B. NO. 24-43: To establish a docking and watercraft fee for derby event participants utilizing the West and East Docks on Rota; to include vessels, jet skis, kayaks, and canoes; to exempt bona fide Rota residents and educational activities; to provide penalties for violations; and to allocate collected revenues for conservation and community programs. **Introduced by: REP. JULIE M. A. OGO** of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for herself*)

[Added 01/16/2026] H. L. B. NO. 24-44: To amend Title 10, Division 1, Chapter 12 (Rota Casino Act of 2007) of the Commonwealth Code to: (1) establish a clear separation between the investigative and compliance functions of the Rota Casino Gaming RCGC (RCGC) and the adjudicatory/decision-making functions of the Commissioners; (2) establish an Investigations and Enforcement Division under the Executive Director; (3) authorize the procurement of qualified independent third-party investigative and professional services for criminal and financial due diligence of casino license applicants and related persons; (4) establish a Casino Regulatory Fee and a dedicated regulatory fund/account to provide stable annual funding for regulatory operations, including enforcement and monitoring; (5) strengthen conflicts of interest, disclosure, and recusal requirements for Commissioners; and for other purposes. **Introduced by: REP. JULIE M. A. OGO** of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for herself*)

Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul formally introduced the following bill:

[Added 01/16/2026] H. L. B. NO. 24-45: o re-appropriate Two Hundred Fifty-Six Thousand Two Hundred Thirty-Five Dollars (\$256,235.00) from the fund balances allotted under Saipan Local Law 22-01, specifically Business Unit 4963V; and for other purposes. **Introduced by: REP. RALPH N. YUMUL** of Saipan, Precinct 3 *(for himself)*

There being no further introduction of unnumbered House Local Bills and no items under House Legislative Initiatives, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 5, Introduction of Resolutions, and opened the floor for introduction of unnumbered House Resolutions, recognized Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan.

House Legislative Initiatives:

None

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

House Resolutions:

Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan formally introduced the following resolution and, there being no objection from the author, the Chair requested that it be introduced by the Committee of the Whole.

There being no objection on the floor, the resolution was accordingly introduced by the Committee of the Whole. The Chair then ordered that it be placed on the Resolution Calendar for consideration.

[Added 01/16/2026] H. R. NO. 24-24: Requesting and directing that the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) undergo a comprehensive, independent, third-party audit by qualified utility expert auditors, including financial, operational "desk," asset, compliance, and related examinations; requiring Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) coordination, formal CPUC docketing and public process for audit review; requiring public reporting, a corrective action plan, a ratepayer impact matrix, a public-facing audit implementation dashboard, and an immediate 90-day control-fix priority list. **Introduced by: REP. VINCENT R. ALDAN** of Saipan, Precinct 1 *(for himself, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada, Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Thomas J. DiC. Manglona, Julie M. A. Ogo, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, Elias J.M. Rangamar, John Paul P. Sablan, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul)*

There being no further introduction of unnumbered House Resolution, the Chair proceeded to House Joint Resolutions and recognized Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan.

House Joint Resolutions:

Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan formally introduced the following resolution and, there being no objection from the author, the Chair requested that it be introduced by the Committee of the Whole.

There being no objection on the floor, the resolution was accordingly introduced by the Committee of the Whole. The Chair then ordered that it be placed on the Resolution Calendar for consideration.

H. J. R. NO. 24-11: Directing the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation and all relevant Commonwealth government agencies and public corporations to expedite planning, permitting, and deployment of viable renewable energy, storage, and resilience projects — and to coordinate energy-security and infrastructure-resilience strategies — in light of the accelerated phase-out of federal clean-energy incentives under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. **Prefiled by: REP. VINCENT R. ALDAN** of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada, Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Thomas J. D!C. Manglona, Julie M. A. Ogo, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, Elias J.M. Rangamar, John Paul P. Sablan, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul)

There being no further introduction of House Joint Resolutions and no items under House Commemorative Resolutions and House Concurrent Resolutions, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 7, Senate Communications, and recognized the Clerk.

