



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila



TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 9184

Introduced by Representative MARLESA “DOC MARLY” HOFER-HASIM

EXPLANATORY NOTE

From both a clinical and legislative perspective, access to natural environments must be recognized as a fundamental determinant of health. As a doctor, I have seen how lifestyle and environmental factors directly influence disease prevention and overall well-being. The World Health Organization affirms that green spaces play a vital role in promoting physical activity, reducing the burden of noncommunicable diseases, and improving physiological health outcomes, including blood pressure regulation and stress reduction. These are not abstract benefits, but tangible, measurable health gains that translate into healthier communities and reduced strain on healthcare systems.

As a legislator, this medical evidence compels us to act. Public policy must ensure equitable access to safe and accessible green spaces, particularly in underserved communities where health disparities are most pronounced. Studies consistently show that exposure to natural environments reduces the prevalence of depression, anxiety, and chronic stress-related conditions. Integrating green infrastructure into urban planning is therefore not merely an environmental initiative, but a strategic, evidence-based public health intervention.

Furthermore, both the World Health Organization and a growing body of contemporary systematic reviews highlight that access to natural environments contributes significantly to mental health, with evidence showing reduced prevalence of depression, anxiety, and chronic stress-related conditions. These findings reinforce the position that equitable access to safe and accessible green spaces should be regarded not merely as an environmental amenity, but as an evidence-based public health intervention essential to advancing health promotion and equity.

Beyond their direct therapeutic value, parks serve as critical ecological infrastructures that deliver health-protective ecosystem services. These include the improvement of air quality, regulation of urban temperature, and mitigation of environmental pollutants factors that are strongly correlated with decreased risks of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.

Moreover, parks and green spaces are generally free and publicly accessible, rendering them equitable and cost-effective complements to conventional health promotion and disease prevention strategies for Filipinos. By fostering regular interaction with natural environments, these spaces enable individuals and communities to attain sustained physical, mental, and environmental health benefits, thereby contributing to an enhanced quality of life.

This bill seeks to establish a National Public Parks System aimed at conserving and protecting natural resources, preserving cultural and historical heritage, and promoting public recreation in a manner that advances population health and overall well-being. It likewise underscores the vital role of Local Government Units (LGUs) in identifying, designating, and developing urban areas and open spaces within their respective jurisdictions into accessible, safe, and health-promoting public parks.

This measure was filed in the Senate by Senator Mark Villar, Senator Jinggoy Estrada, Senator Loren Legarda and Senator Francis Pangilinan.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



MARLESA “DOC MARLY” HOFER-HASIM
Representative, 2nd District of Zamboanga Sibugay



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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL PUBLIC PARKS SYSTEM AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

1 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** - This Act shall be known as the "*National Parks Act.*"

2
3 **SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** - It is therefore the policy of the state to protect and
4 maintain the health and well-being of the Filipino people through the establishment and
5 preservation of parks and open spaces. To this end, the State recognizes parks and open spaces as
6 valuable assets, and as such it shall:

7 a.) Establish the Philippine National Public Parks System aimed to conserve the scenery,
8 natural and historical objects, and to provide for their enjoyment in such manner and by such means
9 as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations; and

10 b.) Recognize that parks and open spaces contribute to human health and well-being, social
11 cohesion or identity, tourism, biodiversity, air quality, carbon sequestration, water management,
12 and cooling of the environment.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms* - For the purpose of this Act, the following terms are hereby defined as follows:

- a.) Administrator - refers to the Chief Executive Officer and Head of the National and Local Public Parks Authority (NALPA) Secretariat as defined in Sec. 9 of this Act.
- b.) Board - refers to the NALPA Board as defined in Sec. 5 of this Act.
- c.) National and Local Public Parks - refer to any land laid out as a public garden and/or used for public recreation. This does not refer to national shrines administered by the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office.
- d.) National and Local Public Parks System or the System - refers to the system of parks and open spaces as defined under Chapter 4 of this Act.
- e.) NIPAS - refers to the National Integrated Protected Areas System as defined in Republic Act No. 7586, as amended or the NIPAS Act.
- f.) NPDC - refers to the National Parks Development Committee created by Executive Order 30 series of 1963.
- g.) NPF or NPFI - refers to the Nayong Pilipino Foundation Inc., a government-owned and controlled corporation registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission on May 7, 1969, as a non-stock, non-profit corporation. Presidential Decree No. 37 established the Nayong Pilipino Foundation on November 6, 1972.
- h.) Protected Areas - refers to the Protected Areas as defined under the NIPAS Act.
- i.) Secretariat - refers to the NALPA Secretariat as defined under Sec. 7 of this Act.

Chapter 2

Establishment of the National and Local Public Parks Authority

Sec. 4. *Composition of the Authority.* - The Authority shall be composed of the Board and the Secretariat.

Sec. 5. *Composition of the Board.* - The NALPA Board shall be composed of the representatives of the following:

- 1. Secretary of Tourism as Chairperson;
- 2. Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources Co-Chairperson (who shall be officially represented by the Director of the Biodiversity Management Bureau);
- 3. Secretary of Public Works and Highways as Member;
- 4. Secretary of Agriculture as Member;
- 5. Secretary of Interior and Local Government as Member;

1 6. Director-General of the TIEZA Secretariat.

2 In addition, the President of the Philippines shall appoint the following members
3 from the private sector:

4 1. Two representatives from a recognized professional architectural organization; and

5 2. Two representatives, from the academe, preferably in urban planning and development.
6

7 As soon as all the members of the private sector are appointed, they shall organize
8 themselves and that the term of office of one-third (1/3) of their number shall expire every year.
9 The member from the private sector appointed thereafter to fill vacancies caused by the expiration
10 of terms shall hold office for three (3) years.
11

12 The President of the Philippines may, however, revise the membership of the NALPA
13 Board, whenever the President deems it necessary for the effective performance of the Board's
14 functions through an administrative order.

15 The NALPA Board shall meet at least twice a year, or as frequently as may be deemed
16 necessary by its Chairperson. In the absence of the Chairperson, a Co- Chairperson shall preside.
17 The internal rules of the NALPA Board shall be promulgated during its first organizational
18 meeting.

19 The benefits, privileges, and emoluments of the Board shall be consistent with the existing
20 laws and rules.
21

22 **Sec. 6. Powers and Functions of the Board** - The Authority shall primarily be responsible
23 for the National and Local Public Parks System including the establishment of policies, plans, and
24 programs taking into consideration the following:

25 a) The State policy declared herein giving due consideration to the establishment and
26 maintenance of national and urban parks, open and green spaces, and recreational facilities;

27 b) The implementation of the above-mentioned policy requires the coordination and
28 cooperation of policies, plans, and programs of different concerned sectors of Philippine society;
29 and

30 c) Equal and active participation of the national government and its appropriate agencies,
31 the LGUs, the academe, and the private sector shall be made the rule in order to ensure that the
32 National and Local Public Parks System shall be fully established and maintained.

33 The Board, shall have the following powers:

1 a) Establish minimum quotas for all LGUs for the designation of municipal and city lands
2 for public parks, where applicable;

3 b) Manage the country's National and Local Public Parks system, and in doing so shall
4 guide and assist other government agencies and entities, and the LGUs in the planning,
5 establishment, and management of parks that will be included in the System;

6 c) Promulgate, after due consultation with concerned groups and entities, policies, plans,
7 programs, and guidelines as may be necessary for the effective implementation, of this Act and
8 the establishment of the National and Local Public Parks System;

9 d) Establish and manage the National and Local Public Parks Institute, which shall serve
10 as the national center for park administration, management, and maintenance training, research,
11 and development;

12 e) In coordination with the Biodiversity Management Bureau, shall make Protected Areas
13 accessible to the public for recreational purposes;

14 f) Organize and constitute standing committees, subsidiary groups, or technical working
15 groups for the efficient integration and coordination of local open spaces and urban parks;

16 g) Exact reasonable fees and charges for such services provided and training conducted
17 and retain such earnings for its own use, subject to guidelines promulgated by the Authority;

18 h) Create, when deemed necessary, an Advisory Committee which shall provide expert and
19 technical advice to the Board to be chosen from the academe and the private sector: Provided, That
20 in case the Advisory Committee is created, the board is hereby authorized to set aside a portion of
21 its appropriation for its operation; and

22 i) Carry out any and all other functions characteristic of public institutions of similar
23 mandate and national scope, in line with prevailing international principles and best practices.

