

David M. Apatang
Governor



GOV. COMM. **24-59**
(HOUSE)

Dennis James "DJ" C. Mendiola
Lieutenant Governor

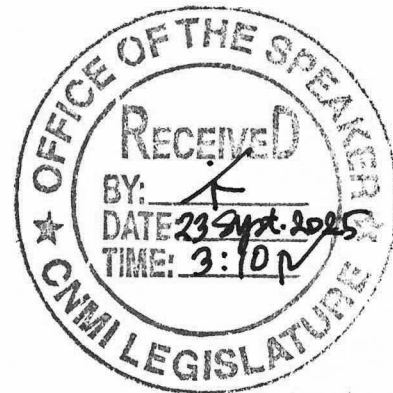
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

September 23, 2025

GOV2025-268

The Honorable Edmund S. Villagomez
Speaker
House of Representatives
Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas
Commonwealth Legislature
Saipan, MP 96950

The Honorable Karl R. King-Nabors
President
The Senate; Twenty-Fourth Northern
Marianas Commonwealth Legislature
Saipan, MP 96950



9/24/25

Dear Mr. Speaker and Mr. President:

This is to inform you that I have signed into law **House Bill No. 24-50, HS1** entitled, "To authorize a loan between the Commonwealth Government and the Marianas Public Land Trust in the amount of \$29,000,000 and authorize the Marianas Public Land Trust to withhold and retain net annual distributable income starting Fiscal Year 2026 for repayment and security of the loan.", which was passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

This bill becomes **Public Law No. 24-13**. Copies bearing my signature are forwarded for your reference.

Sincerely,


DAVID M. APATANG
Governor

RECEIVED BY 
DATE 9/24/2025 TIME 4:26

cc: Lieutenant Governor; Attorney General; Commonwealth Law Revision;
Public Auditor; Secretary of Finance; Marianas Public Land Trust;
Special Assistant for Administration; Programs and Legislative Review



**TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANA COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

AUGUST 15, 2025

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN PAUL P. SABLAN, OF SAIPAN, PRECINCT 2 (*for himself*) in an open and public meeting with an opportunity for the public to comment, introduced the following Bill:

H. B. No. 24-50, HS1

AN ACT

TO AUTHORIZE A LOAN BETWEEN THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT AND THE MARIANAS PUBLIC LAND TRUST IN THE AMOUNT OF \$29,000,000 AND AUTHORIZE THE MARIANAS PUBLIC LAND TRUST TO WITHHOLD AND RETAIN NET ANNUAL DISTRIBUTABLE INCOME STARTING FISCAL YEAR 2026 FOR REPAYMENT AND SECURITY OF THE LOAN.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The Bill was referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means, which submitted Standing Committee Report 24-27; adopted 8/29/2025.

**THE BILL WAS PASSED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON
FIRST AND FINAL READING, SEPTEMBER 9, 2025;**
with amendments in the form of H. B. No. 24-50, HS1 and transmitted to **THE SENATE.**

IN THE SENATE

The Bill was not referred to a Senate Committee.
THE BILL WAS PASSED BY THE SENATE ON FIRST AND FINAL READING, SEPTEMBER 15, 2025;
without amendments and returned to **THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.**

H. B. NO. 24-50, HS1 IS DULY PASSED BY THE TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE WITH THE AFFIRMATIVE TWO-THIRDS VOTE OF EACH HOUSE.



Linda B. Muña, House Clerk



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

THIRD DAY, SECOND REGULAR SESSION

SEPTEMBER 9, 2025

H. B. No. 24-50, HS1

AN ACT

TO AUTHORIZE A LOAN BETWEEN THE COMMONWEALTH
GOVERNMENT AND THE MARIANAS PUBLIC LAND
TRUST IN THE AMOUNT OF \$29,000,000 AND
AUTHORIZE THE MARIANAS PUBLIC LAND TRUST TO
WITHHOLD AND RETAIN NET ANNUAL DISTRIBUTABLE
INCOME STARTING FISCAL YEAR 2026 FOR REPAYMENT
AND SECURITY OF THE LOAN.

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

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

2 The Legislature finds that a loan from the Marianas Public Land Trust
3 ("MPLT") is required to meet the Minimum Annual Payment to the Settlement
4 Fund in light of the strain on the Commonwealth's fiscal resources imposed by the
5 exhaustion of federal assistance and ongoing slow recovery of tourism in the wake
6 of the COVID-19 pandemic.

