



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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4668



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

AN ACT

MANDATING THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS (DPWH), DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY, TO IMMEDIATELY PLAN AND IMPLEMENT THE CONSTRUCTION OF TWO LONG-SPAN PHYSICAL INTERCONNECTIVITY PROJECTS CONNECTING SORSOGON AND SAMAR PROVINCES, AND LEYTE AND SURIGAO PROVINCES TO ENHANCE CONNECTIVITY IN TRANSPORTATION, LOGISTICS, ICT, POWER, AND WATER, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bagong Pilipinas Highway Act is proposed to address critical infrastructure gaps by mandating the planning and construction of two long-span physical interconnectivity projects. These projects aim to connect key provinces across Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, thereby improving transportation, logistics, power, water distribution, and ICT connectivity across these regions.

The Philippine archipelago, with over 7,000 islands, faces significant connectivity challenges. Despite advances in infrastructure development, transport, logistics, power, and communication networks remain fragmented, hindering the country's economic potential and competitiveness. Critical areas, particularly in the central and southern regions, suffer from inadequate

infrastructure and lack seamless connections, resulting in higher operational costs, longer travel times, and limited access to economic opportunities.

The proposed long-span interconnectivity projects aim to bridge these gaps by creating vital links between historically underserved regions, specifically linking Sorsogon with Samar, and Leyte with Surigao. These connections will enhance the movement of goods, services, and people, thus facilitating greater mobility, streamlining logistics, promoting equitable growth across regions, and improving the competitiveness of local industries.

In addition, integrating ICT infrastructure will support the country's transition to a digital economy, while including power and water distribution systems will address long-standing challenges in providing essential services to underserved areas. Strengthening digital connectivity will enhance access to e-government services, boost online business capabilities, and expand opportunities for e-commerce and remote education, especially in rural areas. Incorporating power and water systems into these interconnectivity projects ensures that sustainable development practices are implemented from the outset. By providing reliable access to energy and water resources, these projects will meet basic needs, improve living conditions, and facilitate economic activities in remote areas.

Moreover, the construction and operation of these projects will generate thousands of job opportunities, ranging from skilled labor to management positions. Local industries and businesses will benefit from increased demand for construction materials, technology, and services, thereby contributing to local capacity building and fostering a more sustainable economic ecosystem in the affected regions.

To ensure the success of these projects, the Bagong Pilipinas Highway Authority (BPHA) will be established to oversee planning, funding, and implementation. An inter-agency board comprising representatives from the DPWH, DOTr, DICT, DOE, DTI, and LGUs will coordinate efforts to address all project aspects, including engineering, construction, environmental impact, and social considerations. The potential for Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) will also be explored to supplement government funding, ensuring efficient resource allocation while involving the private sector in national infrastructure development.

Enacting the Bagong Pilipinas Highway Act will signify a major step towards advancing the country's infrastructure, promoting physical connectivity, digital inclusion, economic growth, and sustainability. These projects will unlock

the full potential of key regions in the Philippines, leading to a more unified, competitive, and prosperous nation.

This measure was filed by Cagayan de Oro, 2nd District Rep. Rufus Rodriguez during the 19th Congress.

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



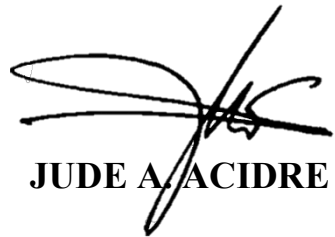
FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ



YEDDA MARIE K. ROMUALDEZ



ANDREW JULIAN K. ROMUALDEZ



JUDE A. ACIDRE



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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4668

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

AN ACT

MANDATING THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS (DPWH), DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY, TO IMMEDIATELY PLAN AND IMPLEMENT THE CONSTRUCTION OF TWO LONG-SPAN PHYSICAL INTERCONNECTIVITY PROJECTS CONNECTING SORSOGON AND SAMAR PROVINCES, AND LEYTE AND SURIGAO PROVINCES TO ENHANCE CONNECTIVITY IN TRANSPORTATION, LOGISTICS, ICT, POWER, AND WATER, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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 "Bagong Pilipinas Highway Act".

Section 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to promote and enhance the interconnectivity and integration of the Philippine archipelago through the development of infrastructure that facilitates efficient transportation, logistics, information and communication technology, power, and water

distribution systems. This policy aims to increase the overall competitiveness and economic growth of the Philippines by improving the connectivity between Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

Section 3. *Objectives.* – The objectives of this Act are:

- a) To mandate the immediate planning and implementation of two long-span interconnectivity projects: one connecting the provinces of Sorsogon and Samar, and the other connecting the provinces of Leyte and Surigao.
- b) To enhance the transportation and logistics networks between Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.
- c) To improve the information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure across the connected regions.
- d) To ensure the efficient distribution of power and water resources between the connected regions.
- e) To boost economic growth and competitiveness by reducing travel time and costs, and improving accessibility and mobility.

Section 4. *Mandate and Responsibilities.* –

- a) The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) shall be responsible for the planning, design, and construction of the long-span physical interconnectivity projects and explore the best engineering

solutions (e.g. bridge, floating tunnel) that will maximize overall interconnectivity objectives and impact;

- b) The Department of Transportation (DOTr) shall coordinate with the DPWH to ensure the integration all possible transportation modes (e.g. land, rail) that can be integrated in the projects and provide a seamless multi-modal interconnection related to the two projects, contributing to the enhancement of the entire national transportation network;
- c) The Department of Information and Communication Technology (DICT) shall ensure the inclusion of ICT infrastructure in the projects, facilitating enhanced digital connectivity and communication;
- d) The Department of Energy (DOE) and the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) shall collaborate with the DPWH to incorporate power and water distribution systems into the projects.
- e) The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and its attached agency, the Construction Industry Authority of the Philippines (CIAP), shall support the trade, logistics, and construction development planning aspects of the two projects. They shall harness the expertise and experience of the private sector to obtain the best business and engineering solutions for the projects.

Section 5. *Creation of the Bagong Pilipinas Highway Authority.* – There is hereby created a Bagong Pilipinas Highway Authority (BPHA) to oversee the planning, fund sourcing, and implementation of the two long-span interconnectivity projects.

The BPHA shall be governed by an inter-agency board composed of representatives from the DPWH, DOTr, DICT, DOE, NWRB, DTI, and the Department of Finance (DOF).

The PBIA shall have the authority to:

1. Formulate and implement a comprehensive plan for the two projects.
2. Source and manage funds from domestic and international sources.
3. Oversee the coordination and collaboration among all involved agencies and LGUs.
4. Ensure compliance with all legal, environmental, and social safeguards.
5. Engage with stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and local communities, to address concerns and maximize benefits.

Section 6. *Collaboration with Local Government Units (LGUs).* – The LGUs of the provinces of Sorsogon, Samar, Leyte, and Surigao shall fully collaborate with the national government to support and facilitate the success of the two long-span interconnectivity projects.

The LGUs shall assist in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the projects, including the provision of necessary permits, right-of-way acquisitions, and local resources.

The LGUs shall also engage with local communities to ensure their participation and address any concerns related to the projects, ensuring that the benefits are maximized and any adverse impacts are mitigated.

Section 7. *Support from All Relevant Government Agencies.* – All government agencies are mandated to support the requirements and provide the necessary resources to facilitate the earliest planning and implementation of the two interconnectivity productivity projects.

This support shall include, but not be limited to, the issuance of permits, right-of-way acquisitions, consultations with indigenous peoples, and the implementation of environmental protection safeguards.

Relevant agencies shall work in coordination with the DPWH, DOTr, DICT, DTI, and LGUs to ensure compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements, and to expedite the processes necessary for the timely completion of the projects.

Section 8. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) of the year following its enactment and thereafter. The DPWH, DOTr, and DICT are also authorized to seek and receive grants, donations, and other forms of financial assistance from both domestic and international sources.

Additionally, the possibility of pursuing the projects through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) modality, either in whole or in part, shall be explored to ensure the efficient and effective allocation of resources.

Section 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DPWH, in coordination with the DOTr, DICT, DOE, NWRB, DTI, and other relevant government agencies, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

Section 10. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 11. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 12. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,