Seventeenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Session, 2011         H. B. No. 17-157

A BILL FOR AN ACT

TO MANDATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH FILM, VIDEO AND MEDIA OFFICE THAT IS ESTABLISHED WITHIN THE MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY (MVA).

BE IT ENACTED BY THE SEVENTEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

Section 1. Short Title. This Act may be cited as the "Commonwealth Film & Media Amendment Act of 2011."

Section 2. Findings and Purpose. The Legislature finds that the Commonwealth has been overlooked for film and media locations partly due to the lack of an active Film and TV Media Office. This has been the case for two major movies that depicted World War II action, "Wind Talkers" and "Oba: The Last Samurai," which were filmed in Hawaii and Thailand.

The Legislature finds that the producers of these movies should have been actively lobbied to shoot these movies on Saipan, where the historical action actually took place. Besides, the actual locations being here on Saipan, the CNMI and Saipan offer ideal weather conditions with clear sunny skies for filming. For example, "Daijobu, My Friend," starring Peter Fonda, was filmed here on Saipan
in 1982, and it was responsible for excellent media exposure and a large budget
spent on the island for two months.

The Legislature finds that the MVA has not filled the position of Film
Office Manager, which needs immediate attention, in order to capitalize on the
tremendous tourism, media and financial benefits that the Commonwealth can
gain through the film and media industry.

Section 3. Amendment. Title 4, Division 2, Chapter 1 (Marianas Visitors
Authority), Article 5, Sections 2151(a) and 2156 of the Commonwealth Code is
amended as follows:

§ 2151. Commonwealth Film, Video, and Media Office

Established.

(a) There is established within the Marianas Visitors
Authority (MVA), a Commonwealth Film, Video and Media Office, to be
referred to as the Northern Mariana Islands Film Office (film office). A
Film Office Manager, selected through an interview process by the MVA
Managing Director shall administer the film office. The Film Office
Manager shall have substantial experience in film, video and media fields
and shall be exempt from the civil service system and shall be hired on a
one two-year government contract with an option to renew one two more
years.

§ 2156. Funding and Staffing of Film Office.
Supplemental funding for the operation of the film office shall be appropriated by the Legislature. MVA is authorized to hire up to two additional staff for the film office. MVA shall restructure their budget to hire a Film Office Manager. MVA will support the Film Office Manager with its existing staff and resources until such a time that the Legislature appropriates supplemental funding.

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

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

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