

THIRTEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

Public Law No. 13-40

SENATE BILL

NO. 13-14, HS1

FIRST REGULAR SESSION, 2002

AN ACT

To lower water rates for local farmers and ranchers and for other purposes.

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

Section 1. Findings and Purpose. The legislature finds that there is a high dependence on imported products which invariably increases the market value of the imported goods. The legislature further finds that providing new incentives to encourage continued farming of produce and the raising of livestock are in the best interest of the Commonwealth. The legislature desires to stimulate the Commonwealths commercial farm product and livestock industry. Lowering water rates for farmers and ranchers would provide an incentive to increase the production of farm goods and livestock thereby.

Section 2. Definitions. For purposes of this Act, the following definitions shall apply:

(a) "Commercial Farmer" means a person actively engaged in the business of producing agricultural products in the Commonwealth for commercial purposes.

(b) "Commercial Rancher" means a person actively engaged in the business of raising livestock in the Commonwealth for commercial purposes.

Section 3. Special Water Rates. The Commonwealth Utility Corporation is hereby authorized to set agricultural water usage rates for Commercial Farmers and Commercial Ranchers at the rate of twenty five cents (\$.25) per one thousand U.S. gallons of water in areas where there is twenty-four hour water available or a flat rate of twenty five dollars (\$25.00) per month in areas where twenty-four hour water is not available. The Special Water Rates shall apply to qualified Commercial Farmers or Commercial Ranchers upon proof that the applicant has a current business license for commercial farming or

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ranching and upon proof that he or she is in compliance with the Business Gross Revenue Tax filing requirements.

Section 4. Rules and Regulations. The Commonwealth Utilities Corporations is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement the provisions of this Act.

Section 5. 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 6. 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 at the date this Act becomes effective.

Section 7. Effective Date. This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the Governor or upon it becoming law without such approval.

CERTIFIED BY:

ATTESTED BY:

/S/ _____
PAUL A. MANGLONA
President of the Senate

/S/ _____
THOMAS P. VILLAGOMEZ
Senate Legislative Secretary

Approve this 17th day of December, 2002

/S/ _____
JUAN N. BABAUTA
Governor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands