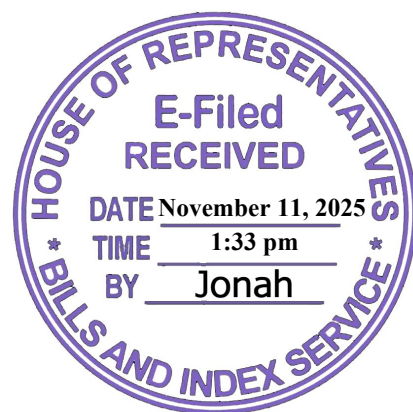




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives



20th CONGRESS

First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5824

Introduced by Hon. Charisse Anne C. Hernandez

Lone District of Calamba, Laguna

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Section 16, Article II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, “*The State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature.*”

The Philippines grapples with some of the world's most severe traffic congestion, particularly in Metro Manila, where commuters lose an average of 117 hours annually—or equivalent to nearly five days—stuck in traffic jams. According to the 2023 TomTom Traffic Index, Metro Manila ranks among the most congested cities globally, with an average travel time of 25 minutes and 30 seconds for a 10-kilometer route and a congestion level of 52%. In 2024, the region's streets and highways saw an average of 3.82 million vehicles daily, exacerbating gridlock and contributing to economic losses estimated in billions of pesos through wasted fuel, productivity declines, and increased pollution. While cities like Davao have recently overtaken Manila in some congestion metrics for 2024, the national trend remains dire, with the INRIX 2024 Global Traffic Scorecard highlighting persistent delays across over 900 cities worldwide, including several in the Philippines. This congestion not only strains infrastructure but also heightens risks for vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists, who are often sidelined in car-centric designs.

Despite the fact that all of these variables are manageable, little remedies have, shockingly, been offered up to this point. According to research from Carnegie Mellon University, short automobile journeys can be substituted with bike and scooter excursions to reduce traffic, but local communities need more micro mobility infrastructure to achieve this beneficial result.

Compounding the congestion issue is the alarming rise in road user fatalities, underscoring the urgent need for safer mobility alternatives. Nationwide, the Philippine Statistics Authority reported 13,101 deaths due to road traffic accidents in 2023, marking a significant increase from previous years

and equating to roughly 36 lives lost daily, including an average of five children per day. From 2011 to 2021, road traffic deaths surged by 39%, rising from 7,938 to 11,096, according to data from the Department of Transportation and the World Health Organization. In 2024, preliminary figures indicate over 37,000 injuries from road crashes, with a forecasted mortality rate of 12.5 deaths per 100,000 population. Metro Manila, as the epicenter of these issues, recorded approximately 88,100 road traffic incidents in 2024, up from the previous year, with 332 fatalities reported from January to November alone—many occurring on major thoroughfares like EDSA and C5. These statistics, drawn from sources like the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and the Highway Patrol Group, reveal a 35% increase in road crash fatalities nationwide in 2024 compared to 2023, with vulnerable groups such as pedestrians and cyclists bearing the brunt due to inadequate safe pathways.

Thus, this bill seeks to empower and institutionalize active transport by establishing safe pathways network of bicycle lanes, walkways, and slow streets in order to decrease not only traffic volume, but also carbon emissions caused by private and public motorized vehicles by empowering and encouraging the citizenry to use said facilities provided in this bill. It will also provide a safe road environment, reducing the risk of road-related accidents. Most of all, the bill also seeks to emphasize its commitment towards sustainable development goals, to expand the economy while maintaining the biological diversity, essential ecosystem processes, and overall environmental quality of the nation. In light of the dire traffic and safety data, the passage of this bill is imperative to safeguard lives, decongest roads, and build resilient communities.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charisse', with a stylized flourish at the end.

CHARISSE ANNE C. HERNANDEZ



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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A SAFE PATHWAYS NETWORK OF BICYCLE LANES,
WALKWAYS AND SLOW STREETS, 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 “*Safe Pathways Act*”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy* - The Constitution mandates the State to protect and advance the right of the Filipino people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature, and to protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.

The State also recognizes the need for infrastructure and a mindset shift to support and accommodate non-motorized modes of transportation like walking, bicycling, and other non-motorized vehicles as well as to provide safe and practical pathways for commuters, particularly for front-line workers in the health sector and other professions.

