

TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HOUSE BILL NO. 5669

Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE MA. NINA FRANCESCA P. LACSON**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is one of the most heavily affected countries in terms of natural calamities. Being located in the Pacific Ring of Fire and along the typhoon belt, the country regularly experiences earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, typhoons, landslides, among others. These disasters do not only cause damage in agriculture, economy, and infrastructure, but also claim countless Filipino lives.

In September 30, 2025, the Philippines was struck by one of the deadliest earthquakes since 2013. A 6.9-magnitude quake hit just before 10:00 in the evening off the shore of coastal Bogo City in the island province of Cebu.

Only a week later, a 7.4 magnitude earthquake struck off Davao Oriental, prompting tsunami warnings from Philippine and Indonesian authorities. Residents in coastal towns were asked to evacuate as authorities warned of waves over a meter (3.3ft) above normal tide levels.

Then, on October 11, 2025, a magnitude 6.0 earthquake struck off Surigao del Sur according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS).

On October 13, 2025, the residents of Cebu were again roused out of sleep by a strong earthquake past 1:00 in the morning. A magnitude 6 earthquake struck at 1:06 a.m. some 14 kilometers southwest of Bogo City, which is still suffering from the devastation caused by the earthquake that hit the city on September 30.

The successive earthquakes have caused concern among many that the “Big One” might occur in the near future. The “Big One” refers to a projected 7.2-magnitude earthquake prompted by the movement of the West Valley Fault, which traverses populous areas in Metro Manila. Some experts believe that this earthquake may result in trillions worth of property damage and bring disastrous effects to the nation’s economy. More than that, it could lead to over 30,000 fatalities.

The goal of this proposed measure is to ensure that relief efforts during disasters are free from any additional fees or transportation costs, in order to distribute aid more efficiently and cost-effectively in calamity-stricken areas. The last thing needed in such emergency situations is added expense. This measure also aims to strengthen existing quick response mechanisms to address the needs of the people during disasters and emergencies.

For the foregoing reason, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



MA. NINA FRANCESCA P. LACSON
Manila Teachers Party-list

Sources:

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR FREE FREIGHT SERVICES IN THE TRANSPORTATION OF
RELIEF GOODS TO CALAMITY-STRICKEN AREAS

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 “Public Assistance in Disaster Aid and Logistics Act (PADALA).”

Section 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to strengthen the existing quick response mechanisms to address the needs of the people during disasters and emergencies. To this end, the State shall encourage altruism among citizens, and engage the services of public and private common carriers, freight forwarders, and logistics companies to collect, sort, store, transport, and deliver relief goods donated by international and local donors to areas declared in a state of calamity in the most economical, reliable, speedy, and secure manner.

Section 3. Definition of Terms. – As used in this Act:

(a) *Airport charges* refer to fees imposed for the use of airport facilities and services, including but not limited to landing and takeoff fees, aircraft parking, navigation charges, and other related charges;

(b) *Auxiliary costs* refer to the additional fees and charges for supplementary services beyond basic freight rate, including but not limited to customs clearance, terminal handling charges, arrastre, storage, and pilotage;

(c) *Common carriers*, as defined under Article 1732 of the Civil Code of the Philippines and interpreted under prevailing jurisprudence, refers to persons, corporations, firms or associations engaged in the business of carrying or transporting passengers or goods or both, by land, water, or air, for compensation, offering their services indiscriminately to the general public.

(d) *Disaster* refers to a severe disruption in the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic, or environmental losses and

impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected population to cope using its own resources;

(e) *Relief* refers to interventions to alleviate, ease, or mitigate distress or critical situations affecting persons, families, groups or communities;

(f) *Relief* goods refer to food packs and non-food items such as clothing, mats, blankets, mosquito nets, kitchen wares, water containers, hygiene kits, medical and health-related products, shelter materials, communications equipment, and other essential supplies for victims of a disaster or an emergency; and

(g) *State of calamity* refers to a condition involving mass casualties or major damage to property and infrastructures, including disruption of livelihood and the normal way of life, caused by natural or human-induced hazards.

Section 4. *Free Freight Services.* – The Office of Civil Defense (OCD), as lead of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) Logistics Cluster, in coordination with the Department of Transportation (DOTr), and in partnership with the Philippine Postal Corporation (PPC), freight companies, common carriers, private carriers, freight forwarders, and other logistics providers operating in the Philippines, shall provide free freight services exclusively for the transportation of relief goods and donated articles to duly registered and accredited relief organizations and emergency response groups, consigned to areas declared under a state of calamity by the President of the Philippines or by the local *sanggunian* of the concerned LGU.

When the intended area of destination is rendered inaccessible, the relief goods shall instead be consigned to the local chief executive of the nearest accessible local government unit (LGU) for immediate safekeeping and distribution.

All auxiliary shipping costs and other port and airport charges shall be waived by the concerned port and airport authorities: *Provided*, That in the implementation of this provision, the container van costs, turnaround time, and volume of cargo transported free of charge shall be duly considered to mitigate undue losses to the private sector.

Section 5. *Vigilance over Relief Goods.* – The National and Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Management Councils, through their Response Clusters, shall ensure the expeditious movement of people, goods, and equipment to the affected populations and responding agencies in coordination with local law enforcement agencies, port and airport authorities, and organizations with similar mandates and responsibilities.

The NDRRMC shall serve as the primary policy and coordinating body, while the OCD shall act as the implementing arm. In case of conflict between the mandates of government agencies under this Act, the policy and coordination authority of the NDRRMC shall prevail.

Section 6. Release of Relief Goods. – The release of donated relief goods and articles intended for distribution to areas under a state of calamity shall comply with the existing rules and procedures of responsible government agencies, including the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Bureau of Customs (BOC), Department of Education, Department of Health, concerned LGUs, and other government agencies authorized to distribute the relief goods and articles, and shall likewise take into account prevailing policies of freight service and logistics companies and carriers: *Provided*, That the provisions of Republic Act No. 10863, otherwise known as the “Customs Modernization and Tariff Act,” and other special laws on relief consignments shall apply suppletorily.

Section 7. Tax Deduction. – Common carriers, private carriers, and other logistics companies mandated to provide free freight services for the transportation of relief goods under Section 4 of this Act shall be entitled to an additional deduction from gross income equivalent to one hundred percent (100%) of the costs incurred for such services, including the actual cost of salaries and allowances of personnel directly involved in transporting the relief goods, subject to the rules and limitations prescribed under the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended, and other applicable laws, rules and regulations: *Provided*, That to avail of the additional deduction, common carriers, private carriers, and other logistics companies shall secure proper certification from the appropriate government agency that the expenses claimed as deduction relate specifically to the transportation of relief goods as contemplated in this Act. Such availment shall be without prejudice to the conduct of post-audit by the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

The availment of this tax incentive shall preclude the concerned common carriers and logistics companies from claiming any similar incentives granted under other general or special laws, rules, or regulations for the same services.

Section 8. Oversight and Monitoring. – The OCD and the DOTr, through the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB), Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), and Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB), shall monitor and oversee the compliance of freight service companies, common and private carriers, and other logistics companies in the provision of free freight services as mandated under Section 4 of this Act.

The NDRRMC shall provide overall strategic policy direction, while the OCD shall serve as the lead implementing agency. The NDRRMC shall submit to Congress an annual report on the implementation of this Act, including data on free freight services rendered, beneficiaries served, and challenges encountered.

Section 9. Penalties. – Any common carrier, freight forwarder, or logistics company that, without justifiable cause, refuses or fails to provide the free freight services mandated under this Act shall be liable to a fine of not less than Two

Hundred Thousand Pesos (PhP 200,000.00) but not more than One Million Pesos (PhP 1,000,000.00), and/or suspension or revocation of franchise, license, or permit, at the discretion of the appropriate regulatory agency.

Section 10. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Section 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Administrator of OCD shall, in coordination with the heads of CAB, MARINA, LTFRB, BOC, PHLPPost, DSWD, Philippine Ports Authority, Philippine Coast Guard, and the associations or authorized representatives of freight service companies and freight forwarders, common and private carriers, and other logistics companies, issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

Section 12. *Suppletory Application.* – The provisions of Republic Act No. 10121, otherwise known as the “Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010,” and other relevant laws shall apply suppletorily to this Act.

Section 13. *Separability Clause.* – If any part or provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder thereof not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 14. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,