
THE SENATE TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE



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In compliance with the Open Government Act, Senate President, Karl R. King-Nabors, issued a session call on September 29, 2025 that the Senate of the Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature will convene this open and public session. The notice, the official session call, and the session agenda was filed in the Office of the Senate Clerk; released to the media; and posted at the Entrance Halls of the Office of the Governor, the Senate and the House of Representatives, posted on the Commonwealth Legislature's website at www.cnmileg.net

The Honorable President of the Senate, Karl R. King-Nabors presided.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Good morning everyone. I hereby call this Fifth Day, Second Regular session to order. Today is October 3rd, 2025. The time is 10:15 a.m in the morning here at the Senate Chamber of the Vice Speaker Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan. It's my honor to welcome everyone here this morning. Before I proceed, I respectfully ask that the mobile devices be placed on silent mode or be turned off so as not to have any interruptions. Today's session will be viewed on cable television Channel 23, the Senate's YouTube channel and as well as the Northern Mariana's Commonwealth Legislature Facebook page. And with that, I kindly ask that we stand for a moment of silence.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

Clerk, please call the roll.

ROLL CALL

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	Absent – Excused
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Present
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	<i>Esti guiha</i> (Present)
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Here
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	<i>Gaige</i> (Here)
Senator Karl R. King-Nabors (President)	Here
Senator Corina L. Magofna	Present
Senator Donald M. Manglona	Absent - Excused

Senator Paul A. Manglona

Here

CLERK: Mr. President, seven (7) members are present and two (2) members absent.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: With seven members present we have the requisite number to proceed with today's session. Please let the record reflect that Senator Babauta and Senator Manglona are hereby excused from today's session. Before we proceed any further, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize our LB support staff assisting us in today's session. Our Legal Counsel Mrs. Antonette Villagomez, our Clerk Mrs. Dolores Bermudes, Sergeant-at-Arms Benjamin Terlaje, Youth Congress Coordinator Luis John Castro, our IT Assistant Delbert Camacho, our Senior Legislative Assistant Mrs. Jolyn Duenas-Tagabuel, and also our Journal Clerk Mrs. Valerie Aguon. Before we proceed onto public comments, I would just like to note for the record that the Floor Leader for today will be Vice President Corina Magofna, thank you. Now the floor is open for public comment. This is the section where we allow the public to provide comments on any of today's agenda items.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jean Paul B. Reyes: Good morning, *Hafa Adai yan Tirow* Honorable Senate President, Mr. Karl R. King-Nabors, and to you Honorable Senate members of this 24th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today for our record purposes, my name is Jean Paul B. Reyes, Special Assistant for the Administration, and I am here on behalf of the Honorable Governor David M. Apatang and the Honorable Lieutenant Governor Dennis C Mendiola, to extend the Administration's appreciation and express our gratitude to the esteemed body, but most especially to your Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations, chaired by the Honorable Senator Francisco Q Cruz for their indulging assistance in conducting public hearings for our past and upcoming nominees. This morning you'll be entertaining a few standing committee reports on the agenda consisting of distinguished individuals that have committed to serving our great Commonwealth. Under Senate Standing Committee Report 24-23, 24-24 and 24-26 are the appointments of Ms. Tina Azarvand, Mr. David Burger and Ms. Remedio C. Mafnas to serve as members of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority Board of Directors representing the Third Senatorial District of Saipan. On the other hand, Senate Standing Committee report 24-25 is the appointment of Mr. Mathew C. Masga to serve as a member of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Board of Directors representing the Second Senatorial District, of the island of Tinian. Your untiring commitment and dedication on behalf of our nominees are just a step forward as the Administration completes the vacancies and all board members and commissions. Honorable Senate President King-Nabors, and to you Honorable members of the Senate august body, it is for this reason that Governor David M. Apatang and Lieutenant Governor Dennis C. Mendiola extends their sincere appreciation for your generous and favorable consideration on behalf of our nominees. Thank you, *Si yu'us ma'ase yan Ghillisow*.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you for those comments. The floor is still open.

Steven Sablan: Good morning Senate President King-Nabors and other members. I don't have a public comment but I do have a request, if we could have a copy of today's agenda. I brought my

father here because part of the agenda is a reading of a bill that I want to show him before he makes any comment because he does not know why he's here and also his brother Rudolfo. Do we have a copy?

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Yes. We'll provide one to you.

Steven Sablan: Thank you very much. I just want them to read it first and then maybe they'll make a comment.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: And can you just say your name for the record please.

Steven Sablan: I'm sorry. My name is Steven Sablan. Thank you.

Derek Sasamoto: My name is Derek Sasamoto. I'm with the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority. I'd like to thank the Senate for allowing me the opportunity to provide public comment. I'm actually here to comment on SLI 24-03. I'm here to say that I support the intent of the initiative. It will allow landowners to better leverage their properties. It would also allow investors to have a stronger and more longer-term foothold here in the Marianas, hopefully allowing them to have more security in terms of developing and enhancing their investments. I also wanted to comment that the initiative also talks about financial clauses. So, I wanted to state that the financial clauses seem to protect not only the landowners, but also takes the investor returns into consideration. And I find that to be a good balance as it should be mutually beneficial. Of course, as long as we consider market factors. The last thing I want to say is that the bill also allows for the ninety-nine year extension, which I support as well. But I just wanted to comment that, if there's any concerns about the ninety-nine years landowners do not have to lock in the full ninety-nine years. They can transact their business according to their economy, their perceived economies, and how they want to transact things based on their financial situation. It's not a matter of requiring the ninety-nine years, but it's an option, right? So, it allows landowners that option at their fruition to determine how they want to move forward with the landowner. I also noticed that the initiative provides for a 20 year stop gap where terms are reevaluated and I feel that's one way to mitigate risk. But of course, landowners have the option to do that in 10 years. They don't have to wait the full 20 years. But I'm glad that the initiative actually has that in there as another fail safe and a compromise as well. I thank you for allowing me to speak, and again, I support the intent of SLI 24-03. Thank you very much.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you Mr. Sasamoto. And for the record, this will be introduced in Section L of today's agenda. Public comment is still open. Good morning, sir. Please state your name for the record.

David M. Sablan: Good morning Leaders of the Northern Marianas. My name is David M. Sablan and I noticed that in the document that I just saw, it mentions Elias Sablan. He was the first Mayor of Saipan after the American took over and of course as far as I'm concerned, I lived through the war. I was 12 years old when the invasion started on Saipan, so I remembered like it was just yesterday. So anyway, I want to thank you for recognizing my father because we were in the cave during the war and he was one of the two people that spoke English. And he also learned International Morse Code that he learned from the Germans while he was detailed to the island of

Yap. When he came back, we were in the cave for three weeks during the invasion of Saipan, and he saw all these American ships sending messages back and forth. And of course, it's one of the two people that spoke English, Gregorio "Kilili" Sablan and Elias Sablan, my father. And so, as he looked out, he saw the signals going back and forth between ships, American ships, and I never forget why we were in this cave. He said, "Oh, the United States is scheduled to take over Guam on July 21, 1944." And I never forget that because he was able to read the morse code that went on between American airplanes, I mean ships. So, I want to thank you. I presume that this is a recognition of my father, the first Mayor and the only one that I can remember that has appeared before the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations, when he was the Mayor of Saipan for 12 years. Thank you very much.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you so much, Mr. Sablan.

Joshua Cook: Mr. President, Honorable Senators, my name is Joshua Cook. I'm here as the Vice President of the Trade Council of the Marianas. More importantly, I'm here as a business owner and a father who wants to raise his children in a thriving Commonwealth. CNMI stands at a turning point, we know this. While federal funding and tourism have long powered the economy, there's a third engine with even greater potential that has remained idle. Today, I suggest we maintain the first two and support them, while also supporting the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority nominees to ensure that the third engine is running on all cylinders. I've been working to support tourism and federal funding. On one hand, my team and I have been working directly with Secretary of Finance and her office to address audit findings and strengthen relationships with grantors. On the other hand, my team and I are building a tool called CNMI Central that will allow us to invite prior tourists back and allow tourists to take virtual tours, plan their own trips, and communicate with local vendors in their native languages. My team and I will continue to help in these areas, but we want to assist with CNMI's most valuable export, or what I call the most valuable export, which is tax rebates in a US jurisdiction. Before we can offer this export, we must address the issues that kept dozens of businesses from coming to the CNMI last year. Now I'm not going to talk about all of the things that kept them from coming. If we can have conversations about that separately for the sake of time. But I will say this, that the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority can bridge the gaps that are preventing businesses from coming to the CNMI, problems that I saw firsthand. Aside from the CEIA's mandates to streamline business set up and aggressively market the CNMI, these individuals are volunteering their time and their expertise. This is a very well-rounded group, as you've already seen with the three nominees that have come before you already. I urge you to consider these nominees and volunteers, and they will help turn up this economic engine with their mandates and their expertise. Please do not delay. I know each of you care deeply about the Commonwealth and your constituents. On behalf of the Trade Council, thank you for your sacrifices and your service.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you. Mr. Cook. The floor is still open for public comments. If there are none, public comments are hereby closed. Members, if there's no objections I would like to proceed to agenda Item M, Reports on Standing Committees. No objections? With that, I recognize the Floor Leader.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Floor Leader Corina L. Magofna: Thank you, Mr. President. Under Item M, we have four Standing Committee Reports. First Standing Committee Report 24-23 from the committee on EAGI reporting on the executive appointment of Ms. Tina Azarvand to serve as a member of the Board of Directors for the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority representing the Private Sector. Mr. President and members, I move for its adoption.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Second.

The motion has been seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: There has been a motion and has been seconded for the adoption of Standing Committee Report 24-23. The floor is now open for discussion. I recognize the chairman of EAGI, Senator Cruz.

Senator Francisco Q. Cruz: Thank you Mr. President. I would like to request if Ms. Azarvand is here to be invited to the chamber. She's not here. It's okay. If the appointee is here I would like to invite her to the chamber so we can proceed forward with the process.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Can I call for a short recess?

The Senate recessed at 10:31 a.m.

RECESS

The Senate reconvened at 10:33 a.m.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: We rise back to session. If I could ask Mr. Burger to please come up to the, yeah. Thank you. I now recognize the chairman of EAGI.

Senator Francisco Q. Cruz: Mr. President, this is the Standing Committee Report 24-23 and this is the executive appointment of Ms. Tina Azarvand to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority representing the Private Sector. Your Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations to which was referred the appointment of Ms. Azarvand to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Incentive Authority representing the Private Sector begs leave to report as follow. After review and consideration of testimonies provided, your Committee recommends the confirmation of Ms. Tina Azarvand's executive appointment to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Authority representing the Private Sector. Pursuant to Rule 8, Section 5 of the Interim Rules of the Senate, it is the duty and purpose of your Committee to report to the Senate for legislative action pertaining to the appointment of Ms. Tina Azarvand to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority representing the Private Sector. Your Committee has examined all pertinent documents relating to the executive appointment of Ms. Azarvand's overall credentials to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority. In summation of all written and oral testimonies provided to the committee, there is one oral testimony in support of the appointee, of which one hard copy of the testimony stated was submitted during the hearing, and no written testimony or oral testimony in opposition of the appointee. Additionally, your Committee stated several recommendation issues

and concerns to the appointee that are included in this report. Therefore, based on the overall assessment of Ms. Azarvand's credentials, experiences, testimonies, and other relevant issues considered, your Committee respectfully recommends the confirmation of Ms. Tina Azarvand to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority representing the Private Sector. The public hearing was conducted on September 18th, 2025 here in the Senate Chamber of the Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building Capitol Hill, Saipan. During the hearing certain recommendation, issues and concerns were raised for the appointee, accompanied by CEIA appointee David Burger to address and look into if confirmed as member of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority. In conclusion, all the required documents in conformance with Rule 8, Section 5 of the Interim Rules of the Senate have been submitted to your Committee for review and consideration. Based on the submission of pertinent documents and testimonies, your Committee concludes that the executive appointment of Ms. Tina Azarvand to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority representing the Private Sector is in accordance with 4 CMC § 51122. Therefore, your Committee consent the confirmation of Ms. Tina Azarvand to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority representing the Private Sector. Again, I ask the full body to support Standing Committee Report 24-23. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you Chairman Cruz. Floor is still open for discussions. I recognize Senator Paul.

Senator Paul A. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. President. Just a short comment here. But before I do that, I just want to thank Mr. Sablan for coming here this morning. I know Mr. Sablan, he is plus or minus 94 years old and just want to recognize him also and thank him for coming up here. On this nomination, I understand we're addressing Ms. Azarvand, Mr. Burger and Ms. Remedio today for the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority Board. The way I look at it is, we have a vehicle parked in the garage for I don't know how many decades already, and we're taking out the vehicle and we're putting EV battery. So, I thank them for accepting the nomination and I'm confident, I know these people, and they're going to move this forward. And thank you to Senator Corina for moving with these nominees. *Si yu'us ma'ase* and thank you Chairman for conducting the hearing and now we're here to finally address their nomination. *Si yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you Senator Paul for that analogy. The floor is to open for discussion. Ready? With that clerk, please call the roll.

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	Absent – Excused
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Yes
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Corina L. Magofna	Yes
Senator Donald M. Manglona	Absent - Excused
Senator Paul A. Manglona	Yes

Senator Karl R. King-Nabors (President)

Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, all seven (7) members present voting yes.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: With all seven members voting yes, Senate Committee Report 24-23 is hereby adopted and confirms Ms. Azarvand to the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority representing the Private Sector. I recognize the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Corina L. Magofna: *Si yu'us ma'ase* Mr. President. Next, we have Standing Committee Report 24-24 from the committee on EAGI, reporting on the executive appointment of Mr. David Burger to serve as a member of the Board of Directors for the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority representing the Private Sector. Mr. President and members, I move for its adoption.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Second.

The motion has been seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: There's been a motion for the adoption of Standing Committee Report 24-24 and has been seconded. We're open for discussion. I now recognize the chairman of EAGI, Chairman Cruz.

Senator Francisco Q. Cruz: Thank you Mr. President. Again, your Committee on Executive Appointment and Government Investigations is ready to report on Standing Committee Report 24-24 and this is the executive appointment of Mr. David Burger to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority representing the Private Sector. Mr. President and members of the Senate, your Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations, to which was referred the appointment of Mr. David Burger to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority representing the Private Sector begs leave to report as follows. After review and consideration of the testimonies provided, your Committee recommends the confirmation of Mr. David Burger's executive appointment to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority representing the Private Sector. Pursuant to Rule 8, Section 5 of the Interim Rules of the Senate, it is the duty and purpose of your Committee to report to the Senate for legislative action pertaining to the appointment of Mr. Burger to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority representing the Private Sector. Your Committee has examined all pertinent documents relating to the executive appointment of Mr. Burger's overall credential to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economics Incentive Authority. In summation of all written and oral testimonies provided to the committee, there is one oral testimony in support of the appointee, of which one hard copy of the testimony was submitted during the hearing and no written testimony or oral testimony in opposition of the appointee. Additionally, your Committee stated several recommendations, issues, and concerns to the appointee that are included in this report. Therefore, based on the over assessment of Mr. Burger's credential, experiences, testimonies, and other relevant issues considered, your Committee respectfully recommends the confirmation of Mr. David Burger to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority representing the Private Sector. The public hearing was conducted on September 18, 2025 in the Senate Chamber, here in the Honorable Jesus P.

Mafnas Memorial Building Capitol Hill, Saipan. During the hearing, certain recommendations, issues, and concerns were raised for the appointee, accompanied by CEIA appointee Tina Azarvand to address and look into if confirmed as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority. In conclusion, all required documents in conformance with Rule 8, Section 5 of the Interim Rules of the Senate have been submitted to your Committee for review and consideration. Based on the submission of pertinent documents and testimonies, your Committee concludes that the executive appointment of Mr. David Burger to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority representing the Private Sector is in accordance with 4 CMC §51122. Therefore, your Committee consents the confirmation of Mr. David Burger to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority representing the Private Sector. Again, I ask this body to support Standing Committee Report 24-24. *Si yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you Chairman Cruz. Discussion is still open. There being none. Clerk please call the roll.

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	Absent – Excused
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Yes
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Corina L. Magofna	Yes
Senator Donald M. Manglona	Absent – Excused
Senator Paul A. Manglona	Yes
Senator Karl R. King-Nabors (President)	Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, all seven (7) members present voting yes.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: With all seven members voting yes, Standing Committee Report 24-24 is hereby adopted by this body confirming Mr. David Burger to serve as the Board of Directors for the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority representing the Private Sector. Congratulations, Sir. I recognize the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Corina L. Magofna: Thank you, Mr. President. Next, we have Standing Committee Report 24-26 from the committee on EAGI, reporting on the executive appointment of Ms. Remedio C. Mafnas to serve as a member of the Board of Directors for the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority representing the Public Sector. Mr. President and members, I move for its adoption.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Second.

The motion has been seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: There has been a motion for the adoption of Standing Committee Report 24-26, and has been seconded. The floor is now open for discussion, and I'd like to recognize the chairman of EAGI, Chairman Cruz.

Senator Francisco Q. Cruz: Thank you, Mr. President. This is the last on the Commonwealth of Economic Executive Authority Board of Director appointees and this is Standing Committee Report 24-26. This is the executive appointment of Ms. Remedio C. Mafnas to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Executive Authority Board of Directors representing the Public Sector. Mr. President and members of the Senate, your Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations to which was referred the appointment of Ms. Remedio C. Mafnas to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority Board of Directors representing the Public Sector begs leave as follows. After review and consideration of testimonies provided, your Committee recommends the confirmation of Ms. Remedio C Mafnas' executive appointment to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority Board of Directors representing the Public Sector. Pursuant to Rule 8, Section 5 of the Interim Rules of the Senate, it is a duty and purpose of your Committee to report to the Senate for legislative action pertaining to the appointment of Ms. Remedio C. Mafnas to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority Board of Directors representing the Public Sector. Your Committee has examined all pertinent documents relating to the executive appointment of Ms. Mafnas' overall credentials to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Executive Authority Board of Directors. In summation of all written and oral testimonies provided to the Committee, there were three oral testimonies in support of the appointee, of which one hard copy of the testimonies was submitted during the hearing, three written testimonies in support of the appointee and no written or oral testimonies in opposition of the appointee. Additionally, your Committee stated several recommendations, issues, and concerns to the appointee that are included in this report. Therefore, based on the overall assessment of Ms. Mafnas' credentials, experiences, testimonies, and other relevant issues considered, your Committee respectfully recommends the confirmation of Ms. Remedio C. Mafnas to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority Board of Directors representing the Public Sector. The public hearing was conducted on September 18, 2025, here in the chamber of the Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building Capitol Hill, Saipan. During the hearing, certain recommendations, issues, and concerns were raised for appointee to address and look into if confirmed as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority. In conclusion, all required documents in conformance Rule 8, Section 5 of the Interim Rules of the Senate have been submitted to your Committee for review and consideration. Based on the submission of pertinent documents and testimonies, your Committee concludes that executive appointment of Ms. Remedio C. Mafnas to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority Board of Directors representing the Public Sector is in accordance with 4 CMC § 51122. Therefore, your Committee consents the confirmation of Ms. Remedio C. Mafnas to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority Board of Directors representing the Public Sector. Again, I ask this body to support Senate Committee Report 24-26. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, Senator Cruz. Any other discussion from the members? I would like to say one thing briefly. I do agree with Senator Paul and his analogy about taking an old car out and putting new parts in to invigorate our economy. And I also want to extend my gratitude the Vice President for her efforts and also the colleagues for pushing this forward. At

