



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 5

**Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez,
Andrew Julian K. Romualdez and Jude A. Acidre**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to create the Eastern Visayas Development Authority (EVDA) to promote and facilitate the active and extensive participation of all sectors in the socio-economic development of Eastern Visayas.

Eastern Visayas or Region VIII, comprising of 6 provinces, 136 municipalities and 7 cities and strategically situated at the very heart of the Philippines, is one of the country's most ecologically diverse regions that is blessed with energy, mineral, land and marine resources. Despite its abundant resources and strategic location, its development is being slowed down due to frequent natural disasters, infrastructure gaps, and fragmented implementation of national programs and projects.

In 2013, Typhoon Haiyan (locally known as Yolanda), one of the most devastating typhoons ever recorded, caused unimaginable destruction in the Eastern Visayas, which resulted in the displacement and loss of lives and properties and devastation of vital infrastructure, agriculture and public utilities, and hindered the economic growth and development of the region. As it recovered from the devastating event, the region is still heavily impacted with the vicious cycle of poverty.

The proposed EVDA is tasked to formulate the Eastern Visayas Development Master Plan, which will serve as the framework for the accelerated and balanced development in the region. Likewise, the EVDA will provide strategic direction for the long-term economic development of the region through the integration and implementation of the national and local government programs and projects, including the efforts of the private sector. Further, the control and administration of the Post-Haiyan Rehabilitation Funds will be transferred to EVDA.

With EVDA at the helm, it will address the region's persistent underdevelopment, disaster vulnerability and governance challenges through focused leadership and integrated planning that will transform Eastern Visayas into a more resilient and prosperous region.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ



JUDE A. ACIDRE



ANDREW JULIAN K. ROMUALDEZ



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5

**Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez,
Andrew Julian K. Romualdez and Jude A. Acidre**

AN ACT
CREATING THE EASTERN VISAYAS DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY (EVDA), DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS,
AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

1 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the “Eastern
2 Visayas Development Authority (EVDA) Act”.

3 **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** – It is hereby declared the policy of the
4 State to promote and accelerate the sound and balanced industrial, economic,
5 and social growth of Eastern Visayas and ensure its speedy rehabilitation in
6 the aftermath of typhoon Haiyan by increasing trade, tourism, and
7 investments, encouraging private enterprise, and advancing efforts towards
8 progress and development within the context of national plans and policies in
9 order to provide jobs to the people, especially those in rural areas, increase
10 their productivity and their individual and family incomes, and thereby
11 improve the quality of their living conditions.

1 Towards this end, an effective institutional mechanism shall be
2 established in order to address the need for a coordinated and integrated
3 approach in the formulation and implementation of plans, programs, and
4 projects geared towards economic growth and development in the Eastern
5 Visayas region, including the establishment, among others, of special
6 economic zones.

7 **SEC. 3. *Creation.*** – The Eastern Visayas Development Authority,
8 hereinafter referred to as the Authority, is hereby created, which shall
9 promote, coordinate, and facilitate the active and extensive participation of all
10 sectors in the socioeconomic development of Eastern Visayas.

11 **SEC. 4. *Coverage.*** – The Authority shall cover all the provinces of
12 Northern Samar, Eastern Samar, Western Samar, Leyte, Biliran and Southern
13 Leyte, the independent City of Ormoc and the highly urbanized City of
14 Tacloban.

15 **SEC. 5. *Main Office.*** – The Authority shall have its main office in
16 Tacloban City. It may also establish satellite offices in Metro Manila and in
17 the other provinces within Eastern Visayas, if necessary, to achieve the
18 objectives of this Act.