House Commemorative Resolutions

None

House Concurrent Resolutions

None

SENATE COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk announced the following Senate Communications:

SEN. COMM. 24-68: (12/31/2025) Returning H. B. No. 24-82, HD1, entitled, “To amend Section 704(k) of Public Law 24-20 to prevent disruption or delay of allotments, payments, or expenditures of the Legislative Branch by adding a transition period of up to 273 days for the implementation of the Legislature’s Finance Department; and for other purposes.”, which was passed by the Senate without amendments on December 31, 2025. [For info]

SEN. COMM. 24-69: (1/5/2026) Transmitting a certified copy of Senate Resolution No. 24-12, entitled, “To commend and congratulate Jacqueline Ayuyu Quitugua for her exemplary service, leadership, and dedication for more than four decades to education, student wellbeing, and youth development in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.”. [For info]

SEN. COMM. 24-70: (1/6/2026) Informing the House of the Senate’s Conferees to the Conference Committee on H. B. NO. 23-74, SS2, entitled, “To appropriate funds derived from trust interest income from the Marianas Public Land Trust.”. [Chair: Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider; Member(s): Sen(s). Donald M. Manglona and Francisco Q. Cruz [Alternate Member: Sen. Corina L. Magofna]. [For info]

The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.

The Floor Leader moved to accept Senate Communications No. 24-68 through 24-70.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to accept Senate Communications No. 24-68 through 24-70 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

The Chair proceeded to Item No. 24-8, House Communications, and recognized the Clerk.

HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk announced the following House Communications:

HSE. COMM. 24-79: (1/12/2026) From Representative Thomas John DLC. Manglona informing the Speaker that he will be out of the Commonwealth on personal matters beginning January 12, 2026—January 18, 2026 and request to be excused from all legislative sessions, SNILD sessions, committee meetings, and any official functions. [For info]

There being no discussion on the floor and no items under Item No. 9, Communications from the Judicial Branch, through Item No. 10, Communications from Departments & Agencies, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 11, Miscellaneous Communications, and recognized the Clerk.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES

None

MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk announced the following Miscellaneous Communications:

MISC. COMM. 24-82: (12/19/2025) From the Commonwealth Zoning Board, Saipan Zoning Office re: Notice of Rezone/Change in Zoning District Boundaries on the Official Zoning Map From Village Commercial (VC) / Rural (RU) to Mixed Commercial (MC). [For info]

MISC. COMM. 24-83: (12/29/2025) Legislative Bureau to the Department of Finance re: request for a transitional implementation period and interim Memorandum of Understanding under Public Law 24-20. [For info]

MISC. COMM. 24-84: (12/29/2025) Notice of a reduction in work hours for Legislative Bureau and CNMI Youth Congress staff. [For info]

MISC. COMM. 24-85: (12/29/2025) OMB FY 2026 Proposed Allotment Schedule for Remaining Fiscal Year (January–September 2026). [For info]

MISC. COMM. 24-86: (1/9/2026) From the Cannabis Commission re: Discrepancies in Cannabis Commission Revenue Reporting relevant to Executive Order No. 2025-005. [For info]

The Chair opened the floor for discussion and there was no discussion on the floor.

Pursuant to the actions taken,

- 1) *Miscellaneous Communication No. 24-82, referencing, “(12/19/2025) From the Commonwealth Zoning Board, Saipan Zoning Office re: Notice of Rezone/Change in Zoning District Boundaries on the Official Zoning Map From Village Commercial (VC) / Rural (RU) to Mixed Commercial (MC). [For info],” was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources; and*
- 2) *Miscellaneous Communication No. 24-86, referencing, “(1/9/2026) From the Cannabis Commission re: Discrepancies in Cannabis Commission Revenue Reporting relevant to Executive Order No. 2025-005. [For info],” was referred to the House Committees on Cannabis and, Ways and Means.*

There being no items under Item No. 12, Reports of Standing Committees, through Item No. 14, Unfinished Business, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 15, Resolution Calendar, and recognized the Floor Leader.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

None

REPORTS OF SPECIAL AND CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

RESOLUTION CALENDAR

The Floor Leader moved for the adoption of H. J. R. No. 24-11:

H. J. R. NO. 24-11: Directing the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation and all relevant Commonwealth government agencies and public corporations to expedite planning, permitting, and deployment of viable renewable energy, storage, and resilience projects — and to coordinate energy-security and infrastructure-resilience strategies — in light of the accelerated phase-out of federal clean-energy incentives under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion to adopt H. J. R. No. 24-11 with the following results:

Representative Roy Christopher Aldan Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Alda	Yes
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao	Yes
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Absent (Excused)
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Yes
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Yes
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Yes
Representative Malcom Jason Omar	Yes
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Yes
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Yes
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, all 19 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villgomez: Thank you, Clerk. With 19 members present voting “yes,” House Joint Resolution No. 24-11 is hereby adopted. Thank you, colleagues. That takes care of the Resolution Calendar. We now proceed to Item No. 16, Bill Calendar, and I recognize the Floor Leader.

