

THE SENATE TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE



SENATE JOURNAL

EMERGENCY SESSION – 2025

SJ 24-19

Emergency Session

Wednesday, December 31, 2025

In compliance with the Open Government Act, Senate President, Karl R. King-Nabors, issued a session call on December 31, 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, and I thank everyone for joining us this morning. Today I am calling this Emergency Session to order. I would like to recognize the Clerk to effectuate the roll call to approve the Emergency Session to act on House Bill No. 24-82, HD1.

ROLL CALL

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

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

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

President Karl R. King-Nabors: With seven members present, we have the requisite number to proceed with this Emergency Session. Moving on, I would like to ask the Clerk to please call the roll for the session.

ROLL CALL

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

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

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

President Karl R. King-Nabors: With seven members present, we have the requisite number to proceed with today's agenda and session. Please let the record reflect that Senators Hofschneider and Manglona are hereby excused from today's Emergency Session. Moving on to our on the next item on the agenda, Public Comment. This is the portion of the agenda where we allow the public to provide any comment on pertaining to any agenda item. Public comment is now open.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

NONE

There being none, public comment is hereby closed. Since we have nothing on the agenda but Item G, I now would like to recognize the Clerk.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE HOUSE:

Clerk: Mr. President, we have House Communication No. 24-113, dated December 31st.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Under discussion from the members.

The Senate recessed at 11:14 a.m.

RECESS

The Senate reconvened at 11:15 a.m.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: We now rise back and we are still on agenda Item G, under discussions for any members. Recognize Senator Babauta.

Senator Celina R. Babauta: *Si yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President for calling this Emergency Session to address a bill that was just transmitted from the House this morning for action on House Bill No. 24-82, House Draft 1. I would like to express my sentiments that I oppose this bill because it fixes a planning failure by the Legislature. It is trying to fix a problem after the fact. But before I go into detail about that, I do want to lay out the problem that exists for the Legislature today. On December 29th, the secretary of Finance issued a memorandum to the Legislative Bureau Director informing the Legislative Branch that all legislative payments will be temporarily suspended, citing Section 704(k) of Public Law 24-23 recently approved Revised Budget. That law does not take effect until January 1, 2026, tomorrow. But the memo was issued on December 29th immediately suspending anything being paid from our legislative accounts. Any action by the Administration to withhold legislative budgetary allotments before the date, before January 1st is premature and without legal effect. This arbitrary and ultra vires conduct of the Executive Branch and attempting to enforce a statutory provision that is not yet legally effective is not right. Nothing can be paid at this time from our office budgets. Not the House, not the Senate, not our staff will be paid, not our vendors, which leaves our operations in jeopardy. And while the bill addresses the immediate concerns of the Legislature, I want to make it clear that this bill is not the way to fix it. This bill is basically the Legislature admitting that it passed a framework that it was not prepared to implement without systems, without staffing, without funding or safeguards in place. This is not reform, to me it's a palm in the face emoji. Why was it even included in the budget to begin with? You know, *pågo para ta pass esti na bill, ya para ta alok kaisari*, by the time, my serious concerns with this bill is, by the time the 270 days transition expires, it will be September 2026. We are basically kicking the can down the road, we'll be well into Fiscal Year 2027. In fact, by the time this bill becomes effective, and I get it, it's trying to suspend the immediate suspension, but it expires because it's only amending a provision of the budget bill which sunsets on September 30, 2026. So, this bill will cost the government if implemented rather than save more money. And worst still, if this was to be effective long after the September 30, 2026, it leaves the Legislature vulnerable, in my opinion, and for that reason I will not be voting in favor of this bill. Thank you.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, Senator Babauta. Any other members? Alright. With that being said, we'll go ahead and move on to the next. The only item on the agenda is the Bill Calendar, which is Item P and I recognize the Floor Leader.

BILL CALENDAR:

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you Mr. President. We have House Bill 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 270 days for the implementation of the Legislature's Finance Department; and for other purposes." I move for its passage.

This motion has been seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: There has been a motion made by the Floor Leader for the passage of House Bill No. 24-82 HD1, and has been seconded. Discussions? Members are ready. Clerk, please call the roll.

ROLL CALL

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	No
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Yes
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Absent - Excused
Senator Corina L. Magofna	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Donald M. Manglona	Yes
Senator Paul A. Manglona	Absent - Excused
Senator Karl R. King-Nabors (President)	Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, six (6) members voting “yes”, one (1) “no”, and two (2) are absent.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: With six members voting in the affirmative, House Bill No. 24-82, HD1 is hereby passed by the Senate. Moving on to Petitions, Memorials, Miscellaneous Communications, there are none.

PETITIONS, MEMORIALS, & MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS: NONE

Announcements members? Recognized Senator Castro.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Senator Manny G.T. Castro: Thank you, Mr. President. I just wanted to thank Ms. Ann Cepeda for hosting a BEAD workshop in Kagman II over the holidays. She donated all her materials and her time for, I think it was for three weeks, and gave free sessions to the community just for the holidays. So, a big thank you to Ms. Ann Cepeda and her family.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, Senator Castro. And with that we will move on to the Adjournment. Recognized Floor Leader.

ADJOURNEMENT:

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. President. At this time, I move to adjourn today's Emergency Session subject to the call of the Chair.

This motion has been seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: There's been a motion for the adjournment of today's Emergency Session and has been seconded. All in favor say "aye".

Members present voiced "aye".

All opposed? This Emergency Session is adjourned at 11:23 a.m. Happy New Year everybody.

The Senate session adjourned at 11:23 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Valerie S. Aguon
Senate Journal Clerk