

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



House Bill No. **369**

Introduced by Representative Richard I. Gomez, DPA

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. Railway has been one of the most underdeveloped and underestimated forms of transportation in our 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.

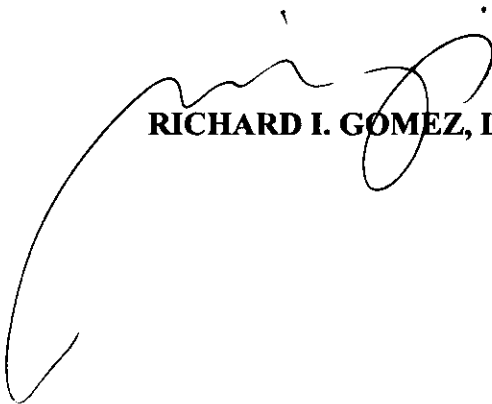
The Philippines continues to be one of the fast-growing nations in the world today, and this is even without the full benefit of railway infrastructure. Such infrastructure, especially if accessible across the entire archipelago, is one that compensates for the drawbacks of a country geographically disconnected into 7,641 islands. The development of a modern, well-connected railway system and network is imperative for the Philippines to maximize its economic potential. 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 holds back growth, especially in the countryside.

There are also parallel plans 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 “Tacloban-Ormoc-Baybay-Pintuyan, Southern Leyte Railway Act,” that would plan, construct and operate the Eastern Visayas Railway System. This system would commence at Tacloban City, traverse to Ormoc City, and travel southward along the west coast of the island of Leyte via Baybay City all the way to the tip of Southern Leyte, in the Municipality of Pintuyan, which is closest to Mindanao. 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 Tacloban-Ormoc-Baybay-Pintuyan, 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, DPA

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A RAILWAY SYSTEM IN
THE EASTERN VISAYAS REGION, FROM TACLOBAN CITY, TO ORMOC
CITY, BAYBAY CITY, AND TO THE MUNICIPALITY OF PINTUYAN 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 “Tacloban-Ormoc-Baybay- Pintuyan, Southern Leyte Railway Act of 2025.”

SEC. 2. *Establishment of the Tacloban-Ormoc-Baybay-Pintuyan, 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 Tacloban City, Ormoc City, to Baybay City and to the Municipality of Pintuyan 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 Tacloban-Ormoc-Baybay-Pintuyan, 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 Tacloban-Ormoc-Baybay-Pintuyan, 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 Tacloban City, Ormoc City, Baybay City and other surrounding economic centers.

- (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, resilience and disaster preparedness of the railway system; and
- (D) Prepare a 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 Tacloban-Ormoc-Baybay-Pintuyan, Southern Leyte Railway System 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 Tacloban-Ormoc-Baybay-Pintuyan, Southern Leyte Railway System.

SEC. 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the Tacloban-Ormoc-Baybay- Pintuyan, Southern Leyte Railway System 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, may be explored as per recommendation of technical studies and Tacloban-Ormoc-Baybay-Pintuyan, Southern Leyte Railway System 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,