

**TITLE 2: NATURAL RESOURCES**  
**DIVISION 4 : LAND RESOURCES**

**§ 4761. Definitions.**

As used in this Article, the following terms shall, unless the context clearly indicated otherwise, have the following definitions:

(a) "Land Compensation" means the payment of the money to private landowners whose properties were taken by the Commonwealth, the value of which was appraised on the date of taking and agreed to by both the landowner and the government.

(b) "Claimant" means an individual or individuals who have a land compensation claim against the Commonwealth Government, including those who have been issued court judgments.

**Source:** [PL 19-81](#) § 3 (Jan. 20, 2017), modified.

**Commission Comment:** [PL 19-81](#) had the following Short Title, Findings and Purpose, and Sunset Clause sections:

Section 1. Short Title. This Act may be cited as the "Land Compensation Settlement Act of 2016."

Section 2. Findings and Purpose. The Legislature finds and acknowledges that the CNMI Government is overwhelmed with millions of dollars' worth of outstanding land obligations to private landowners whose lands were taken for various public purposes, and various land compensation judgments from the Commonwealth courts in favor of the land claimant. The Legislature further finds that CNMI is lacking sufficient funding sources that can be used to alleviate such financial obligations in a timely manner rather than relying on the General Fund, which is also used to fund schools, roads, health care, and other community needs.

The Legislature finds and is cognizant that these land claimants have offered their land in hopes that they will be properly compensated in the near future. However, several years have passed and many of these claimants, many of whom have already passed away, have not been properly compensated. Therefore, it is the CNMI Government's obligation to fulfill their promise to these claimants and relieve any probable burdens that they feel.

The Legislature finds that from an accounting perspective, the CNMI's obligations are recognized as liabilities and contribute to the deficit of our beloved Commonwealth and must be retired in accordance with the CNMI Constitution. The annual interest of these obligations continues to rise and increase the land compensation liabilities of the Commonwealth. This tragic circumstance not only burdens our current Commonwealth taxpayers, but also future Commonwealth taxpayers.

Therefore, it is the intent of this Legislation to require the Commonwealth Government, through its appropriate departments and agencies, to offer a settlement plan for land compensation claims from private land owners who have been denied of these payments and to help reduce the unnecessary financial burden on the CNMI taxpayers.

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Section 4. Sunset Clause. Upon completion of all land compensation claims, all the provisions under this Act shall be voided.

The Commission numbered this article and its sections pursuant to [1 CMC § 3806](#)(a). The Commission changed “this Act” to “this Article” and corrected the spelling of “judgments” pursuant to [1 CMC § 3806](#)(g).