



Office of the Speaker
THERESE M. TERLAJE

I Mina'trentai Sais na Liheslaturan Guåhan | 36th Guam Legislature
Committee on Health, Land, Justice and Culture

Speaker Terlaje Continues Push for Permanent Relief at the Gas Pumps

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (June 13, 2022 – Hagåtña, Guam) – On Friday, June 10, 2022, the committee report for Bill No. 261-36 was being routed to members of the Committee on Appropriations. Speaker Terlaje introduced Bill No. 261-36 on February 22, 2022, which proposes a permanent repeal of provisions in the Liquid Fuel Tax bringing relief of twenty-three cents (\$.23) per gallon of gas purchased at the pumps for every consumer. Bill No. 261-36 needs two more votes in order for it to be eligible for placement on the session agenda this month. The members who have not yet voted on the committee report are Vice Speaker Tina Muna Barnes, Senator Amanda Shelton, Senator Clynton Ridgell, Senator Jose “Pedo” Terlaje, and Senator Mary Torres.

A strikingly similar liquid fuel tax bill by the Committee Chairman was introduced 62 days after Bill No. 261-36 was introduced, 17 days after the public hearing on Bill No. 261-36, and 12 days after Speaker Terlaje sent a draft substitute Bill No. 261-36 to the Chairman for consideration. Speaker Terlaje has been urging the Committee Chairman to make any amendments necessary and report out Bill No. 261-36 so that relief for gas prices could go into effect immediately. Instead, a competing bill was introduced and has already been voted out of the Committee on Appropriations by members of the Committee. The only fundamental difference between Bill No. 261-36 and the Chairman’s bill is that Substitute Bill No. 261-36 repeals liquid fuel taxes permanently as opposed to the Chairman’s bill that places a 180-day moratorium on liquid fuel taxes.

False assertions have been made in recent media coverage about Speaker Terlaje’s Bill 261-36 with the Speaker clearing the record stating, “My liquid fuel tax bills never attempted to direct federal money for any potential gaps left by repealing the gas taxes, nor would it short any government agency funding for FY 2022 or beyond. These statements mislead the people of Guam on the intent and actual provisions contained within the bill.”

In addition, recommended changes were sent on April 12th by the Speaker to the Committee for consideration that would assuage concerns made at the public hearing, but would not have made any substantive changes to mechanics of the bill. With the changes to Bill No. 261-36, the fiscal impact is estimated to be \$8 M annually and only \$2.8 M for the last four months of

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June 13, 2022

FY 2022, based on calculations using initial estimates provided by the Department of Revenue and Taxation.

“It was clear from the public hearing on Bill No. 261-36 in April when the General Fund was showing \$61 M in excess of adopted revenues that my bill was not going to impact the FY 2022 appropriations of any agencies funded by liquid fuel taxes. This is further evidenced with the competing bill by the Chairman which temporarily repeals the liquid fuel tax in FY 2022 and for a portion of FY 2023. If there was truly a threat to the agencies’ budgets as asserted in the media, he would not have introduced a bill to temporarily repeal the liquid fuel taxes using the same funding source (i.e. FY 2022 excess general fund revenues) as Bill No. 261-36,” stated Speaker Terlaje.

The Speaker had attempted to consider Bill 261-36 during the April and May sessions but the committee report was not provided by the Appropriations Chair. Speaker Terlaje plans to call the next session on June 28 and will seek her colleagues’ support for swift passage of gas tax relief measures.

“It is our duty as policymakers to decide on tax policy with diligence and responsibility, not by political gamesmanship and misleading statements. Gas prices have been rising since the beginning of the year and we have had the opportunity to provide relief to our residents, families, and businesses for four months now. I urge the people of Guam to call their Senators to reconsider their position on providing permanent relief to all gas consumers and asking committee members to vote to report out Bill 261-36,” stated Speaker Terlaje.

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