



**RALPH DLG. TORRES**  
Governor

**ARNOLD I. PALACIOS**  
Lieutenant Governor

COMMONWEALTH of the NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS  
**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

**19 DEC 2019**

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

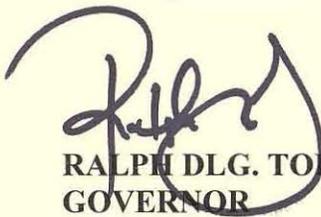
The Honorable Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao  
Speaker, House of Representatives  
Twenty-First Northern Marianas  
Commonwealth Legislature  
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Mr. President and Mr. Speaker:

This is to inform you that I have signed into law **Senate Bill No. 21-10, SD1**, entitled, "To amend 2 CMC § 4308 to mandate the Department of Public Lands to issue the Deed of Conveyance within 45 calendar days to homesteaders who had entered the homestead and complied with the laws and regulations pertaining to homesteads; and for other purposes.", which was passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Twenty-First Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

This bill becomes **Public Law No. 21-15**. Copies bearing my signature are forwarded for your reference.

Sincerely,



**RALPH DLG. TORRES**  
GOVERNOR

cc: Lt. Governor; Press Secretary; Department of Public Lands; Public Auditor; Special Assistant for Administration; Special Assistant for Programs and Legislative Review



THE SENATE  
Twenty-First Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature  
P. O. Box 500129  
Saipan, MP 96950

November 13, 2019

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. 21-10, SD1, entitled: "To amend 2 CMC § 4308 to mandate the Department of Public Lands to issue the Deed of Conveyance within 45 calendar days to homesteaders who had entered the homestead and complied with the laws and regulations pertaining to homesteads; and for other purposes," which was passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Twenty-First Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dolores S. Bernutes".

Dolores S. Bernutes  
Senate Clerk

Attachments



**THE SENATE**  
**TWENTIETH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 21-10, SD1**

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**AN ACT**

To amend 2 CMC § 4308 to mandate the Department of Public Lands to issue the Deed of Conveyance within 45 calendar days to homesteaders who had entered the homestead and complied with the laws and regulations pertaining to homesteads; and for other purposes.

***SENATE ACTION***

**Offered by Senator(s):** Francisco Q. Cruz

**Date:** February 07, 2019

**Referred to:** Committee on Resources, Economic Development and Programs

**Standing Committee Report No.:** 21-17 adopted on 7/18/19

**First and Final Reading:** July 18, 2019

***HOUSE ACTION***

**Referred to:** Committee Natural Resources

**Standing Committee Report No.:** 21-44 adopted on 10/28/19

**First and Final Reading:** October 31, 2019

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

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



THE SENATE  
TWENTY-FIRST NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION, 2019

S. B. NO. 21-10, SD1

AN ACT

To amend 2 CMC § 4308 to mandate the Department of Public Lands to issue the Deed of Conveyance within 45 calendar days to homesteaders who had entered the homestead and complied with the laws and regulations pertaining to homesteads; and for other purposes.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE TWENTY-FIRST NORTHERN MARIANAS  
COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:**

1           **Section 1. Findings and Purpose.** The Department of Public Lands (DPL) is  
2 mandated under 2 CMC § 4306 to issue homestead permits authorizing an eligible person  
3 to enter and improve the land in accordance with the prescribed regulations. The  
4 homesteader is required under NMIAC § 145-20.4-120 improve the lot within 120 days  
5 and complete a single family residence and reside in it as a principal place of residence  
6 within two years after the homestead permit has been issued.

7           However, Public Law 20-05 amended 2 CMC §§ 4308 and 4335(e), which  
8 provides that the Deed of Conveyance for the homestead shall not be issued until the three  
9 years from the date of entry have expired and certification of compliance with all laws,  
10 rules and regulations pertaining to homesteads; and also authorizes the DPL to waive the  
11 requirement that the homesteader must construct a home on the homestead upon a showing  
12 that the construction permit cannot be obtained due to the lack of power, water, or waste  
13 water infrastructure.

14           The Legislature finds that the long delays in allowing the homesteaders to improve  
15 their assigned lots affect long term planning with respect to building a family home in the

SENATE BILL NO. 21-10, SD1

1 Commonwealth. The West San Jose homestead in Tinian is a specific example in which  
2 the homestead lots were drawn in 2009, but the permits were not issued until five years  
3 later. The delay in issuing the homestead permits also delays the issuance of the Deed of  
4 Conveyance.

5 The purpose of this Act is to amend 2 CMC § 4308 so that the Deed of  
6 Conveyance is issued within 45 days after the three years from the date of entry  
7 requirement is completed and DPL has certified that the homesteader is in compliance with  
8 all the other requirements.

9 **Section 2. Amendment.** 2 CMC § 4308 is amended to read:

10 **“§ 4308. Deeds of Conveyance.**

11 Deeds of conveyance shall be issued by the Department of Public Lands for  
12 homestead land entered under the provisions of this chapter; provided, that no such deed  
13 shall be issued until the expiration of three years from the date of entry and the execution  
14 of a certification by the Secretary of the Department of Public Lands certifying that the  
15 homesteader has complied with all laws, rules and regulations appertaining to the  
16 homestead. The Secretary’s certification is final and not subject to review. The Secretary  
17 of the Department of Public Lands shall issue the deed of conveyance within ~~two years~~ 45  
18 calendar days of the time the homesteader becomes eligible to receive the deed of  
19 conveyance under the provisions of this chapter, but waiving the completion of a single  
20 family residential dwelling structure requirement pursuant to 2 CMC § 4335(e). Such deed  
21 of conveyance shall convey to the homesteader any and all rights of the Commonwealth  
22 government to the property, excepting such rights as are reserved by law or by permit.”

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

27 **Section 4. Savings Clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein shall not  
28 be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired under  
29 statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted under the statutes.

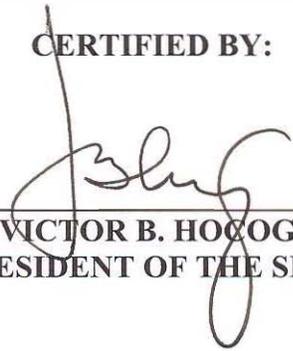
**SENATE BILL NO. 21-10, SD1**

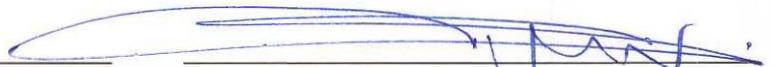
1 Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted under or pursuant  
2 to prior law. The enactment of the Act shall not have the effect of terminating, or in any  
3 way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal, which shall already be in existence on the  
4 date this Act becomes effective.

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

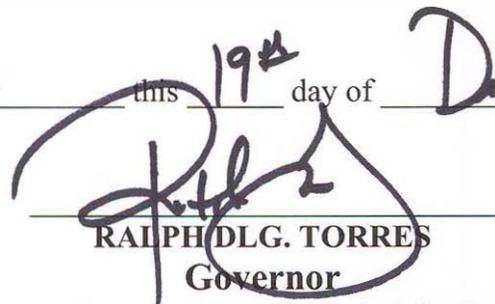
**CERTIFIED BY:**

**ATTESTED BY:**

  
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**VICTOR B. HOCOG**  
**PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE**

  
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**SIXTO K. IGISOMAR**  
**SENATE LEGISLATIVE SECRETARY**

*Approved* this 19<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2019

  
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**RALPH DLG. TORRES**  
**Governor**

**Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands**