



# COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

**Eloy S. Inos**  
Governor

**Jude U. Hofschneider**  
Lieutenant Governor

**21 MAR 2014**

Honorable Ralph DLG. Torres  
Senate President, The Senate  
Eighteenth Northern Marianas  
Commonwealth Legislature  
Saipan, MP 96950

Honorable Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero  
Speaker, House of Representatives  
Eighteenth 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. 18-30, SS1 entitled, "To amend 4 CMC §§ 8144 to include commercial customers pertaining to reconnection of utility services and to amend 8145(a) to reduce the utilities reconnection fee from \$60 to \$25 for residential consumers and \$75 for commercial consumers; and for other purposes," which was passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Eighteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

This bill becomes **Public Law No. 18-39**. Copies bearing my signature are forwarded for your reference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eloy S. Inos", with a vertical line extending upwards from the end of the signature.

ELOY S. INOS

cc: Lt. Governor; Lt. Governor's Legal Counsel; Attorney General's Office; Press Secretary; Commonwealth Utilities Corporation; Special Assistant for Administration; Special Assistant for Programs and Legislative Review



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

February 11, 2014

The Honorable Eloy S. Inos  
Governor  
Commonwealth of the Northern  
Mariana Islands  
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Governor Inos:

I have the honor of transmitting herewith Senate Bill No. 18-30, SS1, entitled, "To amend 4 CMC §§ 8144 to include commercial customers pertaining to reconnection of utility services and to amend 8145(a) to reduce the utilities reconnection fee from \$60 to \$25 for residential consumers and \$75 for commercial consumers; and for other purposes," which was passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Eighteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

Sincerely,

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

Dolores S. Bermudes  
Senate Clerk

Attachment



**THE SENATE**  
**EIGHTEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 18-80, SS1**

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**AN ACT**

To amend 4 CMC §§ 8144 to include commercial customers pertaining to reconnection of utility services and to amend 8145(a) to reduce the utilities reconnection fee from \$60 to \$25 for residential consumers and \$75 for commercial consumers; and for other purposes.

**Offered by Senator(s)** Ralph DLG. Torres

**Date:** August 16, 2013

**Referred to:** Public Utilities, Transportation & Communications; Committee on Judiciary, Government & Law

**Standing Committee Report No.:** None

**Final Reading:** November 26, 2013

**Referred to:** Public Utilities, Transportation & Communications

**Standing Committee Report No.:** 18-90 Adopted on 01/31/14

**First and Final Reading:** February 06, 2014

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**DOLORES S. BERMUDES**  
**SENATE CLERK**

**EIGHTEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE**

**SECOND REGULAR SESSION, 2013**

**S. B. NO. 18-30, SS1**

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**AN ACT**

To amend 4 CMC §§ 8144 to include commercial customers pertaining to reconnection of utility services and to amend 8145(a) to reduce the utilities reconnection fee from \$60 to \$25 for residential consumers and \$75 for commercial consumers; and for other purposes.

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

**Section 1. Findings and Purpose.**

1           The Legislature finds that, in addition to the high utility rates charged by the  
2 Commonwealth Utilities Corporation, the reconnection fees for electrical and water services  
3 imposed by the CUC is a burden to residential customers. The Legislature acknowledges  
4 that all residential customers who get disconnected from electrical or water service or both  
5 for nonpayment of their utility bills, find it a great financial burden to pay high reconnection  
6 fees and at the same time pay remaining balance and then keep their accounts current. The  
7 Legislature also finds that the current reconnection of power or water services is much  
8 simpler and thus takes less time.

9           The purpose of this Act is to reduce the reconnection fees currently charged by the  
10 Commonwealth Utilities Corporation and to amend 4 CMC § 8144 to include commercial  
11 customers pertaining to reconnection of utility services.

**Section 2. Amendment.** 4 CMC § 8144 is amended to read:

13           “(a) Offset security deposit.

- 14                   (1) Prior to the disconnection of utility services, the security deposit of a  
15 residential and commercial customers shall be used to offset amount past  
16

1 due for utility services.

2 (2) CUC shall establish by regulation procedures for the restoring, within a  
3 reasonable period of time, of security deposits, should such security  
4 deposits be used to offset a customer's past-due accounts.

5 (b) CUC shall not disconnect the utility services of a residential or commercial  
6 customer before the disconnection date.

7 (c) CUC shall not disconnect the utility services of a customer if the customer is  
8 actively disputing a billing statement.

9 (d) CUC shall not disconnect all utility services (electrical power, water, and sewer)  
10 of a residential or commercial customer if the customer is only delinquent in the  
11 payment of one utility service.

12 (e) CUC shall be liable for all reconnection fees and costs if the Corporation  
13 disconnects a residential or a commercial customer in violation of any provision of  
14 this section.”

15 **Section 3. Amendment.** 4 CMC § 8145(a) is amended to read:

16 “§ 8145. Reconnection of Utility Services.

17 (a) Fees. The corporation shall ~~not~~ charge a reconnection fee of \$25.00  
18 for water utility services and \$25.00 for electric utility service that is greater than  
19 the actual average cost incurred by the corporation to reconnect a for residential  
20 consumers; provided that the reconnection fee does not exceed \$60.00. Actual  
21 cost includes the average total labor hours, administrative cost, parts,  
22 transportation and other costs necessary to reconnect a residential consumer. In  
23 the event both electrical and water services for residential consumers are  
24 disconnected at the same time due to nonpayment of both services, the  
25 reconnection fee for both electrical and water services shall be \$25.00 for the  
26 reconnection of both services. The reconnection fee for electrical or water  
27 service for commercial consumers shall be \$75.00 for each service.

SENATE BILL NO. 18-30, SS1

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

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

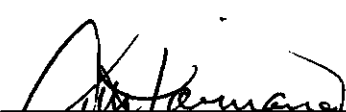
12           **Section 6. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the  
13 Governor or upon its becoming law without such approval.

**CERTIFIED BY:**



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**RALPH DLG. TORRES**  
**PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE**

**ATTESTED BY:**



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**JOVITA M. TAIMANAO**  
**SENATE LEGISLATIVE SECRETARY**

APPROVED this 21<sup>ST</sup> day of MARCH, 2014



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**ELOY S. INOS**  
**Governor**  
**Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands**