

§ 2103. Duty to Promote Tourism.

The MVA shall promote tourism and attract tourists to the Northern Mariana Islands by:

(a) Organizing and conducting programs, advertising, and publicizing the Northern Mariana Islands and its attractions to the traveling public.

(b) Advising the Governor and Legislature on the need for development, expansion and improvement of existing tourist facilities, and recommending methods to increase visitor satisfaction.

(c) Encouraging the investment of private funds to improve tourist facilities in the Northern Mariana Islands.

(d) Planning, constructing and maintaining reception and information booths and other tourist facilities and providing staff for such facilities.

(e) Recommending procedures for expediting immigration and customs clearance for tourists.

(f) Improving communication with foreign visitors by assisting in the establishment of foreign language training programs.

(g) Promoting the indigenous arts and crafts of the Northern Mariana Islands.

(h) Promoting the preservation of the cultural heritage of the Northern Mariana Islands.

(i) Promoting beautification programs in the Northern Mariana Islands.

(j) Preparing information booklets in English and other appropriate languages, for distribution to all tourists.

(k) Collecting, compiling, and analyzing statistics and other data and information that may be helpful in carrying out the provisions of this chapter.

(l) Providing advice and technical assistance to tourism development organizations and tourism related enterprises.

(m) Encouraging and supporting the employment of local residents in the tourism industry.

(n) Coordinating efforts with all departments and agencies of the Commonwealth government including the mayors of each Senatorial district.

(o) Regulating the tour industry through the issuance of certifications to tour operators and tourist land/sea transport operators attesting to their compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements for engaging in the tour operator and tourist land/sea transport operators business and tour guides through the issuance of certifications attesting to a minimum proficient in the English language and their successful completion and training in the history, culture, and scenic attractions of the CNMI.

(p) Planning, designing, and proposing projects and programs to enhance the CNMI as a tourist destination on properties not located within 150 feet from high water pursuant to Article XI of the CNMI Constitution and PL 15-02, Section 105(e) without the expressed approval of the Department of Public Lands.*

(q) Planning, designing, and developing tourist-enhancement projects, including but not limited to recreational and public facilities that will attract potential visitors subject to the same restrictions in (p) of this Section. The MVA shall collaborate and work with the Division of Parks and Recreation (DPR) under the Department of Lands and Natural Resources (DLNR) and the Department of Public Lands (DPL) in developing facility designs and the overall improvement of the sites under the jurisdiction of the DPR and the Mayors of the respective senatorial districts pursuant to the designation conditions issued by the Department of Public Lands on public lands located within 150 feet of high water.*

(r) MVA may sponsor events and issue grants for construction projects and programs in the manner provided in this section to increase visitors' satisfaction, but shall not generate revenue for MVA from such events, construction projects, and programs on properties located in areas described in PL 15-02, Section 105(e) and codified as 1 CMC § 2806(e).*

* See the Commission comment below for details on the expiration of subsections (p) to (r).

Source: PL 11-15, § 5; subsection (o) added by PL 18-58 § 3 (July 31, 2014); PL 23-10, § 2 (Oct. 27, 2023).

Commission Comment: See the comment to [4 CMC § 2101](#).

PL 18-58 (July 31, 2014) contained, in addition to savings and severability clauses, the following Short Title and Findings provisions:

Section 1. Short Title. This Act may be cited as the “Tour Operator and Tour Guide Regulatory Act of 2013.”

Section 2. Findings. The Legislature finds that tourism is an essential component of the Commonwealth’s economy and an industry of great interest and importance. It must be harnessed as an engine of socio-economic growth and cultural affirmation to generate investment, foreign exchange and employment, and to continue to mold an enhanced sense of pride for all citizens.

Furthermore and towards this end, it is in the public’s interest to regulate the operation of tour guides and tour operator businesses to ensure the highest level of professionalism and service; and minimize negative impression of the Northern Marianas. In this regard, the Legislature thus finds that there is a need to develop a standard of conduct for tour guides and tour operators.

Legislative Findings of 2023 Amendment.—In addition to severability and savings clause provisions, PL 23-10 included the following Findings and Purpose section:

Section 1. Findings and Purpose. The Legislature finds that the tourism industry is vital to the growth of the Commonwealth’s economy. It is a

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major source of employment, income, and tax revenues, and confers benefits to both individuals and the community as a whole. Thus, the Legislature finds that the continued development of the tourism industry should be encouraged by providing a pathway for the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA) to tap into sources of funds that otherwise would not be available to it if its duties are not expanded to include specific legal duties to act. The Legislature also finds that the duties stated under 4 CMC §2103 do not fully encompass the actions Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA) may undertake in promoting and attracting tourists to the Northern Mariana Islands. Therefore, MVA's duties need to be expanded to include duties that qualify MVA for available grants without permanently shifting authorities and duties from agencies already tasked with the same. Now, therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to temporarily expand the authority of MVA, subject to the limitations provided in Article XI of the CNMI Constitution, and designate conditions set forth by the Department of Public Lands on public properties located within 150 feet of high water as provided in PL 15-02 up to the year 2027.

Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to amend 4 CMC § 2103 to enhance MVA's promoting capabilities in attracting tourists to visit the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands up to the same day that this Act becomes effective in 2027.

Expiration.—PL 23-10, § 5, provided as follows: “Section 5. Effective Date. This Act [adding subsections (p) to (q)] shall take effect upon its approval by the Governor or becoming law without such approval and shall expire 4 years from the date this Act becomes law.”