

I Mina'trentai Siette Na Liheslaturan Guåhan
BILL STATUS

BILL NO.	SPONSOR	TITLE	DATE INTRODUCED	DATE REFERRED	CMTE REFERRED	PUBLIC HEARING DATE	DATE COMMITTEE REPORT FILED	FISCAL NOTES	NOTES
61-37 (COR)	Frank Blas Jr.	AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FIFTEEN MILLION DOLLARS (\$15,000,000) FROM THE EXCESS GENERAL FUND REVENUES REPORTED IN THE JANUARY 2023 CONSOLIDATED REVENUE EXPENDITURE REPORT (CRER) TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION FOR AN EXTENSION OF THE LOCAL EMPLOYERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LEAP) TO ASSIST BUSINESSES THAT CONTINUE TO STRUGGLE WITH THE DEVASTATING ECONOMIC IMPACT BROUGHT ON BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND COMPOUNDED BY INFLATION.	3/1/23 8:43 a.m.						

I MINA'TRENTAI SIETTE NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN
2023 (FIRST) Regular Session

Bill No. 61-37 (COR)

Introduced by:

Frank F. Blas Jr. 

AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FIFTEEN MILLION DOLLARS (\$15,000,000) FROM THE EXCESS GENERAL FUND REVENUES REPORTED IN THE JANUARY 2023 CONSOLIDATED REVENUE EXPENDITURE REPORT (CRER) TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION FOR AN EXTENSION OF THE LOCAL EMPLOYERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LEAP) TO ASSIST BUSINESSES THAT CONTINUE TO STRUGGLE WITH THE DEVASTATING ECONOMIC IMPACT BROUGHT ON BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND COMPOUNDED BY INFLATION

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF GUAM:

Section 1. Legislative Findings and Intent

I Liheslaturan Guåhan finds that the actions and restrictions that were deemed necessary to combat the COVID-19 pandemic in Guam caused devastating and severe economic hardship to almost every business on our island. To assist our businesses in their struggle, Public Law 36-65 was enacted on December 23, 2021 to establish a Local Employers Assistance Program that provided much needed financial assistance. The funding from that program was key to helping hundreds of businesses that were on the verge of permanently closing to keeping their doors opened and their thousands of workers employed.

1 In the Governor's message to the Speaker on the signing of the public law,
2 she wrote:

3 "The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has had prolonged adverse
4 impacts on our island's people, economy, and businesses. We have
5 lost members in our communities, and many businesses have had no
6 other choice but to permanently close their doors. Without our
7 people, the pandemic has severely affected our island's ability to
8 provide high-quality services and goods. For our surviving
9 businesses, many of their operations have been destabilized or
10 severely interrupted. There is no question that our island continues
11 to undergo significant hardships. While we may not be able to
12 predict when this pandemic will end, we know that we can take
13 actions to further minimize its impacts."

14 The Governor further wrote:

15 "It is our hope that this appropriation (as provided with Public Law
16 36-65) will help stabilize and revitalize sections of our industries that
17 were hurt the most during the pandemic. As an administration, we
18 see the hard work that our community members and businesses are
19 doing to fight this pandemic. In order to maintain the good work of
20 our island, it is imperative we continue supporting our community
21 through this trying time."

22 *I Liheslatura* finds that the hardship the Governor wrote about still continues
23 and with the inflation in the price commodities and services that have taken place
24 since then, it has become even more difficult for businesses to sustain their
25 operations and keep their workers employed.

26 *I liheslatura* also finds that while our island is no longer under a public health
27 state of emergency, a state of emergency continues to exist in saving the businesses

1 that thousands of residents depend on to provide their means to earn an income, our
2 tourism industry, which is a major component of our economy, needs to rely on to
3 attract and service the visitors we need to bring back, and the tax revenues our
4 government needs to continue to provide the services to our community.
5 Furthermore, the cost of goods and services needed to be procured so a business can
6 operate has significantly increased since the time period that businesses were forced
7 to restrict their operations or close their doors. This inflation has added to the hurdles
8 that businesses need to address to restart or remain open and to stay alive.

9 *I Liheslatura* further finds that in the Consolidated Revenue Expenditure
10 Report for December 2022 released by the Bureau of Budget & Management
11 Research, an excess of Twenty Nine Million One Hundred Five Thousand One
12 Hundred Dollars (\$29,105,100) of actual over adopted revenues was reported for the
13 first quarter of fiscal year 2023. These revenues were received from the businesses
14 and tax payers on Guam. It is the belief of *I Liheslatura* that the revenues received
15 by the government of Guam in excess of what was adopted for the government to
16 spend should be utilized in the best and most economical sense. Providing a portion
17 of the excess revenues to our businesses that need help to recover and continue to
18 drive our economy is prudent and beneficial for our island as a whole.

19 It is therefore the intent of *I Liheslatura* to provide funding from the excess
20 revenues received from what was adopted as Fiscal Year 2023 revenues to extend
21 and continue the Local Employers Assistance Program to financially assist
22 businesses that are still struggling to keep their doors open and our people employed.

23 **Section 2. Appropriation.**

24 **(a)** The sum of Fifteen Million Dollars (\$15,000,000) from the excess General
25 Fund revenues as reported in the January 2023 Consolidated Revenue Expenditure
26 Report is hereby appropriated to the Department of Administration for the extension

1 and continuance of the Local Employers Assistance Program, as established by
2 Executive Order 2021-25, or as amended thereafter.

3 **(b)** Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Department of
4 Administration, working with the Guam Economic Development Authority, shall
5 extend the benefits of the Local Employers Assistance Program until all the funds
6 provided for the program are expended.

7 **Section 3. Effective Date.** This Act shall be effective immediately upon
8 enactment.