24
25 **Sec. 7. *The NALPA Secretariat.*** - The NALPA Secretariat, an independent agency of the
26 executive department, shall have the primary mission of providing proactive leadership in the
27 continuous development of systematic approaches as well as measures to maintain and manage the
28 National and Local Public Parks system, and shall have the following functions and
29 responsibilities:

30 a) Establish and maintain a planning process and formulate a national parks development
31 plan in which all concerned groups and entities at various levels participate;

32 b) Provide analytical inputs to policy decision-making of the Authority on the allocation
33 of resources and institutional roles and responsibilities as shall be embodied in the annual national
34 parks plans;

1 c) Recommend measures, and implement the same upon approval by the Authority, for the
2 effective and efficient implementation of the national parks development plan;

3 d) Propose to the Authority the specific allocation of resources for the programs and
4 projects it shall undertake pursuant to the approved national parks development plan;

5 e) Submit to the Authority periodic reports on the progress and accomplishment of work
6 programs of implementation of plans and policies; and

7 f) Perform such other functions and duties as may be assigned by the Board.
8

9 **Sec. 8. *The Dissolution of NPDC and NPF and Transfer to NALPA Secretariat.*** - The
10 NPDC and NPF are hereby dissolved and all their powers, functions, responsibilities, all applicable
11 fund and appropriations, records, assets, and properties are hereby transferred to the NALPA
12 Secretariat.
13

14 **Sec. 9. *The NALPA Administrator and Chief Executive Officer.*** - The NALPA Secretariat
15 shall be headed by an Administrator, who shall likewise be a member of the Board. The
16 Administrator shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines and shall enjoy the benefits,
17 privileges and emoluments equivalent to the rank of Undersecretary.
18

19 As Chief Executive Officer of the Secretariat, the Administrator shall exercise general
20 supervision and control over its technical and administrative personnel. The Administrator shall
21 have the power to recommend to the Authority the structural organization and the personnel
22 complement of the Secretariat. Furthermore, the Administrator shall appoint such personnel
23 necessary to carry out the objectives, policies, and functions of the Authority subject to Civil
24 Service laws, rules and regulations.

25 The administrator may call upon other instrumentalities or entities of the government, non-
26 government, and civic organizations for assistance in terms of the use of their facilities and
27 resources for the management and administration of any park in the System. This authority
28 includes the power to call on the Philippine National Police to maintain peace and order in any
29 park in the System.

30 The performance of the functions of the Administrator under this Act shall, in no case,
31 result in the diminution of the powers of the LGUs to establish their own parks or develop their
32 own open or green spaces.

1 **Sec. 10. Deputy Administrators.** - The Administrator shall be assisted by four (4) Deputy
2 Administrators for (i) Research and Development, (ii) National and Local Public Parks Operations,
3 (iii) Local Public Parks Operations, and (iv) Park Architecture & Planning.

4 The Deputy Administrators shall enjoy the benefits, privileges, and emoluments equivalent
5 to the rank of Assistant Secretary.

6
7 **Sec. 11. Regional Administrators.** - The Regional Administrators shall be under the direct
8 control of the Administrator and shall oversee the operations of National and Local Public Parks
9 at the regional level.

10 The Regional Administrators shall enjoy the benefit, privileges, and emoluments
11 equivalent to the rank of a Regional Director, and shall provide technical assistance, particularly
12 to local government units for effective supervision, coordination, and monitoring of national and
13 local parks within their localities, and their integration to the National Public Parks System.

14 **Sec. 12. Organization Divisions.** - The Secretariat shall have the following Divisions
15 which shall be headed by Division Chiefs:

- 16 a) Administrative Division;
- 17 b) Finance Division;
- 18 c) Programs and Public Affairs Division;
- 19 d) Internal Audit Division;
- 20 e) Security and Safety Division;
- 21 f) Information and Communications Technology Division; and
- 22 g) Cultural & Heritage Preservation Division.

23
24 The following Divisions shall be headed by the Deputies Administrators:

- 25 a) National Public Parks Operations & Management;
- 26 b) Local Public Park Operations & Management;
- 27 C) Research & Development; and
- 28 d) Park Architecture & Planning.

Sec. 13. *Personnel Training, Development and Performance incentives.* - The Authority shall undertake training and development programs to upgrade the capabilities of its personnel in its various functions. Personnel shall be allowed to train or study outside the Institute, in the Philippines, or abroad, on official time, subject to the needs of the service, upon approval of the Administrator.

A system of monetary incentives shall be established to reward the superior performance and milestones of professional development on the part of management and administrative and technical personnel, subject to the approval of the Department of Budget and Management and, where applicable, to the Civil Service Commission.

Sec. 14. *Consultants and Technical Assistance, Publication, and Research.* - In pursuing its objectives, the Authority is hereby authorized to set aside a portion of its appropriation for the hiring of services of qualified consultants, and private organizations for research work and publication in the field of national and urban parks, and open and green spaces. It shall avail itself of the services of other agencies of the Government as may be required.

Sec. 15. *Privileges of the Authority.* - In line with the declared policy and the avowed purposes of this Act, and to ensure its independence and autonomy, the NALPA Secretariat shall be attached solely for budgetary coordination and related purposes to the Office of the President: The Secretariat shall:

a) Be classified as a National Government Agency, primarily for administrative purposes, including receiving its annual budget from the general appropriations of the National Government to cover appropriately the entirety of its mandated operations and activities;

b) Be considered as higher in level than a Bureau or Bureau-level agency but beneath that of a Department or Department-level agency, primarily for administrative purposes as to staffing pattern and compensation scales; and

c) Enjoy such privileges and special rules characteristics of both a Government-Owned or Controlled Corporation and a State University or College wherever possible and which, in any and all cases, promote the objectives of this Act; and that special rules as may be necessary to this effect be formulated and appropriately promulgated by the NALPA, the Department of Budget and Management, the Commission on Audit, and other concerned agencies.

Chapter 3

The National Parks Institute

Sec. 16. *The Creation of the National Parks Institute.* - There is hereby created the National Parks Institute of the Philippines which shall be under the supervision of the Board. The Institute shall serve as the training and development arm of the Authority. The Institute shall be

1 headed by a Director. In coordination with CHED and state universities and colleges, and other
2 private universities and institutions, the Institute shall establish a unique training course aimed at
3 supporting the purposes of this Act, and shall:

4 a) Formulate and implement training programs for all personnel of NALPA and LGUs,
5 other agencies, and private entities and institutions who wish to train with the Institute;

6 b) Formulate and implement select mandatory and specialized courses, and for that purpose
7 shall be allowed to issue diplomas and technical certificates under such rules as will be coordinated
8 with CHED and TESDA;

9 c) Develop and implement research and development to support NALPA and for
10 educational training programs; and

11 d) Perform such other related functions as may be prescribed by NALPA and the Board.

12 **Chapter 4**

13 **The National Parks System**

14 **Sec. 17. Study and Planning of National Parks, Urban Parks, Open Spaces and**
15 **Recreational-Area Facilities.** - Within 3 years from the effectivity of this Act, the Authority shall
16 make a comprehensive study of the National Parks, Urban Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreational-
17 Area Facilities programs of the national government and the LGUs and of areas of land throughout
18 the Philippines that are or may be chiefly valuable to National Parks, Urban Parks, Open Spaces,
19 and Recreational-Area Facilities.

20 The report shall be submitted to the Board who shall be empowered to declare specifically
21 identified areas as either National Parks, Urban Parks, Open Spaces, or Recreational-Area
22 Facilities.

23 **Sec. 18. Identification of National Parks.** - Notwithstanding any law or proclamation to
24 the contrary, the following parks are hereby considered National Parks and shall be under the
25 authority of the Authority: (1) Rizal Park, and (2) Paco Park.

26 Their Administrator and Provincial Administrators are strictly mandated to investigate,
27 study, and continually monitor areas whose over-all circumstances exhibit qualities of national
28 significance and that may have the potential to become a NALPA Park.

29 **Sec. 19. Acquisition of Land.** - In the exercise of its power under this Act, the Authority
30 through the Administrator shall have the power to acquire land and interests in land within the
31 boundary of any NALPA Park. In the same manner and for the establishment of an identified
32 National Park, the power of eminent domain shall be established through the Administrator, or by
33 any of its Deputies or Provincial Administrators.

1 **Sec. 20. *Creation of Urban Parks and Open Spaces in LGUs.*** - Within the period provided
2 by the Authority, LGUs shall be obliged to identify Urban Parks and Open Spaces within their
3 jurisdictions. Identified areas may either become NALPA Administered Parks or maintain their
4 nature as Local Parks at the discretion of the LGU.

5 The Authority is hereby mandated to enter into cooperative agreement with colleges and
6 universities, in partnership with LGUs and other agencies, to establish cooperative study units to
7 conduct multi-disciplinary research and develop integrated information products on the resources
8 in the NALPA Parks or the LGU of which the NALPA Park is located for possible commercial
9 production or utilization.

10 **Sec. 21. *Delineation of Authority and Coverage.*** - Subject to the IRR and dependent on
11 the categorization of the land or an area, a nature reserve or a declared protected area under the
12 NIPAS shall continue. to be under the jurisdiction of the DENR. All other parks established or
13 may be established may be covered under this Act.

14 **Sec. 22. *Administration, Management, and Funding of NALPA Parks.*** – Subject to
15 reasonable restrictions under the IRR, the general public is hereby to be granted free admission to
16 all NALPA Parks. However, the Authority may levy appropriate fees for special activities or
17 programs.

18 **Sec. 23. *Retention of Income.*** - The Authority is hereby authorized to retain the entirety
19 of its income from all sources of its operations nationwide and to spend the same for any purpose.

20 **Sec. 24. *The NALPA Fund.*** - The NALPA Fund is hereby established to be managed or
21 administered by the Authority, the income from which shall be utilized exclusively in awarding
22 grants and providing assistance to park development programs, LGUs for upgrading their
23 capabilities, and to develop and implement training and training-related activities for park
24 development. The contribution to the fund shall be the following:

25 a) a one-time lump sum appropriation from the national government in the amount of Php
26 100,000,000.00;

27 b) donations, grants, endowments, and other bequests or gifts of which the Authority is
28 hereby authorized to accept; and

29 c) any other income generated by the Authority.

30 The Authority shall be the administrator of the fund, and as such, shall formulate the
31 necessary implementing guidelines for the management of the fund, subject to the following: a)
32 unless otherwise stipulated by the private donor, only earning of private contributions shall be
33 used; b) no part of the seed capital of the fund, including earning, thereof, shall be used to
34 underwrite expenses for administration.

1 The Board shall appoint a reputable government-accredited investment institution as a fund
2 manager, subject to guidelines promulgated by the Board.

3 **Sec. 25. Incentive Schemes.** - The Authority shall develop and administer appropriate
4 incentives schemes to encourage the LGUs and private industries and institutions to participate in
5 the development of the National Parks System.

6
7 **Sec. 26. Parks and Green Spaces Awards.** - To promote park development in the country
8 and with the view of participating in international park development competitions, the Authority,
9 with the active participation of private industries, shall organize and conduct an annual Parks and
10 Green Spaces Awards. The Authority, through the Secretariat, shall promulgate the necessary rules
11 and guidelines for the effective and efficient conduct of the Annual National Parks and Green
12 Spaces Competition among the LGUs and for the country's participation in international park
13 development competitions.

14 **Sec. 27. Exemption from Taxes, Duties, Fees, and Charges.** - The Authority shall be
15 exempt from the payment of taxes, fees, and charges imposed by the National Government and its
16 political subdivisions, agencies, and instrumentalities regardless of the nature of its activity.

17 All donations in any form shall be exempt from the donor's tax and the same shall be
18 considered as an allowable deduction from the gross income in the computation of the income in
19 the computation of the income tax of the donor, in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act
20 No. 8424, otherwise known as the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended.
21 Furthermore, the importation of supplies and materials for the use of the Authority shall be exempt
22 from customs duties.

23 **Sec. 28. Commercial Operations of and inside of NALPA Parks.** - The Authority shall be
24 authorized to undertake commercial operations, the proceeds of which shall be credited to the
25 NALPA Fund:

- 26 a) The rental of dedicated areas for external events, functions, and similar activities;
- 27 b) The lease of dedicated areas for the erection and operation of commercial establishments
28 inside NALPA Parks, which NALPA shall be allowed to award, through public bidding, and giving
29 preference to nonprofit organizations of a nature related to or supportive of its mandate, for a term
30 up to five (5) years per contract;
- 31 c) The production and/or licensing of official merchandise; and

d) The award of concession contracts is when the Authority shall utilize concession contracts to authorize a person, corporation, or other entity to provide accommodations, facilities, and services to visitors or users of NALPA Parks.

Sec. 29. *Contracted Services.* - The Authority is authorized to contract out services for Park Management and Safety and Security Services.

Chapter 5

Miscellaneous Provisions

Sec. 30. *NALPA Budget* - The amount necessary to finance the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the existing appropriations of the NPDC and the NPF, and shall be supported by funds coming from the Office of the President. Thereafter, such funds as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Sec. 31. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within 180 days from the effectivity of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the Board the implementing rules and regulations of this Act upon prior consultation with all concerned groups and entities.

Sec. 32. *Transitory Provisions.* -

a) Within two (2) months after the approval of this Act, the President shall, in consultation with the Secretary of Tourism, appoint the private sector representative of the Board.

b) Within three (3) months after the appointment of the private sector representatives, the President shall, upon the recommendation of the Board, appoint the Administrator.

c) Within four (4) months after the appointment of the Administrator, the Board shall convene to determine the organizational structure and staffing pattern of the Authority.

d) Within one (1) year after the organization of the Authority, the Board shall convene to determine the organizational structure and staffing pattern of the Authority.

e) Upon the effectivity of this Act, and prior to the appointment of the Board and the Administrator, the heads and personnel of both NPDC and NPF shall continue to exercise their functions and duties, in a holdover capacity, and shall ensure the smooth transition to the Board and the Administrator.

f) All personnel of the NPDC and NPF are hereby deemed retired from service.

1 Retirement and separation benefits shall be paid under existing rules and regulations.

2 g) The Authority may at its discretion retain any personnel of NPDC and NPF it deems
3 necessary to carry out its purpose and function.

4 h) The ownership and title to the properties now actually occupied by the NPF and NPDC
5 are hereby transferred in fee simple to the Authority, subject to the following conditions:

6 a. The titles to the land conveyed by this Act shall not be transferred by the
7 Authority to another person or entity without previous authorization by the
8 President of the Philippines.

9 b. The Authority is hereby authorized to mortgage any properties referred to above
10 for the purpose for carrying out its objectives and purposes only; and,

11 c. In case the Authority is dissolved or ceases, for any reason, to undertake its
12 objectives, or ceases to need any of the lands for any reason, said land shall *ipso*
13 *facto* revert to the National Government without compensation.

14 **Sec. 33. *Automatic Review.*** - Every five (5) years, after the effectivity of this Act, an
15 independent review panel composed of three (3) persons appointed by the President shall review
16 the performance of the Authority and shall make recommendations, based on its findings to the
17 President and to both Houses of Congress.

18 **Sec. 34. *Repealing Cause.*** - All laws, presidential decrees or issuance, executive orders,
19 letters of instruction, administrative orders, rules or regulations inconsistent with the provisions of
20 this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

21 **Sec. 35. *Separability Cause.*** - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the
22 remainder of this Act or any provision not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

23 **Sec. 36. *Effectivity.*** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after the publication in the
24 Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

25 *Approved,*