this time in our history, we need to bring all forces to bear and I think this is a genuine effort to try to capitalize on every component that we have to try to get us out of the position that we're in. And I'd also like to thank the comments made by Mr. Cook today. And with that Clerk, please call the roll.

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	Absent – Excused
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Yes
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Corina L. Magofna	Yes
Senator Donald M. Manglona	Absent – Excused
Senator Paul A. Manglona	Yes
Senator Karl R. King-Nabors (President)	Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, all seven (7) members present voting yes.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: With all seven members voting yes, Senate Standing Committee Report 24-26 is hereby adopted, confirming Ms. Remedio C. Mafnas to serve as a member of the Board of Directors for the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority representing the Public Sector. I kindly call for a short recess.

The Senate recessed at 10:50 a.m.

RECESS

The Senate reconvened at 10:56 a.m.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: We now rise back to session and I would like to recognize the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Corina L. Magofna: *Si yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. And last report under Item M, we have Standing Committee Report 24-25 from the committee on EAGI, reporting on the executive appointment of Mr. Mathew C. Masga, to serve on the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Board of Directors to represent the Second Senatorial District. Mr. President and members, I move for its adoption.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Second.

The motion has been seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: There is a motion for the adoption of Standing Committee Report 24-25 and has been seconded. Discussion? I recognize Chairman Cruz.

Senator Francisco Q. Cruz: Thank you Mr. President, I would like to invite the appointing to the chamber please. Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President Standing Committee Report 24-25, the executive appointment of Mr. Mathew C. Masga to serve as a member of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Board of Director, representing the Second Senatorial district. Your Committee on Executive Appointment and Government Investigations, to which was referred the appointment of Mr. Mathew C. Masga to serve as a member of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Board of Directors representing the Second Senatorial District, begs leave to report as follows. After review and consideration of the testimonies provided, your Committee recommends the confirmation of Mr. Mathew C. Masga's executive appointment to serve as a member of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Board of Directors, representing the Second Senatorial District. Pursuant to Rule 8, Section 5 of the Interim Rules of the Senate, it is the duty and purpose of your Committee to report to the Senate for legislative action on the appointment of Mr. Mathew C. Masga to serve as a member of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Board of Director representing the Second Senatorial District. Your Committee has examined all the pertinent documents relating to the executive appointment of Mr. Masga's overall credentials to serve as a member of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Board of Directors. In summation of all written and oral testimonies provided to the Committee, there are five oral testimonies in support of the appointee, of which three hard copies of the testimonies were submitted during the hearings, four written testimonies in support of the appointee and no written or oral testimonies in opposition to the appointee. Additionally, your committee stated several recommendations, issues, and concerns to the appointee are included in this report. Therefore, based on the over assessment of Mr. Masga's credentials, experiences, testimonies and other relevant issues considered, your Committee respectfully recommends the confirmation of Mr. Mathew C. Masga to serve as a member of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Board of Directors representing the Second Senatorial District. The public hearing was conducted on September 16, 2025 at the Tinian Courthouse San Jose, Tinian. During the hearing, certain recommendations, issues, and concerns were raise for the appointee, accompanied by Jeannie Mafnas, Corporate Director, Northern Marianas Corporation, to address and look into if confirmed as a member of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Board of Directors. In conclusion, all require documents in conformance will Rule 8, Section 5 of the Interim Rules of the Senate, have been submitted to your committee for review and consideration. Based on the submission of pertinent documents and testimonies, your Committee concludes that executive appointment of Mr. Mathew C. Masga to serve as a member of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Board of Directors representing the Second Senatorial District is in accordance with 2 CMC § 4421. Therefore, your Committee consents the confirmation of Mr. Mathew C. Masga to serve as a member of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Board of Directors, representing the Second Senatorial District. Again, I ask the members of this body to support Standing Committee Report 24-25. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, Senator Cruz. I recognize Senator Hofschneider.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: *Si yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President, members and, all our people that are gathered this morning and the ones that are watching our live feed and most notably our appointee for NMHC. Just to be consistent, we had our hearing on Tinian, and I really appreciate the time and the volunteerism for Mr. Masga to accept an additional responsibility on top of what he's already been doing in his day-to-day activities. I couldn't help but to reiterate the importance

