



RALPH DLG. TORRES
Governor

VICTOR B. HOCOG
Lieutenant Governor

COMMONWEALTH of the NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

05 JAN 2018

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

The Honorable Arnold I. Palacios
Senate President, The Senate
Twentieth Northern Marianas
Commonwealth Legislature
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Mr. Speaker and Mr. President:

This is to inform you that I have signed into law House Bill No. 20-09, entitled, "To require all scuba dive shop operators to impose a \$10.00 surcharge per tank usage to purchase, install, operate, and maintain decompression chambers in the CNMI; and for other purposes.", which was passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Twentieth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

This bill becomes **Public Law No. 20-36**. Copies bearing my signature are forwarded for your reference.

Sincerely,



RALPH DLG. TORRES

cc: Lt. Governor; Press Secretary; Attorney General's Office; Secretary, Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation; Tinian Health Care; Rota Health Care; Department of Finance; Public Auditor; Special Assistant for Administration; Special Assistant for Programs and Legislative Review



House of Representatives

20th NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 500586
SAIPAN, MP 96950

November 29, 2017

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

Dear Governor Torres:

I have the honor of transmitting herewith for your action **H. B. No. 20-9**, entitled: "To require all scuba dive shop operators to impose a \$10.00 surcharge per tank usage to purchase, install, operate, and maintain decompression chambers in the CNMI; and for other purposes.", which was passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Twentieth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "L. Muña", enclosed within a circular blue ink scribble.

Linda B. Muña
House Clerk

Attachment



*Twentieth Legislature
of the
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands*

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

First Regular Session

January 31, 2017

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH LEEPAN T. GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao, Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero, Jose I. Itibus, and Edwin K. Propst,) in an open and public meeting with an opportunity for the public to comment, introduced the following Bill:

H. B. No. 20-9

AN ACT

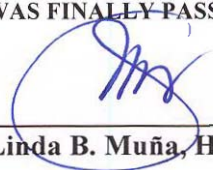
TO REQUIRE ALL SCUBA DIVE SHOP OPERATORS TO IMPOSE A \$10.00 SURCHARGE PER TANK USAGE TO PURCHASE, INSTALL, OPERATE, AND MAINTAIN DECOMPRESSION CHAMBERS IN THE CNMI; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

The Bill was referred to the House Committee on Commerce and Tourism, which submitted Standing Committee Report No. 20-6; adopted 4/3/17.

**THE BILL WAS PASSED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON
FIRST AND FINAL READING, APRIL 4, 2017;
without amendments and transmitted to the
THE SENATE.**

The Bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Fiscal Affairs.
**THE BILL WAS PASSED BY THE SENATE ON FIRST AND FINAL READING, NOVEMBER 21, 2017;
without amendments and was returned to
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.**

THE BILL WAS FINALLY PASSED ON APRIL 4, 2017.



Linda B. Muña, House Clerk



*Twentieth Legislature
of the
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands*
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FIRST DAY, FIRST SPECIAL SESSION

APRIL 4, 2017

H. B. NO. 20-9

AN ACT

TO REQUIRE ALL SCUBA DIVE SHOP OPERATORS TO IMPOSE A \$10.00 SURCHARGE PER TANK USAGE TO PURCHASE, INSTALL, OPERATE, AND MAINTAIN DECOMPRESSION CHAMBERS IN THE CNMI; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Be it enacted by the Twentieth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature:

1 Section 1. Findings and Purpose. The CNMI is home to some of the most pristine
2 and exquisite diving spots in the Pacific. Every year, tourists from different areas of the
3 world come to the CNMI to explore the beautiful sandy beaches and the extravagant
4 underwater life that we have to offer. Scuba diving, an exceptional method of exploring
5 aquatic life, has proven to be a popular recreational activity for tourists visiting the CNMI.

6 The Legislature finds that in order to perpetuate our tourism industry, the CNMI must
7 insure that tourists will be protected from certain and uncertain instabilities. With the addition
8 of decompression chambers, tourists will feel safe knowing that they will be properly treated
9 if decompression sickness were to occur.

HOUSE BILL NO. 20-9

1 The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands lacks a decompression chamber.
2 All treatments of patients requiring the aid of a decompression chamber would have to be
3 referred to Guam. Additionally, decompression chambers can also be used to treat other
4 illnesses, such as carbon monoxide poisoning, bacterial and radiation illnesses, and most
5 especially diabetes. The intent of this Act is to impose a surcharge fee that will be deposited
6 into a special account for the purchase, installation, and the operation and maintenance of a
7 decompression chamber at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation, the Tinian Health
8 Center, and the Rota Health Center.

9 **Section 2. Amendment.** Title 3, Division 5, Chapter 6 of the Commonwealth Code
10 is hereby amended by adding the following provisions:

11 **“§5612. Surcharge Fee.** All scuba dive shop operators shall impose an
12 additional \$10.00 surcharge per tank usage for the services provided by the operators.
13 The operators shall collect and document all the fees collected and the fees shall be
14 remitted to the Department of Finance in accordance with timeline reporting
15 deadlines, procedures, and forms provided by regulation by the Department of
16 Finance.

17 **§5613. Special Accounts.** The Secretary of Finance shall establish a special
18 account, Decompression Chamber Fund, and shall deposit into the account all
19 surcharge fees collected by all scuba dive shop operators pursuant to this Act without
20 further appropriations.

21 **§5614. Expenditure Authorities.** The CEO of the Commonwealth Healthcare
22 Corporation shall be the expenditure authority of the funds deposited in the

HOUSE BILL NO. 20-9


1 Decompression Chamber Fund Account. All funds in the account shall be used solely
2 for the purchase, installation, operation and maintenance of the decompression
3 chamber and related supplies and materials for the First, Second, and Third Senatorial
4 District after the effective date of this Act.”

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

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


HOUSE BILL No. 20-9

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

Attested to by: 
Linda B. Muña, House Clerk

Certified by: 
SPEAKER RAFAEL S. DEMAPAN
House of Representatives
20th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature

Approved this 5th day of January, 2018


RALPH DLG. TORRES
Governor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands