

**AN ACT**

To vacate §304 (d) of Executive Order 94-3, returning the responsibility of administering Division of Environmental Quality to the Office of the Governor, and for other purposes.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE ELEVENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS  
COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:**

Section 1. Findings. The Legislature finds that to more appropriately carry out the policy and purpose of the Commonwealth Environmental Protection Act, the Division of Environmental Quality should be reclassified as an independent regulatory agency, acting from within the Office of the Governor. A sound environmental administration must consider the divergent interests of all government departments, while also serving the total public constituency and the private business sector. We feel that these goals can be more efficiently met if the DEQ is removed from the constraints of working from within the Department of Public Works. Having a regulatory agency such as DEQ placed within a department that it is tasked to regulate both diminishes its ability to carry out its mandated duties, and creates an inherent conflict of interest. As such, we feel that DEQ should become an independent and impartial agency, protecting our island community's most valuable resource, our environment.

Section 2. Repealed. E.O. 94-3 §304 (d) is hereby vacated in its entirety.

Section 3. Placement in the Office of the Governor. All administrative duties and authority with regards to the Division of Environmental Quality is hereby placed with the Office of the Governor, or his designee, and any funds, records, property and personnel transferred the Department of Public Works pursuant to E.O. 94-3 304 § (d) shall revert to the Office of the Governor, Division of Environmental Quality.

Section 4. Severability. If any provision of this Act or the application of any such provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its provisions to persons or circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid shall not be affected thereby.

Section 5. Savings Clause. This Act and any repealer contained herein shall not be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired under statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation or order adopted under the statutes. Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted under or pursuant to prior law. The enactment of this Act shall not have the effect of terminating, or in any way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal, which shall already be in existence on the date this Act becomes effective.

Section 6. Effective Date. This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law without such approval.

**CERTIFIED BY:**

/s/ Diego T. Benavente  
**DIEGO T. BENAVENTE**  
**SPEAKER**  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**ATTESTED TO BY:**

/s/ Evelyn C. Fleming  
**EVELYN C. FLEMING**  
**HOUSE CLERK**

Approved this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of December, 1999

/s/ Jesus R. Sablan  
Jesus R. Sablan ~~PEDRO P. TENORIO~~  
Acting **GOVERNOR**  
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS