

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 592



Introduced by **Representative Jaime R. Fresnedi**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to ensure that all bridges in the country are properly cared for and maintained to assure the safety of travelers.

The Department of Public Works and Highways says that there are 9,007 national bridges nationwide. However, only 34,352.4 kilometers of the total road network of 208,329.4 kilometers in the country are national roads, meaning that the number of bridges is much higher. Many of these are what the DPWH calls “unclassified” bridges – bridges who are not maintained by the national government nor the local government unit (LGU), as the latter often does not have necessary expertise.

Such is the case of the Pleasant Drive Bridge in Muntinlupa City. Originally built by Philippine National Construction Corporation (PNCC) to cross the South Luzon Expressway in the 1970s, the bridge was considered unclassified and not maintained by the DPWH until after strenuous representations were made by concerned local officials. San Miguel Corporation – South Luzon Expressway (SMC-SLEX), which operates the South Expressway, has said that the maintenance of bridges crossing the vital tollway is beyond their area of responsibility, while the city government of Muntinlupa did not have the necessary expertise.

There are certainly many such bridges in the country, and any one of them might collapse at any time, causing a great tragedy. To this end, it is essential that the mandate of the DPWH, as the only agency with the capability to maintain all bridges in the country, include all unclassified bridges.

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


JAIME R. FRESNEDI
Representative
Lone District, Muntinlupa City

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AN ACT
MANDATING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS TO
MAINTAIN, REPAIR, AND REHABILITATE ALL UNCLASSIFIED BRIDGES IN
THE COUNTRY

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

SECTION 1. Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Safety of Bridges Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to ensure the safe passage of people and goods across all bridges of the country. Towards this end, the national government shall assume the responsibility for the maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation of all bridges not otherwise classified as a national or local bridge.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Unclassified Bridges.* Unclassified bridges are bridges that are not maintained by either the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) or the local government unit (LGU) with jurisdiction over the road to which the bridge is connected, but is used by the public. This definition shall include all privately-constructed bridges that are used by the public without need for any toll, and exclude privately- or publicly-constructed bridges that are part of tollways or require the payment of tolls for their use.

SEC. 3. *Inventory of Unclassified Bridges.* The DPWH shall conduct an inventory of all unclassified bridges in the country within a year of the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 4. *Maintenance, Repair, or Rehabilitation of Bridges.* – The maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation of all unclassified bridges in the country shall be the responsibility of the DPWH. The Secretary of the DPWH shall include in the Department’s program the maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation of all unclassified bridges in the country and the funding of which shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DPWH, in cooperation and consultation with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and other relevant stakeholders, shall promulgate the rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 6. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the departments and agencies concerned. Thereafter, such amount shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 7. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act shall be deemed unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected there shall remain in force and effect.

SEC. 8. *Repealing Clause.* – All Acts, Presidential Decrees, Executive Orders and Administrative Orders, Rules and Regulations and other such issuances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 9. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,