

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

20th Congress
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 6341



Introduced by Rep. Maria Vanessa C. Aumentado

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The country's environmental landscape has changed significantly over the past three decades, with emerging threats that are more complex, interconnected, and global in scale. While the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) has long served as the primary implementing arm of the government for pollution control, environmental impact assessment, waste management, and chemical safety, its current institutional framework is no longer sufficient to respond to the magnitude and urgency of today's ecological challenges. The EMB is responsible for implementing major environmental laws such as PD 1586 (Environmental Impact Statement System), RA 6969 (Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Wastes Control Act), RA 9003 (Ecological Solid Waste Management Act), RA 8749 (Philippine Clean Air Act), RA 9275 (Philippine Clean Water Act), RA 9512 (Environmental Awareness and Education Act), and RA 11898 (Extended Producer Responsibility Act of 2022). However, despite these expansive mandates, the structure and resources of the Bureau, established under EO 192, have remained largely unchanged, creating gaps in efficiency, coverage, technical capacity, and regulatory enforcement.

The Philippines now confronts the intensifying pressures of the global triple planetary crisis, defined by the United Nations as the interlinked challenges of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. These three crises reinforce one another and pose serious threats to public health, economic stability, environmental quality, and long-term national development. Climate change is

accelerating the frequency and severity of extreme events, while rising temperatures worsen air quality and water scarcity. Pollution levels in major urban and industrial centers continue to rise, driven by rapid urbanization, industrial expansion, growing consumption, and increasing waste generation, including hazardous waste, electronic waste, and emerging chemical contaminants. Biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation further weaken natural systems and diminish the resilience of communities, particularly those dependent on coastal and agricultural resources.

Despite the EMB's efforts, its current organizational setup limits its ability to comprehensively address these systemic and interconnected issues. Implementation challenges stem from overlapping mandates with other agencies, limited operational autonomy, highly constrained fiscal resources, outdated monitoring systems, and insufficient technical personnel, especially in regional and field offices. These constraints hinder the effective enforcement of environmental laws, the development of science-based policies, and the ability to support local government units (LGUs) in carrying out devolved environmental functions. Strengthening the EMB into a more empowered, modernized, and integrated institution, renamed as the **National Ecological Management Bureau (NEMB)**, is crucial to ensuring a more coherent, efficient, and future-ready environmental governance system.

The proposed measure aligns with the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) and the country's transition toward sustainable, inclusive, and climate-resilient development. A strengthened NEMB will serve as the lead agency in operationalizing key provisions of the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Solid Waste Management Act, EIS System reforms, circular economy programs, and other environmental laws. It will also reinforce the implementation of the Climate Change Act and the National Climate Change Action Plan by enhancing pollution reduction efforts, greenhouse gas monitoring, climate-risk-informed environmental planning, and cross-agency coordination with the Climate Change Commission, LGUs, and relevant national agencies.

Equally important, the Philippines is signatory to numerous multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) such as the Paris Agreement, the Basel Convention, the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), and the Montreal Protocol. The NEMB will serve as the strengthened national authority to ensure compliance with these commitments by improving national reporting systems, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, chemical and waste inventories, and capacity-building programs. Modernizing the Bureau also enables the integration of advanced technologies in environmental management, including remote sensing, data

analytics, air and water quality modeling, digital permitting, and real-time environmental monitoring systems.

A fully empowered NEMB will produce wide-ranging socio-economic, environmental, and institutional benefits. Improved air and water quality, safer chemical and hazardous waste management, and better-controlled industrial emissions will directly reduce public health costs, strengthen ecosystem services, and enhance the quality of life of Filipino communities. A modernized regulatory system will also boost investor confidence and support the transition to resource-efficient, low-carbon, and circular economy practices. Moreover, a more capable Bureau will significantly improve LGU compliance, enhance environmental data governance, and promote transparency and accountability in environmental performance.

The proposed transformation of the EMB into the National Ecological Management Bureau is not merely a structural or administrative adjustment, it is a strategic national reform necessary to safeguard ecological integrity, strengthen climate resilience, and ensure sustainable development for present and future generations. By institutionalizing a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to environmental management, the Act positions the Philippines to more effectively confront the interconnected challenges of pollution, resource degradation, climate change, and biodiversity loss. Ultimately, this measure is a long-term investment in ecological security and national competitiveness, and a reaffirmation of the country's commitment to a resilient, sustainable, and equitable future for all Filipinos.



MARIA VANESSA C. AUMENTADO

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

20th Congress
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 6341

Introduced by Rep. Maria Vanessa C. Aumentado

AN ACT
STRENGTHENING THE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT BUREAU TO BE
KNOWN AS THE “NATIONAL ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT BUREAU”,
DEFINING ITS POWERS, FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* This Act shall be known as the “National Ecological Management Bureau Act of 2025.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature. In pursuit of this, the State shall strengthen environmental governance by enhancing the institutional capacity, authority, and resources of the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) to effectively implement environmental laws, regulations, and programs nationwide.

SEC. 3. *Renaming and Strengthening of the EMB.*

The Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is hereby strengthen to a National Ecological Management Bureau (NEMB).

SEC. 4. *Mandate.* The NEMB shall serve as the primary government agency of the DENR responsible for the formulation of policies, coordination, and implementation of environmental conservation, environmental and waste management, clean production, environmental and ecological research, and educational information, study mitigation of the environmental impact of human activity and pollution control policies, standards, and programs throughout the Philippines.