19 **SEC. 6. *Purpose.*** – The Authority shall have the following purposes
20 and objectives:

21 (a) To promote the development of Eastern Visayas by initiating or
22 undertaking, by itself or otherwise, development and business
23 projects of corporate, economic nature whether in agriculture,
24 power, infrastructure, energy, public utilities, land development,
25 manufacturing, exploration or utilization of natural resources, and
26 other fields or projects;

27 (b) To integrate government and private sector efforts and resources in
28 the pursuit of sustainable development and balanced growth of
29 Eastern Visayas, as proposed in the post-Haiyan rehabilitation plan
30 and other relevant development plans, programs and projects;

31 (c) To facilitate investments in any field as would enhance the economic
32 development of the region;

1 (d) To provide a model for the full implementation of a comprehensive
2 regional industrialization and agricultural modernization policy.

3 **SEC. 7. Powers and Functions of the Authority.** – The Authority shall
4 have the following powers and functions:

5 (a) Formulate an integrated development framework for Eastern
6 Visayas that is, as far as practicable, consistent with the peace and
7 development initiatives of the national government;

8 (b) Provide strategic direction for the long-term economic development
9 of Eastern Visayas;

10 (c) Integrate, prioritize, program, and implement, whenever allowed
11 and authorized by applicable laws, specific programs, activities and
12 projects within Eastern Visayas, including Official Development
13 Assistance (ODA) projects, subject to such limitations prescribed by
14 existing laws, rules, and regulations;

15 (d) Recommend to, and whenever necessary, call upon the appropriate
16 agencies of the national government and any of its instrumentalities,
17 to—provide the necessary technical support for, assistance and
18 prioritization in the implementation of agricultural, industrial,
19 commercial, infrastructure, environmental, tourism, and
20 technological programs and projects;

21 (e) Advocate to the constituents of Eastern Visayas, their elected
22 Representatives in Congress, and the national government, policies
23 that will foster the integrated and balanced development of Eastern
24 Visayas;

25 (f) Promote and facilitate investments in any field that would enhance
26 the socioeconomic development of Eastern Visayas and uplift the
27 living standards of the people in close coordination with agencies
28 primarily mandated to undertake such functions;

29 (g) Explore sources for financing priority programs, projects, and
30 activities that are critical to the development of Eastern Visayas;

- (h) Coordinate and facilitate the extension of necessary planning, management, and technical assistance to prospective and existing investors, to complement the efforts of agencies primarily mandated to execute such functions;
- (i) Establish a comprehensive and integrated database on Eastern Visayas to support planning and decision making;
- (j) Perform prior screening functions, as a condition precedent to the approval by any national, provincial, or municipal government agency, of any permit, license, lease, franchise, or concession for the operation of any business or the exploitation, development, or utilization of natural resources within Eastern Visayas;
- (k) Negotiate and enter into management or consulting contracts with local or foreign management consulting firms for the planning and implementation of agricultural, tourism, and industrial development projects in Eastern Visayas;
- (l) Avail of the expertise of any particular employee, technician, or group of persons in any bureau, office, or department of the national government whose services are deemed urgently needed for the attainment of the goals of the Authority, with the consent and approval of the department head concerned;
- (m) Conduct scientific experiments, investigation, and research to discover economical and practical methods of increasing agricultural and industrial production and other related endeavors;
- (n) Encourage and organize cooperative ventures in agriculture, agribusiness, industry, tourism, and commerce and assist them by arranging appropriate financing schemes, for their plans and projects;
- (o) Monitor, evaluate, and formulate recommendations in the implementation of Eastern Visayas-wide development programs, activities and projects;

1 (p) Establish appropriate mechanisms to ensure the timely
2 implementation of Eastern Visayas-wide projects, whenever
3 necessary, including public-private partnership;

4 (q) Review and recommend for approval by the National Economic and
5 Development Authority (NEDA) Board programs, projects, and
6 plans by the national government and donor agencies for
7 implementation in Eastern Visayas, subject to existing laws, rules
8 and regulations;

9 (r) Recommend the creation and supervise the development and
10 operation of special economic zones in Eastern Visayas according
11 to the principles and provisions set forth in this Act and Republic
12 Act No. 7916, or the Special Economic Zone Act of 1995, as
13 amended;

14 (s) Interface with foreign assistance agencies and international aid
15 organizations, in coordination with the NEDA and other relevant
16 national government agencies, for the purpose of obtaining
17 financing support, grants and donations for its programs and
18 projects;

19 (t) Receive and administer donations, contributions, grants, bequests or
20 gifts, in cash or in kind, from foreign governments, international
21 agencies, private entities and other sources, including ODA, to be
22 used in the development of Eastern Visayas, subject to existing laws,
23 rules and regulations;

24 (u) To sue and be sued, enter into contracts, acquire, purchase, hold,
25 lease, transfer, and dispose of property of any kind or nature to carry
26 out the purposes of this Act; and

27 (v) Discharge other functions that may be deemed necessary or as may
28 be provided by law.

29 In the discharge of its functions, the Authority shall ensure appropriate
30 consultation and coordination with the Eastern Visayas Regional

1 Development Council and other local development councils as well as with
2 national government agencies, local government units, accredited people's
3 organizations, non-government organizations and the private sector operating
4 in Eastern Visayas.

5 The Authority, through the EVDA Chairperson, shall submit to the
6 President of the Philippines and both Houses of Congress annual reports on
7 its accomplishments and activities.

8 **SEC. 8. Board of Directors.** – The overall directions and thrusts of the
9 Authority shall be provided and approved, unless provided otherwise in this
10 Act, by a Board of Directors, hereinafter referred to as the Board. It shall be
11 composed of the following members:

12 (a) The Chairperson who shall be appointed by the President of the
13 Philippines;

14 (b) The Chairperson of the Eastern Visayas Regional Development
15 Council as *ex officio* member;

16 (c) A member of the Senate, upon designation by the Senate President,
17 who shall be an *ex officio* member;

18 (d) A member of the House of Representatives, chosen by the District
19 Representatives of the legislative districts comprising Eastern
20 Visayas, who shall be an *ex officio* member;

21 (e) The Regional President of the League of Municipalities-Eastern
22 Visayas Chapter;

23 (f) Three (3) private sector representatives to be appointed by the
24 President, upon the recommendation of the Board comprising of one
25 (1) representative each from the:

- 26 1. Eastern Visayas business sector;
27 2. Eastern Visayas academic sector; and
28 3. Eastern Visayas non-government sector.

29 The term of office of the three (3) representatives from the private sector
30 shall be six (6) years: *Provided*, That at the initial appointment of such

1 members, the second member to be appointed shall only serve a term of four
2 (4) years and the third member to be appointed shall only serve a term of two
3 (2) years: *Provided, further,* That they shall continue to hold office until their
4 successors shall have been appointed. All vacancies, prior to the expiration of
5 the term, shall be filled for the unexpired term only.

6 The members of the Board shall be entitled to reimbursements for actual
7 and necessary expenses incurred, either for their attendance in the meetings of
8 the Board or in connection with other official business authorized by
9 resolution of the Board, subject to existing laws and regulations.

10 The term of the *ex officio* members including the Senator and the
11 Member of the House of Representatives shall correspond to their term as
12 elected officials.

13 **SEC. 9. Functions of the Board of Directors.** – The Board of Directors
14 shall have the following functions:

15 (a) Provide direction and guidance for the work and thrusts of the
16 Authority for Eastern Visayas;

17 (b) Ensure that the goals and policies of the Authority are consistent
18 with the overall national development goals and objectives;

19 (c) Ensure that the programs of the Authority are consistent with
20 regional and local development plans, programs and projects and
21 vice versa;

22 (d) Explore sources for financing of priority Eastern Visayas-wide
23 development;

24 (e) Create committees or task forces as may be deemed necessary for
25 the accomplishment of the plans, programs, projects and activities
26 of the Authority;

27 (f) Determine schedules, establish voting procedures, criteria for the
28 constitution of a quorum and other rules and regulations in the
29 conduct of Board meetings; and

1 (g) Perform such functions as may be necessary to carry out the
2 purposes of this Act.

3 **SEC. 10. *Executive Committee.*** – The Board shall constitute an
4 Executive Committee from among its membership to act, for and on its behalf,
5 when the Board is not in session, on urgent matters as may be deemed
6 necessary by the Chairperson.

7 The following shall comprise the Executive Committee:

8 (a) The EVDA Chairperson as head;

9
10 (b) The Eastern Visayas Regional Development Council (RDC)
11 Chairperson;

12
13 (c) The Private Sector Representative from the business sector;

14
15 (d) The Private Sector Representative from the academic sector; and

16
17 (e) The Private Sector Representative from the non-government sector.

18 **SEC. 11. *Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer.*** – The
19 Chairperson shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines with the
20 rank of Undersecretary and shall act as Chief Executive Officer of the
21 Authority. The Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer shall serve a term of
22 six (6) years from the date of appointment unless removed for cause:
23 *Provided,* That the person who shall be appointed as Chairperson must be a
24 Filipino citizen, of good moral character, of proven probity and integrity and
25 a holder of a degree in economics, business, public administration, law,
26 management or related fields, and with at least five (5) years relevant
27 experience preferably in the field of management or public administration:
28 *Provided, further,* That the appointee for Chairperson shall have been a
29 resident of Eastern Visayas for at least (5) years before the appointment.

30 The Chairperson shall have the following duties and functions:

31 (a) Call and preside over meetings of the Board and see to it that the
32 policies, programs and rules and regulations are implemented
33 properly;

- 1 (b) Call on technical experts to assist in the formulation and
2 implementation of a comprehensive and integrated development
3 plan for Eastern Visayas, investment programs and the preparation
4 of investment programming priorities, annual reports and other
5 pertinent documents approved by the Authority;
- 6 (c) Identify solutions to key issues and concerns, taking into account
7 related risks, relative impact, and affected parties in coordination
8 with the Board and key stakeholders;
- 9 (d) Advocate the goals, objectives, and programs of the Authority
10 among the various concerned sectors and stakeholders;
- 11 (e) Call on any agency, group, individual member of the Board, local
12 government unit, and host community to address issues and
13 concerns relating to the implementation of major programs, projects
14 and activities;
- 15 (f) Supervise the monitoring and timely implementation of Eastern
16 Visayas-wide programs, projects and activities;
- 17 (g) Endorse to the Board all policy recommendations, plans, and
18 programs for its approval;
- 19 (h) Accept, on behalf of the Authority, donations, contributions, grants
20 and bequests or gifts, in cash or in kind, from members, foreign
21 governments, international agencies, private entities or any
22 individual for purpose that will realize the functions of the
23 Authority;
- 24 (i) Supervise administrative operations including disbursement of any
25 fund of the Authority, subject to the usual accounting and auditing
26 procedures, and submit reports thereon;
- 27 (j) Execute and administer the policies and measures approved by the
28 Board;

(k) Appoint, remove, dismiss or otherwise discipline for cause, all employees of the Authority in accordance with the standard guidelines for recruitment, employment, and discipline in the Civil Service Code;

(l) Represent the Authority before other offices, agencies, and instrumentalities of the government and with all persons and entities, public or private;

(m) Sign agreements and ~~for~~ contracts on behalf of the Authority, including those for services of experts and consultants, and other reports of accountabilities of the Authority;

(n) Serve as *ex officio* member of the Board of Directors of the NEDA and the TIEZA; and

(o) Perform such other functions that the Board may direct to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 12. Deputy Chairperson. – The Chairperson shall be assisted by one Deputy Chairperson, who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines upon the recommendation of the Chairperson, with the rank of Assistant Secretary. The Deputy Chairperson shall have the same qualifications as the Chairperson and shall perform such duties and functions as may be assigned by the Chairperson or as provided for by law.

SEC. 13. Executive Director. – An Executive Director shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines upon recommendation by the Chairperson: *Provided*, That no person shall be appointed as Executive Director unless one is a Filipino citizen, of good moral character, of proven probity and integrity and a holder of a degree in economics, business, public administration, law, management or other related fields, and have at least five (5) years relevant experience in said fields: *Provided, further*, That the appointee to the position of Executive Director shall have been a resident of Eastern Visayas for five (5) years prior to appointment, and has the requisite eligibilities for third level career service position, pursuant to the career executive rank system: *Provided, finally*, That the appointee shall reside in Eastern Visayas while serving in such office.

