



## COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

**Eloy S. Inos**  
Governor

**Ralph DLG. Torres**  
Lieutenant Governor

Honorable Victor B. Hocog  
Senate President, The Senate  
Nineteenth Northern Marianas  
Commonwealth Legislature  
Saipan, MP 96950

14 AUG 2015

Honorable Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero  
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. 19-59, SD1, entitled, "To amend the Commonwealth Disaster Price Freeze Act of 1996; 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. 19-3**. Copies bearing my signature are forwarded for your reference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eloy S. Inos", with a stylized flourish at the end.

ELOY S. INOS

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



## *The Senate*

NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 500129  
SAIPAN, MP 96950

August 13, 2015

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

Dear Governor Inos:

I have the honor of transmitting herewith Senate Bill No. 19-59, SD1, entitled, "To amend the Commonwealth Disaster Price Freeze Act of 1996; 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. 19-59, SD1**

---

---

**AN ACT**

To amend the Commonwealth Disaster Price Freeze Act of 1996; and for other purposes.

**SENATE ACTS**

**Offered by Senator(s):** Arnold I. Palacios, Francisco M. Borja, Sixto K. Igisomar, Francisco Q. Cruz, Jude U. Hofschneider, Justo S. Quitugua, Steve K. Mesngon, Teresita A. Santos, Victor B. Hocog

**Date:** August 12, 2015

**Referred to:** None

**Standing Committee Report No.:** None

**Final Reading:** August 12, 2015

**SENATE ACTS**

**Referred to:** None

**Standing Committee Report No.:** None

**First and Final Reading:** August 12, 2015

---

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

**NINETEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE**

**FIRST EMERGENCY SESSION, 2015**

**S. B. NO. 19-59, SD1**

---

---

**AN ACT**

To amend the Commonwealth Disaster Price Freeze Act of 1996;  
and for other purposes.

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

1           **Section 1. Short Title.** This Act may be cited as the “Commonwealth Price Freeze  
2 Act of 2015.”

3           **Section 2. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that the Commonwealth  
4 Price Freeze Act does not presently allow the Governor to declare a price freeze for more  
5 than ten days during a state of major disaster. Given the overwhelming destruction of  
6 Typhoon Soudelor, the Commonwealth Price Freeze Act requires immediate amendment in  
7 order to more effectively protect the residents from predatory pricing activities by merchants  
8 following the typhoon.

9           The Legislature finds that there are several reports of price gouging throughout the  
10 community notwithstanding the price freeze order that was issued on August 3, 2015, and  
11 extended through August 13, 2015. The Legislature further finds that without an amendment  
12 to the Act, the necessary price freeze protection for the community will not be extended  
13 through the duration of the typhoon recovery efforts. Additionally, the Act must be amended  
14 to extend the price freeze to all items for sale and housing rentals including apartments and  
15 condos during the typhoon recovery. Accordingly, the purpose of this legislation is to amend  
16 the Commonwealth Price Freeze Act for more than ten days during a state of major disaster  
17 and to add other effects or items subject to the price freeze.

1           **Section 3. Amendment.** Subject to codification by the Law Revision Commission, 4  
2 CMC § 5142(a) is amended to read as follows:

3           “(a) Declaration. Upon the Governor’s declaring that the Commonwealth is in  
4 typhoon condition two, or tropical storm condition one, or in case of the Governor’s  
5 declaration of a state of significant emergency or a state of major disaster, pursuant to his or  
6 her constitutional power to do so, the Governor may declare a price freeze, which shall last  
7 for five days or until the Governor rescinds the price freeze, or the declaration of emergency  
8 or disaster is terminated. declares that the disaster has passed, whichever comes first.”

9           **Section 4. Repealer.** Subject to codification by the Law Revision Commission, 4  
10 CMC § 5142(b) is repealed in its entirety.

11           **Section 5. Amendment.** Subject to codification by the Law Revision Commission, 4  
12 CMC § 5142 (c) is repealed and reenacted to read as follows:

13           “(c) Effects. Upon the declaration of a price freeze, all prices of items for sale, and  
14 housing rentals including apartments and condos, shall be frozen until the Governor rescinds  
15 the price freeze or the declaration of emergency or disaster is terminated.”

16           **Section 6. Amendment.** Subject to the codification by the Law Revision  
17 Commission, 4 CMC § 5142(d) is amended to read as follows:

18           “(d) Price Increases Illegal During Duration of the Freeze. While a price freeze is in  
19 effect, it shall be illegal to raise the price of any ~~of the above listed~~ items for sale or housing  
20 rentals including apartments and condos.”

21           **Section 7. Amendment.** Subject to codification by the Law Revision Commission, 4  
22 CMC § 5143 is amended to read as follows:

23           “(a) Criminal Penalties. Any person who sells, or presents for sale, an item whose  
24 price has been raised or increases housing rentals including apartments and condos while a  
25 price freeze was in effect, shall be guilty of a felony, and shall be subject to a penalty of not  
26 more than \$10,000 or one ~~month~~ year of imprisonment, or both.

27           “(b) Civil Penalties. Any person who sells, or presents for sale, an item whose price  
28 has been raised or increases housing rentals including apartments and condos while a price

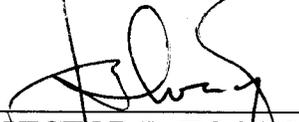
1 freeze was in effect, shall be liable for a civil penalty not to exceed \$2,500 for each  
2 violation.”

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

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

14       **Section 10. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the  
15 Governor or upon its becoming law without such approval.

CERTIFIED BY:



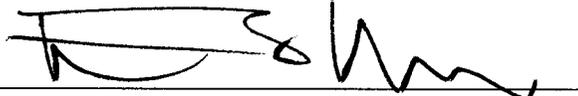
VICTOR B. HOCOG  
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ATTESTED BY:



TERESITA A. SANTOS  
SENATE LEGISLATIVE SECRETARY

Approved this 14<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2015



ELOY S. INOS

Governor

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands