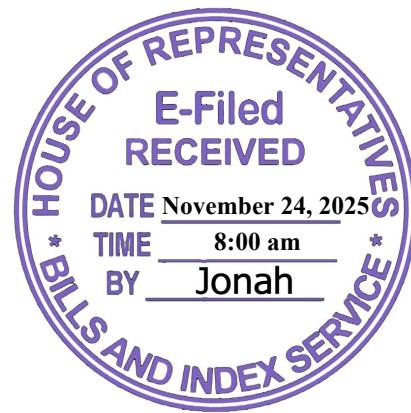


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6287



Introduced by **ANG PROBINSYANO**
Party-List Representative Alfred Delos Santos

EXPLANATORY NOTE

As of the 2024 census, the National Capital Region (NCR) recorded a population of 14,001,751, reflecting an increase of 517,289 people or 0.91 percent compared to the 2020 census figure of 13,484,462. Based on growth projections, NCR's population is expected to reach between 14.75 to 15.23 million by 2025. This continued rise underscores the intensifying pressures of urban life in Metro Manila, where overcrowding, traffic congestion, pollution, and limited access to essential services have made daily living increasingly stressful.

Local government units (LGUs) are often overwhelmed by the sheer number of residents they must serve. While some LGUs manage to implement effective policies, these are frequently short-term measures that cannot fully address structural issues such as insufficient health facilities, inadequate personnel-to-patient ratios, limited resources compared to the growing population, traffic gridlock, and rising housing costs. These challenges highlight the imbalance between urban centers and the provinces. Many Filipinos migrate to Metro Manila in search of opportunities, yet the lack of comprehensive rural development forces them into stressful and unsustainable urban environments.

Thus, this representation proposes the Buhay Probinsya national policy to provide a long-term solution. We envision a future in which provinces are alive, thriving, and self-sustaining. To achieve this, a comprehensive national framework must be established to promote industrial and commercial development that creates jobs outside Metro Manila, agricultural modernization to strengthen food security and rural livelihoods, and sustainable tourism that harnesses local culture and natural resources while ensuring environmental protection.

This national policy shall consider industrial or commercial development, agriculture, and sustainable tourism. We want the policy to harness, but at the same time protect, our existing resources so that they can be used for the overall national development. We likewise seek to balance national growth by

channeling investments, businesses, and innovations into the provinces. By doing so, Filipinos will no longer feel compelled to uproot their families and migrate to already congested cities. Instead, they will experience development within their own communities, leading to vibrant, prosperous provinces

We want the provinces to thrive through the inflow of businesses, investors, agricultural advances, and sustainable tourism, *mga probinsyang buhay at puno ng buhay, iyan po ang obhektibo natin*. It is for these reasons that the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



ALFRED C. DELOS SANTOS

Representative, Ang Probinsyano Partylist

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF PROVINCES

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 “*Buhay Probinsya Law.*”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to promote rural development. It is likewise the policy of the state to ensure the equitable distribution of wealth and opportunity to each Filipino. The State shall thus endeavor to provide and implement programs that will ensure a decentralized economic development that will now focus on provinces and rural areas. Toward this end, the State shall implement measures to achieve the following objectives:

- a) Creation and implementation of policies focused on the economic development of provinces and rural areas;
- b) Determination of areas within each province that are suitable for industrial, agricultural, and eco-tourism hubs;
- c) Creation and implementation of sustainable tourism policies per area;
- d) Creation and implementation of policies that will attract various industries to invest and maintain their manufacturing or production sites in rural areas;
- e) Provide avenues for agricultural development which shall consider other agriculture activities that fit the characteristics of the province and not just crop planting;
- f) Encourage Filipinos to work and reside in provinces and rural areas; and
- g) Effectively decongest urban areas by decentralizing business and job opportunities.

SECTION 3. *Philippine Regional and Rural Development Council.* – A Philippine Regional and Rural Development Committee (PRRDC) is hereby created, which shall be composed of the following:

- a) Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA);
- b) Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG);
- c) Secretary of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH);
- d) Secretary of the Department of Transportation (DOT);
- e) Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE);
- f) Secretary of the Department of Tourism (DOT);
- g) Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);
- h) Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);
- i) Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD);
- j) Secretary of the Department of Health (DOH);
- k) Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM);
- l) Secretary of the Department of Finance (DOF);
- m) Secretary of the Department of Education (DepEd);
- n) Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED);
- o) Director-General of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA);
- p) Chairperson of the Mindanao Development Authority; and
- q) Chairperson of the Cooperative Development Authority.

Each committee member shall designate a permanent and alternate representative who shall have the authority to decide for, and on behalf of the department, agency, or office they are representing, and to perform other functions as necessary.

The Committee shall be assisted by a Secretariat, headed by the General Manager of the National Housing Authority (NHA), which shall provide technical and administrative assistance to the Committee. The Secretariat shall be composed of personnel from the NHA and the member agencies of the Committee.