of having a quorum in this important entity. One of the biggest components of NMHC nowadays, for everyone that's not familiar, is the Disaster Recovery funds. To which, they have a timeline that we need to obligate and commit and push forward with those projects. I do know and have full confidence in Mr. Masga's representation of the Second Senatorial District, and that along with his abled staff at NMHC can see through that we are done with all the projects that have been rendered from previous decision and policy makers. So, thank you again, Matt, for taking this up. And I'm ready to cast my vote. *Si yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President, and I yield back.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, Senator Hofschneider. I recognize Senator Paul Manglona.

Senator Paul A. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. President. I want to also thank Mathew for accepting this nomination. Mr. President, I was fortunate to be in the hearing on Tinian and was not chased out by the Committee because I was there to participate, but I'm glad I did. And I know that this committee report was finalized by the Committee, but I just want to make sure I highlight some points that I brought up to Mathew and I am very pleased that he is aware of the situation down on Rota also. One of the concerns I raised was the Section 8 housing in Liyo. We have maybe 24, 25 units there, and it is costing MIHA a lot of their financial resources to maintain that constantly, those old units. So, one of the ideas was to sell them out and maybe they can look at a LIHTC program for Rota for the low income. And also, we raised the idea of the former Farmer's Home, which is USDA program. So, I'm going to be following up with Mathew and the other board members as well as the Director on these programs. I think that's very much needed on Rota to have new homes or units for the low income and also the opportunity that they had decades ago where it's so simple to get a Farmer's Home Loan. The other concern is the availability of home loans for middle income. It is so hard now for these young kids that are coming back and because they're the middle income they cannot qualify for all these other loans available. So, I've been following up with MPLT to work with NMHC so that they can provide better opportunities. Because right now, if you go to the bank, when you borrow money, let's say \$200 or \$300,000 they demand the applicant to pay 30% up upfront. Who has 60 to 90,000 if they're just coming back and beginning work. So that's an area that they need to work on. Which brings me to the lower Garapan area that is a subdivision owned by NMHC. So, I emphasize to the Executive Director that they need to pick the ball on that. Do something for either the low income or make that into a revenue producing property so they can supplement home loans or programs for our young people that are here hoping that they do not move away from the islands. Speaking on subdivision, I mentioned also the Dugi subdivision on Rota, which I know do not belong to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation. But since the project that has been pending for several years now, the waterline connection to Dugi homestead is before 702 office. They have the money, they've been working on it. I respectfully ask that they coordinate with the CIP office so that they can help them, whatever process they need to accomplish to bring the waterline to at least the entrance of Dugi homestead. The money is there. I don't know why that years later we're still talking about that waterline project and so it has to do with housing. It's not your project, it's not your funding, but I think that you can coordinate the efforts there. There are other issues that we brought up and I'm glad that I noticed that they're here in the report. I want to thank the Chairman for putting a very detailed report and the members of EAGI. Going back to the Garapan subdivision, for example Director, they're leasing those houses out for \$500-\$600 a month and that's good because they're earning revenue. When we have visitors coming to Saipan, for example,

they see the houses there, they're not well maintained, and they think that's our people that are staying in those houses and that's the impression we give them. So, I think we need to do something, either if they're going to rent that, then fix it up, make it nice because they think that's our people, but those are being rented out to businesses. I don't even know how the competitive process of getting one of those houses and do they stay there forever? So, do we just wait and run the property down and milk the \$600 the month or is it better to do something there that will beautify the island and will complement the western Garapan? Which was the proposal of former Congressman Juan Reyes. I mentioned that in the hearing to put out a master plan for that, beautify and connect it to the western Garapan, to the American Memorial Park, to just below the hospital; beautify that area and the potential is there. And I believe that what MIHA owes there is just maybe, below 10 million now to beat that out and have somebody do something. *Enao ha*, I think I spoken enough, but I will be following up. Director, I appreciate your taking on this challenge. *Si yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President.

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, Senator Paul. I recognize Senator Castro.

Senator Manny G.T. Castro: Thank you, Senate President. And also thank you Mr. Masga for taking this position up. I know you heard a lot of what I had to say in Tinian but just as a reminder, Senator Paul brought up the cost of building a house nowadays and we need to think outside of the box and be innovative about how we approach these challenges in terms of costs. As a board member I hope that you also look into the contractors. Because a lot of the times the contractors, some of them are not actual contractors or not legit businesses, they're manpower agencies and they're just borrowing from each other. That's part of the side effects of our challenges with labor and workforce. But if we can look for other ways such as automation in Rota, for example, it's pretty hard to build a house there because of the quarry, the access to those things. But as a board member, you can always use your position to influence the Legislature or other departments to make that a priority, to take care of the quarry so that the cost for building a house in places like Rota will go down. Other options like looking into the inmates to help with the construction process. The Department of Corrections has been doing a really good job renovating the Manamko' Center, the Office of the Public Auditors and if you see the quality of the work that the inmates are doing, it benefits the government and the community because the costs are down. And in construction, 30% to 50% of the cost is labor. So, if we can tap into the inmates and give them an opportunity to work on some of these projects, which federal law allows us to do, we can further reduce the costs of building homes. And the cheaper we make it, the more homes we can build for our people. So, I know it's easy for us to just do the same process that we've been doing, but the more we look deeper into some of these core issues, the more we can help more people. And I just want to give a shout out to all the grant writers and people within the agencies that are working hard to get people into homes rather than renting. But if we just take a step further and look at some of these factors then we can even expand that mission more. Maybe even kicking out the government agencies out of Capitol Hill and giving it to the people, because these houses were not designed for offices, they were designed to be houses. So, I know it's a little bit out there, but it saddens me to see a story like in Garapan where we moved out the residence of that subdivision next to Garapan Elementary and, in the 90s we saw people living there, our people, and we moved them out for investors and investors never came. It doesn't look as nice as it used to be when we had our own members of our community living there because a lot of the people living there right now are business owners or tour operators. Maybe we can focus on our *manamko'* and start those

that are still on the wait list, put them there because it's closer to the hospital, but synergizing our thinking. But I know as an entrepreneur this is your specialty as well. So, thank you again for your commitment to this cause.

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you. Senator Castro. I recognize Senator Calvo.

Senator Ronnie M. Calvo: Thank you Senate Pres. No questions, just a commandment, a thank you to Mr. Masga for your establishment in representing the municipalities of Tinian and Rota at that level. Knowing that we can list the laundry list of problems, but knowing you, your resume and your background, you are a problem solver and so we're looking for the resolutions with the team, the board and everything. So, thank you for that commitment and I appreciate it on behalf of the team. Thank you, I yield.

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, Senator Calvo. Any other members? Okay. With that, I would like the Clerk to please kindly call the roll.

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	Absent – Excused
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Yes
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Corina L. Magofna	Yes
Senator Donald M. Manglona	Absent – Excused
Senator Paul A. Manglona	Yes
Senator Karl R. King-Nabors (President)	Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, all seven (7) members present voting yes.

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: With all seven members voting yes, Senate Committee Report 24-25 is hereby adopted, confirming the appointment of Mr. Mathew C. Masga to serve on the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Board of Directors to represent the Second Senatorial District. Congratulations. Short recess.

The Senate recessed at 11:15 a.m.

RECESS

The Senate reconvened at 11:18 a.m

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: We now rise back to session and we will return to agenda Item C, Reading and Approval of Journals. There is none

READING AND APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

NONE

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: Item D, Messages from the Governor. I recognize the Clerk.

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

Senate Clerk: Mr. President, we have nine on our agenda, 24-115 to 24-123.

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: Discussions from the members. If there are none, we'll move on to Item E, Communications from the Judiciary.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIARY

Senate Clerk: We have two, Mr. President, 24-05 and 24-06.

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: Discussion from the members. None? Moving on to Item G, Communications from the House.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE HOUSE

Senate Clerk: We have two Mr. President, 24-82 and 24-83.

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: Members? No discussions? Moving on to Item H, Communications from the Senate.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE SENATE

Senate Clerk: Mr. President we have eight on our agenda, 24-129 to 24-139.

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: Discussions. None? There is nothing under Item I, Communications from the CNMI Delegate.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE DELEGATE

NONE

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: Nothing under Item J, Unfinished Business.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NONE

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: Under Item K, Pre-filed Bills, Initiatives, Local bills and Resolutions. I now recognized Senator Jude U. Hofschneider.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS, INITIATIVES, LOCAL BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Thank you Mr. President and members. Before I read out this, I wish to thank the families, the descendants of the individual that we are about to honor by way of

Senate Bill 24-45, as was mentioned earlier and I believe *na matto hulo' ya ma* offer public comment, *si* uncle Dave. Everybody knows, Mr. David Mangarero Sablan and *todu i yona* extended families, his siblings. I'm privileged and honor to formally introduce a Bill for an Act, Senate Bill 24-45, "To rename the "Guma' Hustisia, limwal Aweewe, House of Justice" Building to the "Elias Parong Sablan Guma' Hustisia, limwal Aweewe, House of Justice" in recognition of his long-standing contribution for the people of the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands." I respectfully ask Mr. President that if this should be put to a committee for further scrutiny that we ask the respective chair for an expedited action on the matter.

