

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 2765



Introduced by Representative

BRIAN POE, PhD, MNSA

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING A SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL WATERWAY
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IN THE PHILIPPINES THROUGH THE REGULATION
AND PROMOTION OF ECO-FRIENDLY FERRY SERVICES, PROVIDING
STANDARDS FOR SAFETY, ACCESSIBILITY, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION,
AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

As an archipelagic nation surrounded by seas, rivers, and straits, the Philippines is uniquely positioned to harness ferry services as a sustainable and efficient mode of transportation. However, with the rapid expansion of road infrastructure, the country has experienced a surge in vehicles, leading to traffic congestion, air pollution, and prolonged travel times. Our car-centric approach has fostered a heavy reliance on roads, resulting in bottlenecks and increased carbon emissions.

Given the current challenges in the transportation sector, there is a pressing need to explore sustainable and eco-friendly alternatives. Ferry services offer a viable solution to road congestion by utilizing the country's natural waterways to move passengers and goods efficiently. They also contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, particularly when

operated under strict environmental standards involving cleaner fuels and effective waste management systems.

This bill seeks to establish a Sustainable National Waterway Transportation System by regulating and promoting eco-friendly ferry services. It proposes a comprehensive framework ensuring ferry services are safe, affordable, inclusive, and environmentally responsible. The development of necessary infrastructure and regulatory oversight aims to reduce road congestion, promote environmental sustainability, and improve national mobility.

The proposed legislation is a significant step toward a more connected, inclusive, and greener Philippines. Prompt approval of this bill is respectfully urged.



HON. BRIAN POE, PhD, MNSA
Representative
FPJ Panday Bayanihan Party-List

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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 “Sustainable National Waterway Transportation Act.”

SEC 2. Declaration of Policy. — It is hereby declared the policy of the State to harness the Philippines’ extensive network of waterways as a sustainable, eco-friendly alternative to road-based transportation. The government acknowledges the pressing issues of traffic congestion, environmental degradation, and dependence on private vehicles. In promoting environmental sustainability, accessibility, and safety, the State aims to:

- (a) Alleviate traffic congestion by offering ferry services as a viable alternative to road transport.
- (b) Reduce carbon emissions by promoting ferries that comply with environmental standards.
- (c) Ensure ferry systems are inclusive and accessible to all, especially vulnerable sectors.

- (d) Stimulate economic development through job creation and sustainable tourism and trade.
- (e) Protect marine ecosystems through strict regulatory standards.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. — For purposes of this Act:

- (a) **Ferry Service** — A water-based transportation system using vessels to transport passengers, goods, and vehicles across waterways.
- (b) **Eco-friendly** — Practices or technologies minimizing environmental impact, including the use of clean fuels and proper waste management.
- (c) **National Waterway Transportation System** — The integrated network of ferry services across the Philippines.
- (d) **Accessibility** — Infrastructure designed to ensure equitable transportation access for all, including persons with disabilities.
- (e) **Environmental Standards** — Government regulations on emissions, waste management, and marine protection.
- (f) **Infrastructure Development** — Construction and maintenance of ferry-related facilities.
- (g) **Car-centrism** — Societal and governmental over-reliance on private car usage.

SEC 4. Promotion of Eco-Friendly Ferry Services.

- (a) Regulation of Ferry Operations — The Department of Transportation (DOTr), in coordination with MARINA and relevant agencies, shall establish operational regulations ensuring:
 - (i) Compliance with environmental protection standards.
 - (ii) Adherence to national and international safety protocols. c. Infrastructure is accessible to all, including persons with disabilities.
 - (iii) Environmental Monitoring — A monitoring system shall be established to ensure continuous compliance with environmental standards.
 - (iv) Public Awareness Campaign — A national campaign to promote ferry use and raise environmental awareness shall be launched.

SEC 5. Maritime Industry Authority Restructuring. – The Maritime Industry Authority is hereby reorganized as the Maritime Industry Office (MIO), under the DOTr. It shall be governed by a board named the Maritime Industry Franchising and Regulatory Board (MIFRB). The MIO Functions are:

- (a) Enforce regulations and issue franchises.
- (b) Inspect and ensure compliance with safety and emissions standards.
- (c) Lead an Inter-Agency Council to develop and implement the sustainable waterway system, including feasibility studies and infrastructure development.
- (d) Relocate affected informal settlers responsibly.
- (e) Accept funding and facilitate public-private partnerships.

SEC 6. Funding and Financial Support.

- (a) LGU Involvement — LGUs may raise and manage funds in accordance with the Local Government Code to support ferry initiatives.
- (b) Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) — LGUs and NGOs may collaborate under BOT arrangements per RA 6957, as amended by RA 7718.
- (c) Monitoring and Auditing — The Commission on Audit (COA) shall audit all ferry program funds.

SEC 7. Environmental Safeguards.

- (a) Compliance with existing environmental laws, such as the Clean Water Act.
- (b) Mandatory waste management systems onboard.
- (c) Conduct of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) for new routes.
- (d) Avoidance of ecologically sensitive areas.

SEC 8. Accessibility and Inclusivity.

- (a) Universal Design — Infrastructure must follow inclusive design standards.
- (b) Affordability — Government subsidies and fare discounts for vulnerable sectors.
- (c) Rural Connectivity — Priority development for underserved and isolated communities.

SEC 9. Public Consultation.

- (a) Stakeholder Participation — Inclusive decision-making processes involving relevant groups.
- (b) Grievance Mechanism — A system to report and resolve ferry-related issues.

SEC 10. Penalties.

- (a) Environmental Violations — Sanctions in accordance with RA 9003 and RA 9275.
- (b) Safety Violations — Penalties, including suspension, fines, and corrective actions.
- (c) Public Accountability — Transparent action on violations and corruption.

SEC 11. Appropriations.

- (a) GAA Allocation — Initial and continuing funds to be appropriated through the General Appropriations Act.
- (b) Use of Funds — For infrastructure, vessel procurement, regulation, and education.
- (c) Trust Fund — A National Waterways Trust Fund shall manage external resources.

SEC 12. Separability Clause. — If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder shall remain valid.

SEC 13. Repealing Clause. — All laws or regulations inconsistent with this Act are repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC 14. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect 15 days after publication in at least two national newspapers. The Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) shall be issued within 90 days. Existing ferry operators shall be given two years to comply with the new standards.

Approved,


HON. BRIAN POE, PhD, MNSA
Representative
FPJ Panday Bayanihan Party-List