Prioritizing walking, bicycling, and other non-motorized transportation will cut carbon emissions, require less energy and resources, improve quality of life, and have a number of positive health effects.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms*. — For purposes of this Act, these terms are defined as follows:

- a. *Active transport* refers to physical activity undertaken as a means of transport, such as walking or cycling and the use of other non- motorized vehicles;
- b. *Electric personal mobility devices* refer to any electric motorized device exclusively used for transporting an individual. This includes electric bicycles and electric kick scooters, excluding motorcycles, tricycles, and other similar modes of transport;
- c. *End-of-trip facilities* refer to facilities that cater to active transport users needs at their destinations, which may include shower and changing rooms, short- and long-term bicycle parking, bicycle repair stations, and lockers, among others;
- d. *Non-motorized vehicles* refer to all forms of transportation that do not rely on an engine or motor for movement, including, but not limited to, bicycles and small wheeled non-motorized transport, such as skateboards, push scooters, and handcarts; and
- e. *Slow streets* refer to local roads providing safe and convenient access and use by restricting motor vehicle access, use, or speed limits on certain days or hours in the day, or any combination of such measures as may be determined by the concerned local government unit (LGU), and prioritizing access and use by pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-motorized vehicle users.

SEC. 4. *Safe Pathways Network.* - Immediately upon effectivity of this Act, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), and in coordination with the Local Government Unit (LGUs), shall identify and create a network of pop-up bicycle lanes. The pop-up bicycle lanes are strictly for bicycles and other non-motorized vehicles only, and shall, as much as practicable, directly connect users to essential destinations such as medical facilities, public and private facilities frequented by people, schools, and other similar places that may be identified. The lanes may be marked with removable tapes and mobile signs, which can easily be placed and removed as necessary. Other physical barriers may also be used. Electric scooters, electric bicycles, and other similar modes of transport may be allowed subject to the guidelines set by the DOTr and other appropriate agencies.

To complement the network of pop-up bicycle lanes, LGUs shall create a designated network of people-oriented emergency pathways along local roads that will provide pedestrians and bicycle and non-motorized vehicles users safe, convenient access to frequented destinations by restricting motorized vehicle passage in these pathways during peak hours. The emergency pathways shall be clearly marked with signage containing restrictions. The DOTr and DPWH shall identify priority areas for implementation.

SEC. 5. *Traffic Law, Rules and Regulations.*- All users of non-motorized vehicles and electric personal mobility devices shall obey traffic laws, rules and regulations and shall be subject to existing penalties for violation.

The LGUs, in consultation with the DOTr and other appropriate agencies, shall issue ordinances for the safe use of bicycle lanes and the use of non-motorized vehicles and electric personal mobility devices.

SEC. 6. *Bicycle Racks and other End-of-Trip Facilities.*- All public places, government offices, schools, places of work, mass transit and public utility vehicles terminals, and commercial establishments, including but not limited to malls, banks, and hospitals, shall provide, as far as practicable, secure bicycle or multi-use racks and other end-of-trip facilities, as needed.

SEC. 7. *Non-motorized Vehicle Parking Spaces* – All public places, government offices, schools, places of work and major commercial establishments, including malls, banks, hospitals, and the like shall provide, as far as practicable, adequate parking spaces for other non-motorized vehicles, and electric scooters, electric bicycles, and other similar modes of transport as allowed by the DOTr and other appropriate agencies.

SEC. 8. *Permanent Adoption of Safe Pathways Network.* – The DOTr, DPWH and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), in coordination with the appropriate agencies, shall prepare to permanently adopt the established bicycle lanes and emergency pathways, as may be appropriate. Pursuant to this, the LGUs shall clear all local roads and sidewalks of obstructions, and make the necessary improvements on existing structures. All non-motorized vehicle parking spaces and bicycle and other end-of-trip facilities shall also be made permanent, as may be appropriate and practicable.

Further, the DPWH shall revise its manuals and guidelines for road design and construction to include non-motorized vehicles in the allocation of road space on national and local roads, and to promote safety of pedestrians and non-motorized vehicle users.

The LGUs shall coordinate and issue the necessary measures for the adoption and implementation of the Safe Pathways Network, in compliance with the implementing rules and regulations as provided in Section 9 of this Act.

SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOTr, in coordination with the DPWH, DILG, and other appropriate agencies, shall promulgate and issue the necessary guidelines for the effective implementation of this Act. The implementing rules and regulations issued pursuant to this Section shall take effect thirty (30) days after its publication in two (2) national newspaper of general circulation

SEC. 10. *Appropriations.* - The funds necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be sourced from the amounts set aside by LGUs for the infrastructure projects within their jurisdiction, as well as from the appropriations of the DOTr and the DPWH under the General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.* – If, for any reason, any section of this Act shall be deemed unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions hereof shall not be affected and shall thereby remain in force and effect.

SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, decrees, instructions, rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 13. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,