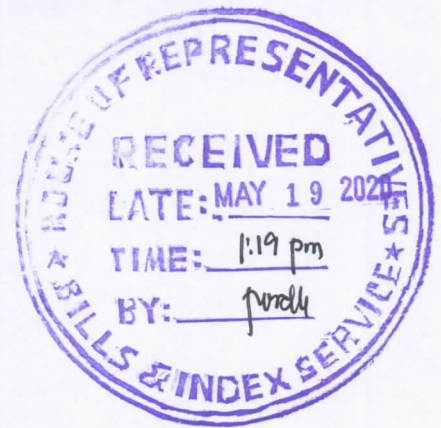




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 6762



Introduced by REPRESENTATIVE ERIC L. OLIVAREZ

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The National Capital Region (NCR) or Metro Manila encompasses an area of 619.57 square kilometers and a population of 12,877,253 or 12.8 percent of total population as of 2015. It is the country's most densely populated region with a population density of 21,000/km². It is the second most populous region in the Philippines next to regio IV-A, ninth most populous metropolitan area in Asia and fifth most populous urban area in the world.

The region contributes thirty-six percent of the country's gross domestic product based on the 2018 Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). Its economic power makes the region the country's premier center for finance and commerce.

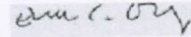
Homelessness is also a major problem in Metro Manila. In 2014, there are an estimated four million slum dwellers living in Metro Manila. However, this conundrum is being addressed by creating in-city relocation housing as well as relocation of informal settler families in low-density housing built in the nearby provinces of Batangas, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, and Rizal.

However, the present Covid-19 pandemic has shown that these congested areas are vulnerable and a major public health concern since they are the epicenters of the pandemic. It also brought forth the issues of the lack of viable and sustainable employment in rural areas, unbalanced regional development, and unequal distribution of wealth.

The Constitution provides that the State shall promote a just and dynamic social order that ensures the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty. It shall likewise promote full employment, a rising standard of living and improved quality of life for all , and comprehensive rural development.

It is imperative for the State to promote countryside development to reverse the migration to NCR and other congested metropolitan centers through balanced regional development and agricultural development of the rural areas to achieve inclusive, resilient, and sustainable rural communities.

The passage of this measure is earnestly sought.



ERIC OLIVAREZ



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Introduced by REPRESENTATIVE ERIC L. OLIVAREZ

1
2 **AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE “BALIK PROBINSYA, BAGONG PAG-ASA”**
3 **ACT CREATING A COUNCIL THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**
4
5

6 *Be in enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in*
7 *Congress assembled:*

8 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the Balik Probinsya,
9 Bagong Pag-asa Act or BP² of 2020.

10 **Section 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It shall be the policy of the State to bring to
11 the countryside viable and sustainable employment opportunities, balanced regional
12 development, and equal distribution of wealth.

13 The State shall ensure balanced regional development and equitable distribution
14 of wealth, resources, and opportunities through policies and programs that boost
15 countryside development and inclusive growth, provide adequate social services, and
16 promote full employment, industrialization and an improved quality of life in rural areas.
17 Towards this end, the “Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa (BP²) Act” shall be
18 institutionalized.

19 **Section 3.** – *Creation of the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Council.* To
20 ensure whole-of-government action on the implementation of the BP² Act, the Balik
21 Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Council (“Council”) is hereby created to be composed of
22 the following:

23 Chairperson: Executive Secretary

1 Vice Chairperson: Secretary for Socio-Economic Planning and Director-
2 General, National Economic and Development Authority
3 (NEDA),

4 Members: Secretary, Department of Interior and Local Government
5 (DILG),
6 Secretary, Department of Social Welfare and Development
7 (DSWD),
8 Secretary, Department of Agriculture (DA),
9 Secretary; Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR),
10 Secretary, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)
11 Secretary, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE),
12 Secretary, Department of Health (DOH),
13 Secretary, Department of Information and Communications
14 Technology (DICT),
15 Secretary, Department of Finance (DOF),
16 Secretary, Department of Budget and Management (DBM),
17 Secretary, Department of Public Works and Highways,
18 (DPWH),
19 Secretary, Department of Transportation (DOTr),
20 Secretary, Department of Tourism (DOT),
21 Secretary, Department of Human Settlements and Urban
22 Development (DHSUD),
23 Secretary, Department of Education (DepEd),
24 Chairperson, Commission on Higher Education (CHED),
25 Secretary, Department of Environment and Natural
26 Resources (DENR),
27 Director General, Technical Education and Skills
28 Development Authority (TESDA),
29 Chairperson, Mindanao Development Authority; and,
30 Chairperson, Cooperative Development Authority (CDA).

31 A member of the Council shall designate one (1) permanent and one (1)
32 alternate representative who are fully authorized to decide for and on behalf of his or
33 her respective department, agency, or office and perform the functions as hereafter
34 provided.

1 The Council shall be assisted by a Secretariat, to be headed by the General
2 Manager of the National Housing Authority (NHA) as Executive Director which shall
3 provide technical and administrative support to the Council. The Secretariat shall be
4 composed of personnel from the NHA and, as may be necessary, from member
5 agencies of the Council.

6 **Section 4. Powers and Functions of the Council.** – The Council shall have the
7 following powers and functions:

- 8 a. Formulate within thirty (30) days from the issuance hereof the guidelines
9 necessary to implement this Act, including the BP² Act Framework as defined
10 herein;
- 11 b. Provide overall direction in the implementation of the BP² Act including
12 guidance and technical assistance to government agencies and local
13 government units (LGUs) in its implementation;
- 14 c. Approve or modify key areas and components of the BP² Act as well as
15 ensure the compliance of government agencies involved in its
16 implementation;
- 17 d. Develop a strategic communications plan to educate the people and advocate
18 for supportive policies in the local level in coordination with the Presidential
19 Communications Operations Office;
- 20 e. Identify legislative, regulatory, and policy changes to promote balanced
21 regional development and recommend to the Congress the enactment of
22 such reforms into law;
- 23 f. Engage, consult, and coordinate with LGUs in the formulation of policies, and
24 implementation of the components of the BP² Act that will allow for resource-
25 sharing arrangement through, among others, co-financing mechanism with
26 development partners;
- 27 g. Enlist the support and assistance of other government agencies,
28 instrumentalities, government-owned or controlled corporations and state
29 universities and colleges, as well as consult and provide avenues for the
30 private sector, relevant stakeholders, advocacy groups and non-government
31 organizations to participate in the attainment of the objectives of this Act;
- 32 h. Create sub-groups, technical working groups or committee as may be
33 deemed necessary to implement the objectives of this Act;
- 34 i. Adopt mechanisms, such as but not limited to an online platform, and
35 establishment of BP² desks in all offices of member agencies to facilitate
36 accessibility to the public, enhance monitoring of implementation, and
37 ascertain the compliance of beneficiaries; and
- 38 j. Perform other tasks as the President may direct.

1 **Section 5. *The Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Act and Its Key Areas.*** The
2 BP² act is hereby established as a national program of the government and adopted as
3 a continuing strategy to drive inclusive and balanced urban and rural development,
4 ensure rural prosperity, and complement initiatives towards attaining resilient and
5 sustainable communities.

6 The BP² Act Framework shall be divided into key areas, each having measured
7 policy objectives:

- 8 a. **Empowerment of Local Industries** – introduce a sustainable program for
9 public sector investment and private sector participation that promotes
10 regional development. Support shall be particularly provided to micro, small,
11 and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to foster the continued growth of the
12 sector. The rationalization of a purposeful system of fiscal incentives shall be
13 prioritized to develop forward and backward linkages and export-oriented and
14 domestic-oriented enterprises, access markets and a fully integrated value
15 chain, and encourage the transfer of medium and large businesses to
16 provincial hubs.
- 17 b. **Food Security and Agricultural Productivity** – Encourage and facilitate
18 innovations and technologies for agricultural production such as modern rice
19 farming techniques, seed production, and farm mechanization that are
20 conducive to long-term and sustainable rural development. Local agricultural
21 industries shall be supported, and loans sourced from the Agricultural
22 Competitiveness Enhancement Fund as well as existing incentives be given
23 to agriculture cooperatives.

24 Measures to take advantage of economies of scale in agricultural
25 production, promote value chain development, increase farm incomes, and
26 improve the quality of life of farmers, shall be pursued.

- 27 c. **Social Welfare, Health and Employment** – Comprehensive assistance
28 packages shall be designed to encourage the voluntary and immediate
29 movement to their respective home provinces of workers and overseas
30 Filipino workers especially those stranded in the NCR due to the Enhanced
31 Community Quarantine (ECQ).

32 Local health facilities shall be upgraded and local health capacity shall be
33 improved to address the health need of the community such as building more
34 hospitals and clinics, providing more ambulances, and enhancing medical
35 scholarship programs, among others.

36 Educational institutions and technical and vocational schools shall be built
37 in strategic rural areas while state universities and colleges shall be linked to
38 industries and may have, among others, convert their idle lands into science
39 or technology parks. Access to open distance learning shall also be
40 enhanced in rural communities.

41 Employment shall be created and restored through various support
42 programs and assistance packages including resettlement to provincial

township sites and community interventions or projects based on resettlement site.

- d. **Development of Infrastructure** – Infrastructure such as means of transport and communications, power resource, and irrigation facilities which support the operation and development of other sectors of the economy shall be developed in all the different regions of the country. The completion of existing and future railway projects to facilitate movement of people, as well as the creation and improvement of transport terminals and construction of public markets in communities, shall be prioritized.

Section 6. Categorization of the BP² Act Framework Components. – The components of the BP² Act Framework to be formulated by the Council shall be aligned with the key areas mapped in the preceding Section and shall be categorized under specific progress points, as follows:

- a. **Short-term** – Pipeline or existing programs, activities, or projects (PAPs) with available funds or appropriations which can be adapted to support the required interventions under the BP² Act, and which can be readily implemented during the Enhanced and General Community Quarantine. Due priority shall be given to individuals and enterprises qualified under the implementing guidelines mentioned in Section 5 hereof.

For the efficient voluntary movement of individuals and enterprises from NCR to identified rural areas, initial assessment may be provided for assistance such as, but not limited, to the following:

- i. Transportation and relocation coursed through the DOTr and DILG which are tasked to coordinate with the LGUs concerned. For this purpose, the Department of National Defense (DND) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines and all its main service branches, as well as the Philippine Coast Guard, may be called to render the necessary logistical support;
- ii. Transitory support from existing DSWD and NHA programs;
- iii. Livelihood and employment packages that are implemented or may be developed by the DOLE and DTI;
- iv. Agri-based support services offered by the DA;
- v. Educational programs, including intern-based learning, through the DepEd, CHED, and TESDA;
- vi. Fiscal incentives and transition assistance for MSMEs, including but not limited to tax incentives and fast -tracked processing of licenses and permits, as may be applicable; and
- vii. Other forms of aid as may be necessary or formulated by relevant government agencies.

1 b. **Medium-term** – Existing PAPs with available funds or appropriations to
2 support required interventions or new PAPs for funding, which can be
3 implemented when the ECQ or travel restriction is lifted. It may consist of, but
4 is not limited, to the following:

- 5 i. Identification of existing special economic zones, as well as
6 development of MSME-oriented industries;
- 7 ii. Livelihood and employment opportunities suitable to rural
8 development;
- 9 iii. Strengthening and prioritizing the National Spatial Strategy integrated
10 in the Philippine Development Plan and spearheaded by the NEDA;
- 11 iv. Integration of institutional assistance such as the progression of formal
12 education, improved healthcare services, and medical facilities,
13 maintenance, and promotion of peace, order, and security; and,
- 14 v. Establishment of new special economic zones in Visayas and
15 Mindanao including the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region.

16 c. **Long-term** – PAPs that require longer time horizons to implement but whose
17 initial steps must already be taken by national government agencies, such as
18 but not limited to the proposed decentralization of powers and seat of
19 governance, priority legislation on rationalized and results-based tax
20 incentives for agricultural or tourism industries and the National Land Use Act,
21 and the creation of new urban centers outside of the NCR and existing major
22 urban centers.

23 **Section 7. Funding.** – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act
24 shall be charged against existing appropriations of the member agencies of the Council,
25 and from sources to be identified by the DBM subject to existing budgeting, accounting
26 and auditing laws, rules, and regulations. To the extent permitted by law, agency heads
27 are hereby authorized to realign items in their respective appropriations to fund PAPs
28 approved as part of the BP² Act. Funding requirements for the succeeding years shall
29 be included in the respective budgets of government agencies implementing the BP²
30 Act.

31 **Section 8. Reporting.** – The Council shall submit to the President a bi-annual
32 report on the implementation of this Act, including its accomplishments in terms of short,
33 medium, and long-term goals and budget utilization.

34 **Section 9. Separability Clause.** – If any part or section shall be declared
35 unconstitutional or invalid, such declaration shall not affect the other parts or sections of
36 this Act.

37 **Section 10. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, rules and regulations
38 inconsistent with any provision of this Act shall be deemed repealed or modified
39 accordingly.

1 **Section 11. Effectivity.** – This shall take effect after fifteen (15) days from its
2 publication in two (2) national newspaper of the general circulation or in the Official
3 Gazette.

4
5
6 **APPROVED.**