7 The Final Amended Agreement and Stipulation of Settlement in Johnson
8 v. Inos et al., 1:09-cv-00023 (D. N. Mar. I. Aug. 6, 2013), ECF No. 468-1 at 11,

HOUSE BILL 24-50, HS1

1 requires the CNMI “to make minimum annual payments to the Settlement Fund
2 sufficient to enable the Settlement Fund to pay 75% of Class Members’ Full
3 Benefits each year for the Settlement Fund’s expected life as determined by an
4 independent actuary appointed by the Trustee and approved by the District
5 Court.”

6 In accordance with Article X, Section 3 of the NMI Constitution, the
7 Legislature is authorizing a loan from the Marianas Public Land Trust to pay the
8 Minimum Annual Payment for Fiscal Year 2026 in the amount of \$29 million
9 (\$29,000,000.00) and with a simple interest rate of 7.5% calculated annually.

10 The Legislature pledges as security and earmarks for debt service until the
11 loan is redeemed the interest accrued on MPLT’s trust proceeds and owed to the
12 Commonwealth pursuant to Article XI, Section 6(d) of the NMI Constitution. That
13 is, the Legislature authorizes MPLT to withhold transfer of accrued interest on
14 the trust proceeds until such time as the principal and interest loan balance is
15 redeemed.

16 **SECTION 2. ENACTMENT.**

17 The following provision is hereby enacted:

18 “§ 101. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the
19 Commonwealth Government, through the Governor and the Secretary of Finance,
20 is authorized to enter into an agreement with the Marianas Public Land Trust for
21 a loan in an amount not to exceed \$29,000,000 at an interest rate not to exceed
22 7.5 % per annum simple interest on such terms as are mutually agreed upon by
23 the Marianas Public Land Trust and the Commonwealth Government.

24 § 102. Distributions into the Commonwealth General Fund of interest
25 accrued on the trust proceeds of the Marianas Public Land Trust for

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1 Fiscal Year 2026, and for each fiscal year thereafter until such time as the loan
2 described in the foregoing section of this chapter is fully satisfied and retired, shall
3 be appropriated to service debt on the said loan.

4 § 103. The Secretary of Finance shall issue a quarterly summary
5 “MPLT Loan Report” which shall be a financial statement detailing the loan
6 balance, the interest accrued, list of expenses, drawdown breakdown, and any
7 reductions due to Marianas Public Land Trust withholding the interest
8 distribution. This MPLT Loan Report shall be submitted to the Governor, Lt.
9 Governor, the presiding officers of both houses of the Legislature, and the trustees
10 of the Marianas Public Land Trust. The Secretary of Finance shall further provide
11 a drawdown payment list to each of the above-enumerated entities prior to
12 expending the funds.

13 § 104. Authorization to Defend, Hold Harmless, and Indemnify MPLT. The
14 Legislature hereby authorizes, as a condition precedent to the loan agreement
15 being authorized herein, the Commonwealth Government, through the Executive
16 Branch including the Secretary of Finance and Office of the Attorney General, to
17 defend, hold harmless, and indemnify the Trustees of the Marianas Public Land
18 Trust, individually and collectively, along with MPLT’s staff, counsel and
19 consultants for any suits, causes of action, litigation, and claims as well as any
20 loss, liability, and expense whatsoever of any kind or nature including but not
21 limited to attorney’s fees which may arise or that are in any way related to the
22 loan agreement which is the subject of this Act or the events arising therefrom as
23 to MPLT’s actions in extending this loan. The Commonwealth shall pay for the
24 cost of representation being authorized herein through the Department of Finance
25 without cost to MPLT or provide representation by the CNM Office of the Attorney

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1 General. In the event MPLT is compelled to engage its own counsel or
2 representation of the Commonwealth, the Department of Finance shall reimburse
3 MPLT for such costs and expenses, MPLT may withhold further distributions of
4 income until its expenses and costs are fully reimbursed. The obligation to defend,
5 indemnify and hold harmless does not include any suits against MPLT or its
6 Trustees for breach of their fiduciary duty for prudent investments as set forth in
7 Article XI, Section 6 of the CNMI Constitution, which MPLT shall defend and be
8 responsible for at all times.”

9 **SECTION 3. SEVERABILITY.**

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

15 **SECTION 4. SAVINGS CLAUSE.**

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

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SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.

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

Attested to by:


Linda B. Muña, House Clerk

Certified by:


SPEAKER EDMUND S. VILLAGOMEZ
House of Representatives
24th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature

Approved this 23rd day of September, 2025


DAVID M. APATANG
Governor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands