

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF THE REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 5588



Introduced by HON. MANUEL ANTONIO F. ZUBIRI

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to institutionalize geo-tagging in all local government units to allow for more effective policy-making by both the national government and the different local government units, facility in updating our respective maps, to track the success of government projects, and to avoid the pernicious problem of poverty which has so far hampered progress in our country.

Since 2006, the Philippines has more or less maintained a poverty incidence at around 20 percent, with the number fluctuating from highs of 26.6 and going as low as 21.6 as time passed¹. Although the trend has shifted downward in 2015, the country still fails to address the root of poverty while the population continues to rise, with 21.9 million Filipinos still remaining poor. Though the government through its various agencies and partnering non-governmental organizations has tried its best, it is clear that a novel approach is needed to identify the cause and strike at the root of the problem, a solution that allows the government, its citizens, and other stakeholders to constantly monitor the progress of society in terms of poverty incidence and tangible results.

Geo-tagging is an efficient way of tracking the existence and progress of government projects, as it allows government officials and the citizenry alike to check and follow up projects as they are being carried out in real time. A third-party satellite will show how far the project is coming along or if such project is already being executed according to the terms and tenure of the contract. We can now check various areas and physical aspects of the Philippines and see which areas have long been lingering in poverty.

Three executive agencies have already begun using geo-tagging technology alongside their projects, namely the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Environment and

¹ Philippine Statistics Authority, "Poverty incidence among Filipinos registered at 21.6% in 2015", <https://psa.gov.ph/poverty-press-releases>, Accessed February 27, 2017

Natural Resources (DENR)². The same technology was used in India, where a handful of projects' budgets were found to have been maximized by tracking the progress of these projects³.

As an additional benefit, each local government unit from NCR down to the smallest barangay will be geo-tagged, providing an updated digital map of these areas. Said maps will be placed in the hands of the Department of Information and Communications Technology for easier distribution and access. With easy and visible access to the progress of our government projects, the government can identify which areas demand the most attention and resources.

The current administration has put an onus on transparency, starting with the Executive Order on the Freedom of Information. This bill will further the imperative to provide our citizenry the transparency they seek and ensure their tax dollars go to the support of the welfare of Filipinos on the fringes of society, because a developing country is only as good as its poorest citizen.

In line with this, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

MANUEL F. ZUBIRI

² Rappler, "Can geo-tagging help combat corruption?"; <http://www.rappler.com/move-ph/issues/corruption/49566-geo-tagging-corruption>, Accessed February 27, 2017

³ The Times of India, "Geo-tagging to help curb corruption in projects"; <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/jaipur/Geo-tagging-to-help-curb-corruption-in-projects/articleshow/53202578.cms>, Accessed February 27, 2017

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Introduced by Representative **MANUEL ANTONIO F. ZUBIRI**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A NATIONWIDE GEO-TAGGING AND POVERTY TRACKING
SYSTEM AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

1
2 **SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy.** – It is the policy of the State to promote a
3 just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the
4 nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social
5 services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of
6 life for all. It is also the State's policy to adopt and implement a policy of full public
7 disclosure, subject to reasonable conditions prescribed by law, and to recognize the
8 vital role of communication and information in nation-building.

9
10 **SECTION 2. Definitions.** – As used in this act, the following terms shall mean:

11
12 (a) **Geo-tagging** – The process of adding geographical identification to various
13 media in the form of metadata. The captured information are uploaded to a
14 web-based application which provides the platform to geo-tag. This will allow
15 the mapping of all the areas in the Philippines and allow the government, the
16 citizenry, and other stakeholders to check the progress of the project in real
17 time.

18
19 **SECTION 3. Nationwide Geo-tagging.** – The Department of Information and
20 Communications Technology (DICT), with the assistance of the Department of Interior
21 and Local Government (DILG), the Department of Natural Resources and Environment
22 (DENR), and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), shall undertake
23 the geo-tagging of all areas in the Philippines for efficiency of mapping and tracking the
24 existence and progress of all infrastructure, conservation, and land titling projects as
25 well as all projects relating to the patrimony of the Philippines. The DILG shall
26 coordinate with local government units and pertinent government agencies to ensure
27 the geo-tagging of all infrastructure, conservation, and land titling projects to show their
28 progress from start to finish. The implementing agency of the DENR shall be the
29 National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA).

30
31 **SECTION 4. Tagging of Poverty-Stricken Areas.** – The DICT, DILG, DPWH,
32 and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) shall work hand-in-
33 hand to identify which areas are most stricken by poverty by determining the amount of
34 physical resources of these areas and their respective basic infrastructure, facilities, and
35 geography. The DSWD, DPWH, and the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC)
36 shall work together to create an exhaustive list of basic parameters to measure the level
37 of poverty as outlined by the images received through geo-tagging.
38

1 SECTION 5. **Access and Website.** – The DICT, in coordination with DENR
2 through NAMRIA, shall set up an online portal where information pertinent to the
3 location specified can be accessed. Physical copies of the information and maps of the
4 entire area shall likewise be made available by the DENR, DICT, and the DILG.

5
6 The DENR, DILG, and DSWD shall undertake in training its employees in the municipal
7 level as to how to access the information as to the project or the area specified. The
8 DILG shall undertake the distribution of the physical copies of the maps in the respective
9 local government units.

10
11 SECTION 6. **Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – The DICT, in
12 consultation with the NAPC, the DENR, the DILG, the DSWD, the DPWH, the
13 Department of Transportation (DOT), the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), and
14 the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), and the Department of Budget and
15 Management (DBM), within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, shall
16 promulgate the rules and regulations necessary for the effective implementation of the
17 provisions of this Act.

18
19 SECTION 7. **Appropriations** – The DICT shall, by way of national government
20 start-up assistance, incorporate in the General Appropriations Act and/or from other
21 funding sources as the President of the Philippines shall authorize the amount of TWO
22 HUNDRED FIFTY MILLION PESOS (P250,000,000) which shall be earmarked and
23 disbursed to the DICT for the nationwide geo-tagging system.

24
25 The fund may be augmented by grants, donations, and endowment from various
26 sources, domestic or foreign, for purposes related to their functions, subject to the
27 existing guidelines set by the government.

28
29 SECTION 8. **Separability Clause.** - If any portion or provision of this Act is
30 declared unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the
31 other provisions not affected thereby.

32
33 SECTION 9. **Repealing Clause.** - All laws, parts of laws, decrees, presidential
34 issuances, proclamations, orders, ordinances, and administrative regulations in conflict
35 with the provisions of this Act are hereby amended, modified or repealed accordingly.

36
37 SECTION 10. **Effectivity.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
38 publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general
39 circulation.

40
41 *Approved,*