The Committee, in coordination with other relevant agencies, shall formulate a comprehensive national policy for the creation of business, industrial, agricultural, and eco-tourism hubs or zones for every province, depending on the capacity and characteristics of the province. The Committee shall release the national policy within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act.

SECTION 4. *National Policy Direction.* – The national policy shall include short, medium, and long-term sub-policies on the following focal areas: a)

agriculture; b) local industries and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs); c) sustainable tourism; d) employment and social welfare; e) public health, and f) education. The national policy shall have a holistic approach to rural development and improving the quality of life of the inhabitants of rural areas.

The national policy shall provide for measures that will encourage businesses to move their operations into the industrial hubs, including but not limited to local tax holidays, expedited processing, or waiver of other requirements for the establishment of their business, among others. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) shall be given fiscal incentives and transition assistance such as local tax holidays, expedited processing, or waiver of other requirements for the establishment of their business, among others, by Local Government Units (LGUs) and the national government.

It shall also provide for measures on agricultural development, which may be but are not limited to planting crops, fisheries, production or processing of agricultural products, dairy farming, or livestock raising. The determination of which agricultural venture or ventures will be undertaken shall be based on the discretion of the LGU, considering its capability and geographical characteristics.

The national policy shall likewise include measures for developing tourism and tourism-based livelihood and businesses, with high regard for sustainability and environmental impact. No measure shall be undertaken if it damages or destroys the environment, and all measures shall include safeguards that will ensure compliance with the standards set by the DENR and the DOT.

The national policy shall provide for the employment of Filipinos before foreign nationals, but in no way shall the latter be discriminated against or prevented from occupying the position if there is no Filipino qualified and available to perform the job.

The national policy shall ensure that a sufficient number of well-equipped hospitals are available for each province. It shall also consider public health principles in creating health policies for rural development.

The national policy shall ensure that the transition of families from urban to rural areas is supported by sufficient transportation, social welfare, and other necessary assistance from the government.

SECTION 5. *Implementation by the Local Government Units.* - The national policy shall be forwarded to the existing regional development councils and provincial local government units for assistance in the implementation. LGUs shall assist in implementing the national policy but shall have the authority to modify aspects of the policy implementation to tailor-fit the needs and available

resources of their territory. LGUs shall submit a bi-annual accomplishment report to the Committee.

SECTION 6. *Incentives for Businesses.* – The provincial LGUs shall implement the incentives laid out in the national policy created by the Committee, including but not limited to local tax holidays, expedited processing, or waiver of other requirements for establishing their business. The provincial LGUs shall also have the discretion to provide additional incentives for businesses that will migrate from the urban areas or establish operations in their territorial jurisdiction.

SECTION 7. *Incentives for Workers.* – Workers and their families who decide to move to and take up employment in the provinces shall be given transportation assistance for their person and their belongings by the DOT in coordination with the LGU which has jurisdiction over the chosen residence of the worker.

The DSWD shall provide a *Buhay Probinsya* financial assistance of ten thousand pesos (PhP10,000.00) for every family who will move from Metro Manila or other urban cities to the provinces or rural areas and will pursue employment, trade, or profession in such locality. A family who received the *Balik Probinsya* financial assistance shall be disqualified to receive the same within three (3) years from receipt of the grant.

The DSWD shall formulate the guidelines for the documentary requirements and release of the *Buhay Probinsya* financial assistance to qualified families. The DSWD shall also maintain a comprehensive database of families who availed of the financial assistance to avoid duplication.

SECTION 8. *Technical Skills Training for Members of the Urban Poor Communities and Informal Settlers; Benefits for Trainees.* – The Technical Education Skills Development Authority, in coordination with DSWD, shall formulate and implement training programs for interested members of the urban poor communities and informal settlers in Metro Manila and other urban cities. The training programs should sufficiently provide the necessary skills training required by commercial, tourism-related, and agricultural industries and businesses.

TESDA, in coordination with the DOT, shall provide its trainees with free transportation and a daily meal allowance. TESDA shall thereafter assist training graduates in looking for employment opportunities in the provinces. Once employed, DSWD shall assist the employee in moving to the province where his employer is located.

SECTION 9. *Provincial Wage Rate Rationalization.* – The Secretary of DOLE, through the National Wages and Productivity Commission, shall submit a provincial wage rationalization plan to the Committee. The said plan shall lay

out the gradual increase of regional wage rates outside Metro Manila in five (5) years. The annual increase shall lead to a uniform national wage rate. The increase shall begin one (1) year after the issuance of the national policy by the Committee.

SECTION 10. *Reporting.* – The Committee shall submit to the President a quarterly report on the status of the implementation of this Act, accomplishments, and budget utilization.

SECTION 11. *Appropriations.* – The amounts necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against the existing appropriations of the member agencies and from other sources as identified by the DBM.

Local government units shall also be allowed to include in their budget the amounts required to implement the national policy created under the Buhay Probinsya Act. The appropriation for the implementation of this law shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 12. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions or parts unaffected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 13. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees or issuances, letters of instruction, administrative orders, rules, and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 14. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,