SEC. 5. *Powers and Functions.* The National Ecological Management Bureau shall have the following powers and functions:

1. Formulate, implement, and monitor policies, standards, and programs for ecological and environmental protection and sustainable management;
2. Enforce environmental laws, rules, and regulations including, but not limited to, the Philippine Environmental Impact Assessment System (PD 1586), Clean Air Act (RA 8749), Clean Water Act (9275), Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (RA 9003), and Toxic Substances and Hazardous Wastes Control Act (RA 6969), Environmental Education Act (RA 9512), and Extended Producer Responsibility Act (RA 11898);
3. Issue Environmental permits, certificates, and clearances for development projects;
4. Conduct environmental quality monitoring, research, and data management;
5. Provide technical and policy support to Local Government Units (LGUs) in environmental planning and enforcement;
6. Impose penalties and sanctions for violations of environmental laws in accordance with existing legislation, rules and regulations;
7. Establish regional and provincial offices to ensure the effective implementation of environmental programs;
8. Coordinate with national and international organizations for the promotion of environmental sustainability; and
9. Perform such other functions as may be necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act.

10. Establish an Environmental Research and Data Analytics Center to conduct advanced studies, modeling, and monitoring of air, water, and waste pollution trends;
11. Create a National Environmental Laboratory Network to ensure standardized monitoring and testing nationwide;
12. Develop a National Chemical Risk Assessment Unit to evaluate chemicals and hazardous substances prior to registration or importation;
13. Establish an Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Directorate to consolidate and strengthen environmental law enforcement and case management;
14. Implement a Digital Environmental Permitting and Compliance System (e-Permit) for transparent and real-time monitoring of clearances and violations;
15. Integrate Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation functions, including greenhouse gas inventory and resilience assessments;
16. Create a Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency Division to promote waste reduction, recycling, and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) implementation;
17. Lead a Plastic Pollution and Marine Debris Task Force to coordinate national efforts on marine litter prevention and cleanup;
18. Institutionalize continuous Environmental Law Enforcement Training programs for NEMB personnel and LGUs;
19. Strengthen public access to environmental information through a national online database of permits, monitoring data, and compliance reports; penalties, and grants for environmental programs;
20. Institutionalize performance monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of programs and policies;

SEC. 6. *Organizational Structure.* NEMB shall be headed by an Undersecretary and shall be assisted by five (5) Directors IV.

The Bureau shall also establish specialized divisions on air quality, water quality, chemicals and hazardous wastes, ecological solid wastes, environmental impact assessment, and extended producer responsibility.

SEC.7. *Undersecretary.* The NEMB shall be headed by an Undersecretary with the Salary Grade of 30 who shall be appointed by the President of the Republic of the Philippines, upon the recommendation of the DENR Secretary, and shall be provided with the necessary staff for the efficient and effective implementation of the above functions.

The Chief Executive shall possess qualifications and experiences relevant to environmental/ecological protection and management.

SEC. 8. *Duties and Powers of the Undersecretary.* - The duties and powers of the C are the following:

(a) Exercise general supervision and control over the operations of the NEMB;

(b) Execute and administer environmental implementing rules and regulations, environmental quality standards, and environmental plans, programs and projects;

(c) Recommend to the Secretary the officials and employees the approved positions in accordance with the merit system established by the NEMB; and

(d) Perform such other duties and powers of the NEMB.

Sec. 9. *NEMB Directors.* There shall be five (5) Services under NEMB, each headed by a Director, and seventeen (17) Regional Offices, each headed by a Regional Director:

- 1) Environmental Quality Management
- 2). Environmental Policy Planning and Data Management, International Affairs and Foreign Assisted Programs
- 2) Environmental Research and Education,
- 3) Legal and Legislative Liaison, and
- 4) Administrative and Finance

There shall established Provincial Environmental Management Offices to be headed by a Regional and Provincial Director, respectively.

In view of the strengthening of the NEMB it shall be provided with additional plantilla positions to be determined by the Undersecretary and its Directors.

SEC. 10. *Human Resource Development.* The NEMB shall implement a continuing program for training and professional development of its personnel in the fields of environmental science, engineering, policy, and law. The NEMB shall also partner with academic institutions and international agencies for advanced capacity-building programs and scholarships in environmental science, data analytics, and law enforcement.

SEC. 11. *Modernization of Facilities and Laboratories.* The Bureau shall develop a modernization plan for laboratory equipment, digital infrastructure, and regional testing facilities, ensuring their accreditation and alignment with international standards.

Section 12. *Coverage of Magna Carta Benefits for S&T Workers.* Personnel of the NEMB are "*S & T Personnel*" as defined in section 5 of R.A. 8439 as amended by R.A. 11312, and as such shall be entitled to full benefits and incentives under the Magna Carta For Scientists and Engineers.

SEC. 13. *Appropriations.* The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the DENR–Environmental Management Bureau. Thereafter, the amount necessary for the implementation of this act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 14. *Duty And Tax Exemptions.* - All grants, bequests, endowments, gifts, donations and contributions made to and used actually, directly and exclusively for research purposes by the NEMB, shall be exempt from donor's tax and the same shall be considered as allowable deductions from gross income for purposes of computing the taxable income of the donor, in accordance with the provisions of the national internal revenue code of 1997, as amended.

The importation of laboratory equipment for scientific and research purposes made by the NEMB, upon certification by the DENR Secretary, shall be exempt from customs duties in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act No. 10863, otherwise known as the "Customs Modernization and Tariff Act."

SEC. 15. *Transfer of Assets, Records, and Personnel.*

All assets, records, equipment, and personnel of the existing Environmental Management Bureau are hereby transferred to the National Ecological Management Bureau. The rights and security of tenure of affected employees shall be respected.

Further, NEMB officials, thru the Executive Committee shall submit to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) a reclassification or staffing

modification and/or position classification plan to fix the qualifications and upgrade the salary grades of its personnel.

SEC. 16. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources, in consultation with relevant agencies and stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 17. *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. 18. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, orders, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 19. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,