

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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4367**



Introduced by **Representative RAYMOND ADRIAN SALCEDA**

**AN ACT
STRENGTHENING THE PHILIPPINE MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY BY
RENAMING IT AS THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL MARITIME ACADEMY,
EXPANDING ITS MANDATE, CURRICULAR OFFERINGS, RESEARCH
CAPABILITY, AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE, AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippine Merchant Marine Academy (PMMA) has long served as the country's premier institution in maritime education, producing master mariners, chief engineers, naval and coast guard officers, shipping executives, and maritime educators. For decades, it has been recognized by international shipowners as the gold standard for training Filipino seafarers.

Yet the maritime industry has undergone fundamental change. The rise of automation, artificial intelligence, green shipping, and increasingly complex global trade and security dynamics require a broader and more resilient institution. At the same time, the Philippines continues to face compliance issues with international standards such as those set by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). From 2016 to 2018 alone, Philippine manning agencies lost over 100,000 seafarer positions due to declining international confidence in maritime training.

The PMMA is no longer only a source of merchant marine officers. It has become a vital reservoir of highly trained personnel for the Philippine Navy, the Philippine Coast Guard, and maritime law enforcement agencies. It is also the preferred institution of many international shipping companies despite its limited capacity. For these reasons, it is necessary to expand and modernize its mandate, and to rename it as the Philippine National Maritime Academy (PNMA) to reflect its broader role in both commercial and national service.

This bill therefore seeks to:

1. Expand the mandate of PMMA into the PNMA, serving not only shipping but also defense, law enforcement, maritime domain awareness, and marine environmental protection.
2. Establish the National Maritime Research and Policy Center within PNMA to institutionalize science-based, data-driven research and policy support for the maritime industry, defense, and law enforcement sectors.
3. Modernize curricular offerings by including automation, robotics, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, autonomous ships, green shipping, and maritime environmental management, while strengthening traditional marine engineering and transportation courses.
4. Guarantee equitable access through a congressional district billeting system and scholarships for poor but deserving students, ensuring national representation in the cadet corps.
5. Provide Multi-Role Training Vessels (MRTVs) that will serve both as training platforms and as standby assets for overseas repatriation, anti-pollution operations, research expeditions, and disaster response.
6. Strengthen governance by broadening the Board of Trustees to include CHED, DOTr, MARINA, the Philippine Navy, the Philippine Coast Guard, alumni, industry, faculty, and student representatives.
7. Integrate climate resilience and sustainability in all academic programs, training modules, and research priorities.

By adopting this measure, the Philippines will position itself as a regional hub of maritime education and innovation, ensuring compliance with international standards while preparing the next generation of Filipino maritime professionals to serve both global shipping and the nation's defense and security needs.

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


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

SECTION 1. Short Title. This Act shall be known as the “Philippine National Maritime Academy Charter.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is the policy of the State to promote excellence in maritime education, training, and research based on science, innovation, and international standards. The State shall strengthen the Philippine maritime education system to serve the needs of commercial shipping, naval defense, maritime law enforcement, environmental protection, and national security. It shall ensure that the country produces world-class maritime professionals and positions the Philippines as a regional hub of maritime education, research, and innovation.

SEC. 3. *Renaming of the Academy.* The Philippine Merchant Marine Academy (PMMA) is hereby renamed as the Philippine National Maritime Academy (PNMA).

SEC. 4. *Mandate.* The PNMA shall:

- (a) Provide maritime education and training responsive to the needs of international shipping, the Philippine Navy, the Philippine Coast Guard, and other maritime law enforcement agencies;
- (b) Establish a National Maritime Research and Policy Center to advance science-based innovation, data-driven planning, and policy development;
- (c) Integrate climate change adaptation, green shipping, digitalization, and sustainable development into its programs; and

(d) Serve as the official service academy for naval and maritime law enforcement agencies.

SEC. 5. *Curricular Offerings.* The PNMA shall offer postsecondary, undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate programs in maritime education including, but not limited to, Marine Transportation, Marine Engineering, Naval Architecture, Maritime Business, Maritime Policy, Port and Logistics Management, Naval and Coast Guard Science, and allied sciences. It may also provide technical-vocational education and short professional courses. All programs shall be subject to approval by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA).

SEC. 6. *Governance.* The PNMA shall be governed by a Board of Trustees chaired by the Chairperson of the CHED, co-chaired by the Secretary of Transportation, and vice-chaired by the Superintendent of the PNMA. Members shall include the Administrator of MARINA, the Flag Officer-in-Command of the Philippine Navy, the Commandant of the Philippine Coast Guard, the President of the PNMA Alumni Association, representatives of the faculty, students, non-teaching personnel, and a representative of the maritime industry.

SEC. 7. *Superintendent.* The PNMA shall be headed by a Superintendent with the rank of Vice Admiral, appointed by the President of the Philippines upon recommendation of the Board of Trustees. The Superintendent shall serve for a term of four years and may be reappointed.

SEC. 8. *Research and Policy Center.* There is hereby created a National Maritime Research and Policy Center under the PNMA. The Center shall conduct research on shipping, maritime law, safety, environmental protection, and green shipping; serve as a data repository; and partner with international maritime institutions for technology transfer and policy development.

SEC. 9. *Service Obligation.* Graduates of merchant marine programs shall serve in the government or the domestic maritime industry for an accumulated duration of at least four years under a return service program. Graduates commissioned under the Philippine Navy or the Philippine Coast Guard shall comply with the service obligation required under their respective service contracts.

SEC. 10. *Training Vessels.* The PNMA shall maintain Multi-Role Training Vessels (MRTVs) to provide shipboard training. Subject to approval of the Board, MRTVs may also be used for repatriation of Overseas Filipino Workers, anti-pollution operations, search and rescue, and research voyages.

SEC. 11. *Admission and Scholarships.* The PNMA shall establish an admission system that ensures nationwide representation through a congressional district billeting system. Scholarships and financial assistance shall be provided for poor but deserving students.

SEC. 12. *Tax Exemptions.* The PNMA shall be exempt from all taxes on revenues and assets used for educational purposes. Donations, grants, and endowments made to the PNMA shall be exempt from donor's tax and considered allowable deductions from gross income in accordance with the National Internal Revenue Code, as amended. Importations of ships, training equipment, and academic materials shall be exempt from customs duties and taxes.

SEC. 13. *Appropriations.* The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy. Thereafter, such amounts as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 14. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* Within sixty days from the effectivity of this Act, the Board of Trustees, in consultation with CHED, MARINA, and TESDA, shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations.

SEC. 15. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 16. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 17. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,