BILL CALENDAR

The Floor Leader moved to suspend Rule VII, Section 9 and, Rule IX, Sections 9 and 10.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to suspend Rule VII, Section 9 and, Rule IX, Sections 9 and 10 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.

The Floor Leader moved for the passage on First and Final Reading of H. B. No. 24-84:

H. B. NO. 24-84: To authorize the expenditure of \$2,105,563.00 identified by the Governor as a surplus from Fiscal Year 2025 revenues that shall be appropriated by the Legislature to the Public School System and to the 25% Retirees’ Pension Obligation.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion for the passage of H. B. No. 24-84, First and Final Reading, with the following results:

Representative Roy Christopher Aldan Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Alda	Yes
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao	Yes
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Absent (Excused)
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Yes
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Yes
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Yes
Representative Malcom Jason Omar	Yes
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Yes
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Yes
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes

Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, all 19 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villgomez: Thank you, Clerk. With 19 members present voting “yes,” House Bill No. 24-84 hereby passes the House. Thank you, colleagues. That is all for our Bill Calendar, and we now proceed to Item No. 17, Miscellaneous Business. The floor is open and I recognize Representative Vincent Aldan.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to make a speech regarding the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation fiasco. Good morning, colleagues, community leaders, and fellow citizens of the Commonwealth. I rise before you today not out of fear, but out of urgency, out of responsibility, and most importantly, out of a deep commitment to our islands, our families, and our shared future. We stand at a pivotal moment—a crossroads in our energy story—driven not by natural disaster but by a looming federal deadline set by the recently enacted 2025 “Big Beautiful Budget” Act. This legislation ends access to clean energy tax credits and grants unless renewable energy projects are awarded by September 30 and break ground by December 31 of this year. Let me be clear: if we miss this window, the Commonwealth stands to lose tens of millions of dollars in clean energy investment. But worse, we risk condemning future generations to a legacy of fuel surcharges, blackouts, diesel dependency, and climate vulnerability. CUC’s own report shows that we spent over \$67 million on power generation fuel alone in one year. That burden falls squarely on our people—on every family, every business, and every school paying their power bill. And for our sister islands of Tinian and Rota, the situation is even more dire, with unreliable shipments, higher transport costs, and frequent outages. That’s why I authored House Resolution 24-21 — to urge Governor Apatang to issue a Proactive Resilience Emergency Declaration. This declaration is not symbolic. It is a strategic tool—one that empowers our agencies to fast-track permits, reprogram resources, and cut through bureaucratic gridlock that’s stalling shovel-ready solar projects for our schools, ports, water systems, and clinics. This is not just about energy. This is about jobs. About infrastructure. About health clinics that stay powered during typhoons. About students learning in classrooms cooled by solar-powered air conditioning. And above all, it’s about choice: choosing energy independence over fuel dependency, choosing local jobs over foreign fuel bills, and choosing resilience over reaction. Our Constitution grants the Governor authority to act during “other calamities.” And I believe this moment qualifies. The economic risk is real. The policy shift is undeniable. And the time to act is now. So I call upon every public servant, every agency, and every community stakeholder to answer this call to action. Let us mobilize every stalled renewable project. Let us align permitting, procurement, and financing without delay. Let us ensure that by midnight on December 31st, we’ve broken ground, not promises. We have shovel-ready projects waiting only for leadership. The federal government has opened the door—but it will close quickly. If we hesitate, others will decide our fate for us. But if we act together, with unity and urgency, we can make 2026 the year the CNMI claimed its energy future. Let’s not just react. Let’s lead. Let’s rise with proactive resilience. Thank you. This

