

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

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill NO. 2221



Introduced by Representative Richard I. Gomez

EXPLANATORY NOTE

According to 2019 data from the World Economic Forum, the Philippine railway infrastructure is currently ranked 86th out of 100 countries surveyed in terms of extensiveness and condition of efficiency. The railways have been one of the most underdeveloped and underestimated forms of transportation in the country. Realizing this, the government has attempted to revive and redevelop the railway system, albeit mostly in Luzon in the last decades. Although the efforts have seen limited success, this does not change the reality that rail is a vital element in our country's development.

As we approach the edge of the post-pandemic world, this challenge cannot be over emphasized. If the Philippines has to achieve economic recovery and beyond, the development of a modern, well-connected and pervasive railway system and network is imperative. This will not only be essential within Luzon island but in the Visayas region and Mindanao island, as well.

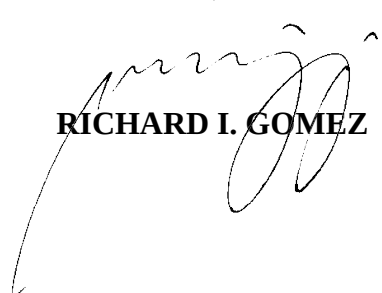
The role of infrastructure in supporting industries such as manufacturing, tourism, food production and trade, is vital not just for growth, but to their very survival. Every study of the country's economic competitiveness tags infrastructure as one of the missing links that is holding back growth, especially in the countryside.

In the previous administration, President Duterte already expressed support for the establishment of a Mindanao Railway System. To complement this, the Eastern Visayas Region is well positioned as the railway bridge that would connect the entire archipelago from Luzon to Mindanao via rail. Such a vision would, of course, be a decades long undertaking; so therefore, it is only sensible to begin the construction of the inter-regional railway systems along the same timeline, so the next stage of connecting the three regional railways systems would coincide, as well.

With this in mind, this representation seeks the immediate approval of the Ormoc-Southern Leyte Railway Act, that would plan, construct and operate the Eastern Visayas Railway System. This system would commence at Ormoc City, travelling southward along the west coast of the island of Leyte via Baybay City and Maasin City. This route would not only interconnect the major cities of the island of Leyte, but also

provide a freight transport infrastructure for the economic and industrial zones located along the same major cities.

The creation and establishment of the Ormoc-Southern Leyte Railway System would provide a transport backbone that would support tourism and trade across Leyte and Southern Leyte and eventually bridge Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao via rail. Thus, the immediate approval of this bill is earnestly requested.



RICHARD I. GOMEZ

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

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill NO. **2221**

Introduced by Representative Richard I. Gomez

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A RAILWAY SYSTEM IN
THE EASTERN VISAYAS REGION, FROM ORMOC CITY, TO BAYBAY
CITY, MAASIN CITY AND TO THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAN RICARDO IN
THE PROVINCE OF SOUTHERN LEYTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Ormoc-Southern Leyte Railway Act of 2022.”

SEC. 2. *Establishment of the Ormoc-Southern Leyte Railway System.* – There shall be established a railway system in the Eastern Visayas Region under the administration of the Philippine National Railways, from Ormoc City, to Baybay City, to Maasin City, and to the Municipality of San Ricardo in the Province of Southern Leyte. The Central Station of said railway system shall be located in Ormoc City.

SEC. 3. *Route, Alignment, Safety and Efficiency of the Ormoc-Southern Leyte Railway System.* – The Department of Transportation (DoTr), in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and the Philippine National Railways (PNR), shall undertake the following:

- (A) A comprehensive study of the Ormoc-Southern Leyte Railway System to determine the most feasible and optimal route, taking into consideration the agro-industrial, tourism and ecozone transportation and freight infrastructure needs of Ormoc City, Isabel and Baybay City.

- (B) Conduct a study on various modern locomotive technology, including those utilizing either electricity or diesel, to offer options that produce negative carbon transportation, as well as high efficiency;
- (C) Conduct an immediate technical study on the safety, efficiency, resiliency and disaster preparedness of the railway system; and
- (D) Prepare an sound land expropriation plan, including but not limited to land surveys that provides for fair acquisition prices as well as proper relocation of displaced families.

SEC. 4. *Establishment of Ormoc-Southern Leyte Railway Working Group.* – The Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the DPWH and the PNR, shall establish a working group which shall include, but not limited to, local chief executives of affected local government units, and lawmakers of affected districts. This working group shall be consulted on all matters concerning the Ormoc-Southern Leyte Railway System.

SEC. 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the Ormoc-Southern Leyte Railway Working Group shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 6. *Funding.* - The amount necessary for the conduct of the necessary technical studies, shall be sourced from the current budget of the DoTr and the PNR. Other funding mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships, maybe be explored as per recommendation of technical studies and Ormoc-Southern Leyte Railway Working Group.

SEC. 7. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication either in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,