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

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 694

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE JURDIN JESUS M. ROMUALDO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The volatile peace and order situation in some areas in Mindanao has been attributed to the lack of economic opportunities available to the residents of the region. The lack of socio-economic infrastructures and services has become factors in the rise of insurgency and rebellion in Mindanao, particularly in underdeveloped and underserved areas.

This bill proposes the establishment of railway system across the Mindanao region. The proposed railway system is deemed to be a factor in the growth of its socio-economic development services and the promotion of rural development. It is believed that this would open linkages within the island's rural and urban area, providing effective movement and ready-access of people, goods and services.

However, before such a railway system is established, there is a need to conduct a feasibility study that would look into the financial and physical viability of the project. Given the present situation of the railway system in the country, there is a need to look into the sustainability of the project. The government would be spending a large amount of money for the project; it would be very frustrating to see such an endeavor go to waste.

The bill envisions a railway system that would serve as the region's main transportation system. It would be very beneficial in the travel of people and the transport of goods. This would hopefully expand into the promotion of the region's tourism, and the improvement of Mindanao's peace and order situation.

With the foregoing, the immediate passage of this measure is requested.

JURDIN JESUS M. ROMUALDO

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AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE MINDANAO RAILWAY SYSTEM

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

SECTION 1. Title. – This Act shall be known as the "Mindanao Railway System Act of 2002".

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared a policy of the state to provide for socio-economic development services in the island of Mindanao, which would serve as a factor in the growth and development of the island. It is also the policy of the state to promote rural development that would be the means for the growth of the countryside, and thus ensure the equitable allocation of resources and opportunities.

SEC. 3. Objectives. The Act aims to establish an efficient, reliable, safe, affordable and viable transportation system in Mindanao that would facilitate and improve the linkages between the island's rural and urban areas as well as provide for the effective movement of people, goods and services within the island. This is geared towards the promotion of Mindanao's productivity, as well as the island's peace and order situation.

SEC. 4. Establishment of the Railway System. – A railway system across the island is hereby established, to be known as the Mindanao Railway System, which shall be implemented by the Philippine National Railways (PNR). The implementation of the railway system shall be done in various phases to include but not limited to the following sites:

a) Davao City – Cagayan de Oro – Iligan lines;
b) Davao City – Butuan – Cagayan de Oro lines;
c) Davao City – General Santos – Cotabato City lines;
d) Iligan City – Dipolog City – Zamboanga City lines

SEC. 5. Feasibility Study. – The Act stipulates the undertaking of a feasibility study before the establishment of the Mindanao Railway System to ensure the viability of the project. The Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC), through the PNR and in cooperation with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), and the concerned Regional Development Councils (RDC), is charged to conduct the feasibility study within eighteen (18) months upon the approval of this Act.

The feasibility study shall have the following purposes:

a) To develop and evaluate an alternative transport system, specifically the introduction of railway lines, with due consideration on the socio-economic growth pattern and the peace and order situation in the area;

b) To review and evaluate the transport system's viability through technical, economic and financial effectiveness;

c) To identify appropriate project financing schemes and prepare the over-all implementation program and evaluate the potential economic savings resulting from transfer of present and future traffic from road to rail.

SEC. 6. Appropriations. – The Secretary of the Department of Transportation and Communications, in coordination with the Chairman of the Philippine National Railways, shall immediately include in its program and issue such rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 7. Rules and Regulations. – The Philippine National Railways, the Department of Transportation and Communications and the concerned Regional Development Councils shall promulgate the rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 8. Separability Clause. – If any part or provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 9. Repealing Clause. – All acts, rules, or regulations, or parts thereof in conflict with this Act are hereby repealed or modified.

SEC. 10. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,