is about the \$250 million that needs to be looked over. As Chairman of the Public Utilities, Transportation, and Communications Committee, I want the public to understand a simple principle: before any division of the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is privatized, the people deserve a fair, independent, and enforceable audit, conducted with full transparency and real consequences for noncompliance. CUC is the backbone of our economy and public services. Every family and business depends on reliable, affordable power and water. That is why the Public Law amendment governing CUC oversight must be strengthened so decisions are based on verified facts, not incomplete records or closed-door negotiations. Why the amendment must be improved: Privatization can involve public assets, long-term contracts, and ratepayer obligations. Without a strong audit framework first, we risk the following: Transferring assets without clear valuation or documented condition; Locking customers into unfair rate structures or hidden cost pass-throughs; Losing enforceable service standards, maintenance accountability, and investment commitments; and Inviting disputes and litigation because the record is incomplete or the process is not credible. Why OPA must conduct the audit: The Office of the Public Auditor (OPA) provides independent oversight on behalf of the people. An OPA-led audit helps ensure: Independence from parties that benefit from the transaction; A complete financial picture (revenues, expenses, receivables, liabilities, and contract exposure); An operational assessment (reliability, maintenance backlogs, staffing, inventory, and performance metrics); and Verified compliance (procurement, internal controls, and legal and regulatory requirements). What the public should expect in a fair audit A fair audit means the law requires: 1. Full access to records and mandatory cooperation, with enforceable deadlines; 2. Public reporting in plain language, not just technical summaries; 3. Transaction-level transparency for any assets, debts, contracts, or obligations tied to privatization; 4. Ratepayer protection, including clear disclosure of who pays for what after privatization; and 5. A public-interest test showing improved reliability, affordability, and accountability. This is not about politics. It is about protecting the public and ensuring any restructuring of CUC is lawful, transparent, and in the public interest. I support reforms that improve service and reduce costs, but reforms must be grounded in verified facts. Strengthening this public law amendment is how we keep the public informed, protected, and respected in any privatization decision. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I yield.

The Chair recognized Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.

Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to take this time to thank all the members for signing off on my bill, House Bill No. 24-86. This bill will give power to the consumers who are less fortunate than others. And it gives military veterans with disabilities the same opportunity also. So, I just wanted to thank them. I want to thank the Senate for passing my other bill regarding the veterans. And I ask them for their continued support for this coming bill, as well as our Chairman of the Judicial and Governmental Operations, so that this bill takes off running to the Senate. And I want to thank the Governor for signing off, and I am just lobbying again for this one to pass also. Thank you.

The Chair recognized Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente.

Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to congratulate everyone for putting this session together and making sure that we, most especially the Public School Systems and Retirement, that it is a very crucial situation if we do not get this thing going.

But I am glad that we all put our two cents together and made sure we get this through. Another thing, I would like to thank Representative Yumul for mentioning that the bill he introduced, the House local bill, was from Precinct 1 funds. Thank you for that. Do not worry, we are united. Thank you.

The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Marissa Renee Flores: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today was, talk about a marathon. We did cover a lot, and it is unfortunate that certain legislation or bills in the Judicial and Governmental Operations Committee could not pass due to them being—actually, it could not even be discussed due to the fact that it was for introductory purposes. Now, while I would have hoped that we could have at least discussed and added some testimonies to what is really going on out there in the public for survivors and victims, I did not get that chance. It would be an injustice, and I know there are so many things going on with our community—CUC rates, poverty, the drastic cut in education, and the Public School System. I mean, there are just so many things. The rise in crime, and every time, like I said earlier, if the place does not land, it is the Legislature's fault. If something happens, it always boils down to the Legislature, and we are doing everything we can. But outside of that, I received an email in regard to House Bill No. 24-52. And I need to read this because I feel that we all have a responsibility to help craft this legislation. And it reads, if you all will allow me your indulgence:

Dear Honorable Flores, First of all, happy New Year. I am pleased to submit my utmost support on House Bill No. 24-52: An Act to strengthen current domestic and family violence laws to ensure the protections of women and children and to recognize and penalize digital and electronic harassment as acts of domestic and family violence; and for other purposes. As a victim of domestic violence, it is unfortunate that, based on statistics, according to the CNMI DPS, 364 domestic-related incidences occurred between October 1, 2024, and September 30, 2025. In 2025, I was one of those victims and am now part of those statistics. We are all aware that there are also unreported incidences as well. As legislators, it is your responsibility that laws are passed to protect each individual and family and to live in a nonviolent environment. We cannot prevent a 100% violence-free community. However, we can decrease it with stricter laws. I commend all of you for a job well done. And I plead that the following be added to House Bill No. 24-52: The establishment of a Domestic Violence Perpetrator (DVP) registry for all DVP individuals, just as it is for the child abuse registry. If your bill cannot be amended to add the domestic violence perpetrator registry for all DV perpetrators. I urge this House to initiate another house bill specifically to establish that to protect myself. I cannot reveal my identity due to threats. And to the Senators, it is also your responsibility to ensure that families are protected from domestic violence and that public laws are enacted. I thank you all for your hard work, and I look forward to your bill becoming a public law.