1 The Executive Director shall assist the Chairperson in carrying out the
2 functions of the Authority and shall, likewise, serve as the Secretary of the
3 Board.

4 **SEC. 14. *The Advisory Council.*** – There is hereby constituted an
5 EVDA Advisory Committee to be composed of the following:

6 (a) The Chairperson as head;

7 (b) The Eastern Visayas RDC Chairperson;

8 (c) The District Representatives of the legislative districts comprising
9 Eastern Visayas;

10 (d) The Provincial Governors of the provinces comprising Eastern
11 Visayas;

12 (e) The City Mayors of the independent cities in Eastern Visayas;

13 (f) The Regional Directors of the national line agencies with regional
14 offices in Eastern Visayas.

15 The Advisory Council shall convene at least once every six (6) months
16 or as often as necessary upon the call of the EVDA Chairperson, for advice or
17 consultation by the Authority on important matters related to Eastern Visayas.

18 **SEC. 15. *Organizational Structure.*** – The Board of Directors, upon the
19 recommendation of the Chairperson shall determine the organizational
20 structure and staffing pattern of the Authority, in accordance with the existing
21 compensation and position classification system and civil service laws, rules
22 and regulations. The Chairperson may reorganize the Authority and may
23 create or abolish divisions, units, or branches therein as the exigency of the
24 affairs of the Authority may require.

25 **SEC. 16. *Merit System.*** – All officials and employees of the Authority
26 shall be selected and appointed on the basis of merit and fitness in accordance
27 with civil service law, rules, and regulations. The recruitment, transfer,
28 promotion, and dismissal of all its personnel including temporary workers

1 shall be governed by a merit system that will be established by the Authority
2 in compliance with existing laws, rules and regulations.

3 **SEC. 17. *Appropriations.*** – The amount necessary for the
4 implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General
5 Appropriations Act.

6 **SEC. 18. *Transfer of Post-Haiyan Rehabilitation Funds.*** – The
7 authority, control, and administration of funds, equipment and properties
8 donated by foreign governments, foreign and local non-profit agencies and
9 foundations and private entities to the National Government for the purpose
10 of the rehabilitation of areas in Eastern Visayas that were affected by Typhoon
11 Haiyan, as well as all other funds received or appropriated by the National
12 Government for the same purpose are hereby transferred to the Authority.
13 Thereafter, the Authority shall exercise the sole power of control and
14 disposition of the rehabilitation funds, in accordance with the provisions of
15 this Act or until the purposes for which the said funds had been donated are
16 accomplished.

17 **SEC. 19. *Formulation of the Eastern Visayas Development Master***
18 ***Plan.*** – Upon its organization, the Authority shall formulate and submit its
19 development master plan to the NEDA for integration into the Medium-Term
20 Philippine Development Plan and public investment program. The Eastern
21 Visayas Development Master Plan shall serve as the framework for the
22 accelerated and balanced development of Eastern Visayas, in accordance with
23 the aims and purposes of this Act.

24 **SEC. 20. *Administrative Supervision.*** – The Authority shall be under
25 the direct supervision of the President of the Philippines.

26 **SEC. 21. *Interpretation.*** – The powers, authorities and functions that
27 are vested in the Authority are intended to decentralize governmental
28 functions and authority and promote an efficient and effective working
29 relationship between the EVDA, the national government, and the local
30 government units.

31 **SEC. 22. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – The Authority shall
32 promulgate the rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act
33 within sixty (60) days from the date of its approval.

1 **SEC. 23. *Separability Clause.*** – If any part or provision of this Act is
2 held unconstitutional or invalid, other parts or provisions hereof which are not
3 affected shall continue to remain in full force and effect.

4 **SEC. 24. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules
5 and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions
6 of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

7 **SEC. 25. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after
8 its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,