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: Not a problem, Senator Hofschneider.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: And it's formally introduced. Thank you again and thank you to all the families for being here to witness this very important event today.

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: You still have the floor.

Senator Paul A. Manglona: Point of information Mr. President. I think Senator Jude forgot to state that I beg him to be one of the sponsors for this legislation and he approve it already. Just for the record.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Yes, *Dispensa magahet* Senator Paul. Yes, jointly sponsored by yours truly and Senator Paul A. Manglona.

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: Noted.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Senator Paul. I also have a legislation, co-sponsored by Senator Paul A. Manglona, Senate Bill 24-47, "To require all contractors to be licensed in the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands; and for other purposes." And another Senate Bill 24-48, "To establish a Division of Customs and Biosecurity within the Department of Finance for the purposes enforcing all laws of the ports of entry and that is responsible for the inspection and clearance of containers, cargo, baggage related to customs and biosecurity at the ports of entry, and other matters related to border security." Thank you, Mr. President. I yield back.

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, Senator Hofschneider. I would now like to recognize Senator Cruz.

Senator Francisco Q. Cruz: Thank you, Mr. President. This is to officially introduce Senate Bill 24-46, "To require all gas service stations to provide to the public free compress air, a gauge for measuring air pressure, and tap water; and for other purposes." Thank you, Mr. President.

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, Senator Cruz. And if there are no other, on Item L, Introduction of Bills, Initiatives, Local Bills and Resolutions that didn't make the agenda. Members? I recognize Senator Castro.

Senator Manny G.T. Castro: Thank you, Mr. President. Formally introducing Senate Legislative Initiative 24-03, “To amend Article XII of the Northern Mariana Islands Constitution to increase the term of private land leases from 55 years up to 99 years and to require that private land leases include financial clauses that protect persons of Northern Marianas Descent from exploitation and ensure a fair share of potential upside gains.” Introduced by myself.

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, Senator Castro. I recognize Senator Manglona. Oh, okay. Take that back. Any other members with legislation? None. We'll move on to Item N, Reports of Special/Conference Committee.

Senator Paul A. Manglona: Mr. President, before we move on to Item N, I wanted to comment on Item H if there's no objection, on number five, Senate Communication 24-133. I think it's important that I state this for the record.

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: No objection from the members? Proceed.

Senator Paul A. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. President. Senate Communication 24-133 is from you to the Senate members and the subject matter is “Withdrawal of the Marianas Eland Corporation New Lease for the former Marianas Resort and Spa Property.” I just want to say that there's a sense of uncertainty with the Department of Public Land on this matter and because they feel that this decision has to be made in a joint session. But I think that this memo makes it clear that now it goes back to DPL and that they shouldn't be waiting for a joint session because this memo basically says that you are hereby withdrawing that lease proposal from the committee of R&D, or resources. And so, that means that they shouldn't wait for a joint session. I guess I just saw this memo and I think that this should send a message that they should then do whatever they want or whatever they propose to, for the best use of that property. So, my recommendation would be, since they're not under the cc here in the list that we send a copy of this to DPL. Thank you.

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, Senator Paul. Going back to Item N, Reports of Special/Conference Committees. There's none.

REPORTS OF SPECIAL/CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

NONE

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: Resolution Calendar, there is none.

RESOLUTION CALENDAR

NONE

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: Bill Calendar, there is none.

BILL CALENDAR

NONE

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: Item Q, Petition, Memorials and Miscellaneous Communications. I recognize the Clerk.

PETITIONS, MEMORIALS AND MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS

Senate Clerk: Mr. President, we only have two, 24-47 and 24-48.

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: Any discussion from the members? There are none. Announcements, are any from the members?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NONE

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: Then I'd like to kindly ask the Floor Leader for the proper motion.

Floor Leader Corina L. Magofna: Thank you, Mr. President. At this time, I offer a motion to adjourn this session, subject to your call.

Senator Francisco Q. Cruz: Second.

The motion has been seconded.

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: There's been a motion to adjourn today's session subject to my call, and has been seconded. All in favor say aye. All opposed?

All members voiced, "aye".

Senate President Karl R. King-Nabors: This session is now adjourned at 11:27 a.m. Good morning everybody.

The Senate session adjourned at 11:27 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Valerie S. Aguon
Senate Journal Clerk