



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Ralph DLG. Torres
Governor

Victor B. Hocog
Lieutenant Governor

1.7 JUN 2016

Honorable Francisco M. Borja
Senate President, The Senate
Nineteenth Northern Marianas
Commonwealth Legislature
Saipan, MP 96950

Honorable Rafael S. Demapan
Speaker, House of Representatives
Nineteenth Northern Marianas
Commonwealth Legislature
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Mr. President and Mr. Speaker:

This is to inform you that I have signed into law Senate Bill No. 19-05, SS1, HD2, entitled, "To prohibit telecommunication companies from imposing an expiration date or forfeiture of unused cellular prepaid credits and MIFI credits earlier than 90 days; and for other purposes.", which was passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Nineteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

This bill becomes **Public Law No. 19-50**. Copies bearing my signature are forwarded for your reference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ralph DLG. Torres", enclosed within a circular scribble.

RALPH DLG. TORRES

cc: Lt. Governor; Attorney General's Office; Public Utilities Commission; Public Auditor;
Special Assistant for Administration; Special Assistant for Programs and Legislative
Review



THE SENATE
Nineteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature
P. O. Box 500129
Saipan, MP 96950

May 11, 2016

The Honorable Ralph DLG. Torres
Governor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Capital Hill
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Governor Torres:

I have the honor of transmitting herewith for your action Senate Bill No. 19-05, SS1, HD2, entitled: "To prohibit telecommunication companies from imposing an expiration date or forfeiture of unused cellular prepaid credits and MIFI credits earlier than 90 days; and for other purposes," which was passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Nineteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dolores S. Bermudes".

Dolores S. Bermudes
Senate Clerk

Attachments



THE SENATE
NINETEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

SENATE BILL NO. 19-05, SS1, HD2

AN ACT

TO PROHIBIT TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANIES FROM IMPOSING AN EXPIRATION DATE OR FORFEITURE OF UNUSED CELLULAR PREPAID CREDITS AND MIFI CREDITS EARLIER THAN 90 DAYS ; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

SENATE ACTION

Offered by Senator(s): Teresita A. Santos

Date: January 21, 2015

Referred to: Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications

Standing Committee Report No.: 19-04 Adopted on 03/04/15

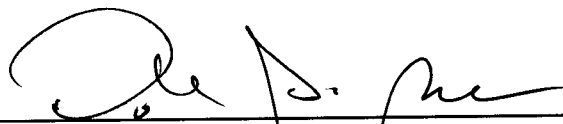
Final Reading: Passed SS1 on March 04, 2015 and HD2 on April 29, 2016

HOUSE ACTION

Referred to: Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications

Standing Committee Report No.: 19-103 adopted on 03/31/16

First and Final Reading: April 04, 2016


DOLORES S. BERMUDES
SENATE CLERK



THE SENATE
NINETEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION, 2015

S. B. NO. 19-05, SS1, HD2

AN ACT

TO PROHIBIT TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANIES FROM IMPOSING AN EXPIRATION DATE OR FORFEITURE OF UNUSED CELLULAR PREPAID CREDITS AND MIFI CREDITS EARLIER THAN 90 DAYS ; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE NINETEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:

1 **Section 1. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that cellular prepaid
2 plans are designed for customers who cannot afford to go on a postpaid contract with a
3 telecommunication provider. Cellular prepaid plans and MiFi accounts provide customers
4 a prepaid option to fit their needs and financial capability to stay connected with their
5 family, associates, and community.

6 The Legislature finds that customers who purchase cellular prepaid cards and MiFi
7 credits are compelled to use the credits purchased within a thirty (30) day period. Failure to
8 use the amount purchased by the thirty (30) day expiration will result in the forfeiture of
9 credits which is a loss to the customers and continued financial burden.

10 The Legislature finds that during these hard economic times, customers who can
11 only afford a cellular prepaid plan should not be forced to use all credits prior to the 30-day
12 expiration date nor should they be penalized for having a remaining balance by the
13 expiration date. The Legislature finds that a 90-day expiration period is more reasonable
14 and gives the customers more time to use up their credits. The 90-day expiration period
15 further gives Telecommunication companies a deadline to cancel cards and MiFi accounts
16 and establish new ones. The purpose of this act is to prohibit telecommunication

1 companies from imposing an expiration period or forfeiture of unused cellular prepaid
2 credits and MiFi credits earlier than 90 days.

3 **Section 2. Cellular Prepaid Card and MiFi Credits: 90-Day Expiration Date.**

4 (a) Telecommunication companies shall impose a 90-day expiration date on cellular
5 prepaid cards and MiFi credits and allow customers to continue using the credits purchased
6 to its full value during the 90-day period.

7 (b) Penalties.

8 (1) Any person or entity who violates this section shall be subject to a civil
9 penalty not less than \$5,000 and not to exceed \$10,000 for each such violation.

10 (2) Actions to recover any penalty provided for in this section shall, where
11 appropriate, be brought by the Attorney General at the request of PUC or any
12 affected person in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

13 (3) All funds recovered for penalties from violations of this section shall be
14 paid into the Public Utilities Commission Revolving Fund.

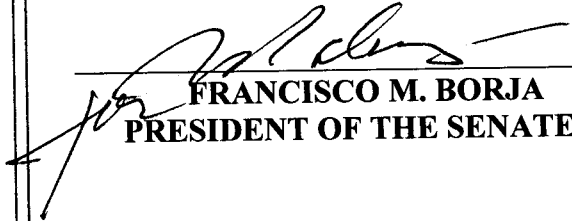
15 **Section 3. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or the application of any such
16 provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court of competent
17 jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its provisions to persons or
18 circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid shall not be affected thereby.

19 **Section 4. Savings Clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein shall not be
20 construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired under statutes
21 repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted under the statutes. Repealers
22 contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted under or pursuant to prior
23 law. The enactment of the Act shall not have the effect of terminating, or in any way
24 modifying, any liability, civil or criminal, which shall already be in existence on the date
25 this Act becomes effective.

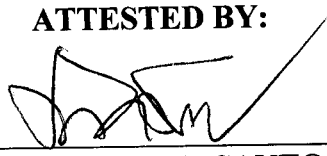
26 **Section 5. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the
27 Governor or becoming law without such approval.

SENATE BILL NO. 19-05, SS1, HD2

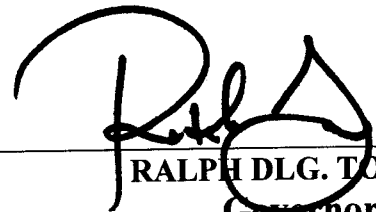
CERTIFIED BY:


FRANCISCO M. BORJA
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ATTESTED BY:


TERESITA A. SANTOS
SENATE LEGISLATIVE SECRETARY

Approved this 17th day of June, 2016


RALPH DLG. TORRES
Governor

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands