

# *Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa Responds to Lies About New Galapagos Law*

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Quito, June 15 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa responded on Saturday to falsehoods being spread by the political opposition regarding the new law for the province of Galapagos, clarifying that no worker will see a reduction of their wages.

The province of Galapagos, a world famous archipelago located off the coast of Ecuador, enjoys special considerations due to the higher costs of living for residents of the islands.

The new law governing the province, first debated by the National Assembly in 2012, was approved June 9, 2015 after the executive returned the bill to the assembly with a partial veto. The new law modifies a 1978 law that provided for a 100 percent subsidy for state workers, doubling their wages, and a 75 percent subsidy for private sector workers. The subsidy will now be determined based on the costs of living on the island through a technical calculation of a consumer price index, which will apply to both

private and public sector workers and could ultimately be greater than the previous subsidy.

Lawmakers opposing the new law claimed that the law would reduce the salaries of workers living on the archipelago. However, the Ecuadorean constitution specifies that laws cannot be retroactive and so all existing contracts will remain the same, a fact reiterated repeatedly by the president. Opponents of the new law also claimed that it eliminates the demarcation of the National Park and Marine Reserve.

The Ministry of the Environment issued a statement on Sunday reaffirming that article 18 and 19 of the new law specifies that the Marine Reserve will remain the same as before. Meanwhile the National Environmental Authority will determine the demarcation for the National Park in accordance with environmental protection laws.

Protesters on the island staged a short one-day strike and have vowed to continue to hold demonstrations until the law is revoked. President Correa added that some of the recent protests had turned violent, resulting in injuries to three police officers.

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