I am sorry. I know it is a weekend, and I know that there are other things that need to be addressed here. But I, too, know a lot of people who have suffered at the hands of a perpetrator or even men who have been abused by women. And it is really sad to think that these individuals, who maybe

have not been identified as having some narcissistic disorder, actually use digital platforms to cause more havoc and fear to the victim, to their partner, or to whoever. What is worse is when a community allows such activity. A couple of weeks ago, there was a viral video that went out, and I believe this was outside my precinct, of a gentleman, or an individual—I would not say "gentleman." But an individual beating on a woman in an alley. And while she was being beaten, somebody was taking a video. Just documenting this behavior. I do not know whether or not the individual called the police. But how sick does a community need to be if you could not even take the opportunity, the time to stop, to intervene, to call? We are all responsible for each other. But we are not here to judge why people do it. We are here to have a healthier society. But when the society does not even do anything, that is a clear indicator that there is something wrong. Now I have to think about a time when I am not going to be here, and I am thinking of my daughters and my son. I am looking around, and we all have daughters and sons, and if these bills and legislation are not updated to adjust and adapt to the given time, then all our children and all their children are going to suffer. And they are not going to have the protections they need. And if they do not have the protections they need. If they do not have the protections they need, then what will happen? They suffer from mental illness. And then what? What happens then? Suicide. That is all determined already. We have the statistics for all of that. So, I urge, once again, that the Judicial and Governmental Operations Committee will be meeting at some point, and I am going to ask for further deliberations with the Counsels to address and offer a substitute. But in the meantime, I ask the people to just say something. If you see this, say something. No one deserves to be beaten. No one. But we fail as a community if we continue to allow this behavior to happen without saying anything. So, I urge my community, both men and women, and children: if you see something that is not right, call the police and say something. Because we cannot afford another loss of life at the hands of an individual due to domestic violence. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. I am so sorry to talk about this during a time when we are trying to unify people and be happy. Because there is just so much going on. But I cannot not talk about this because it is happening, and we have to be cognizant of that because we cannot have an unhealthy community if we are preaching about doing all these great things. We need our community to be healthy, and doing so means standing up for each other and ensuring everybody's safety. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I yield my time.

The Chair recognized Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul.

Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just reading the Governor's Communication No. 24-100, and I just wanted to prove a point, and I believe during the budget submission, we had a lengthy discussion about zero being a number. So, if you look at the annual report, there are some zeroes, and there are some expenses that were incurred. And obviously a number was added to it. So, the point in being here is you can add a number to any zero. So, just remember that. Thank you.

There being no further discussion on the floor, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 18, Announcements, and recognized Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.

Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time, I just wanted to wish everybody a happy three-day weekend. The Chairman and I would like to wish the great people of Precinct 2, the greatest village that has ever existed, thank you, people of Precinct 2.

Chairman Sablan and I love you. And Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank you for that recommendation you gave way back about a golf course. We are trying to push for the Pachu Park to have miniature golf. So, we are hoping we can entice people to come down and live in Election District 2, the best district. Thank you.

The Chair recognized Representative Joel Castro Camacho.

Representative Joel Castro Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would I want to announce that we are going to have the Judicial and Governmental Operations Committee meeting in a week or two. So, I am kindly asking all the members, please, do not leave the island. Thank you.

There being no further announcements on the floor, the Chair proceeded to Adjournment and recognized the Floor Leader.

ADJOURNMENT

Floor Leader Marissa Renee Flores: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hereby move to adjourn subject to the call of the Chair. So move.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to adjourn was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

The House adjourned at 3:42 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Brenalyn T. Santos
House Journal Clerk

APPEARANCE OF LOCAL BILLS

FIRST LEGISLATIVE DAY: 1st Legislative appearance of a local bill is on the day it is introduced.

SECOND LEGISLATIVE DAY:

THIRD LEGISLATIVE DAY:

Appearance of Measures introduced on the House Floor during the House Session on December 31, 2025:

H. B. NO. 24-82: To amend Section 704(k) of Public Law 24-20 to prevent disruption or delay of allotments, payments, or expenditures of the Legislative Branch by adding a transition period of up to 270 days for the implementation of the Legislature’s Finance Department; and for other purposes. REP. JOHN PAUL P. SABLÁN of Saipan, Precinct 2 (for himself Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Angelo A. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores,

Marissa R. Flores, Malcolm J. Omar, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Denita Kaipat Yangetmai). Introduced on December 31, 2025.