

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6373



Introduced by **HON. JOSEPH "JOJO" L. LARA**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines remains one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, frequently experiencing typhoons, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, landslides, and other natural calamities. These events often result in widespread devastation, displacement of communities, and severe disruption of access to basic necessities. In the critical hours and days following a disaster, the immediate delivery of relief goods is essential in preventing further loss of life and alleviating the suffering of affected families.

However, the efficient movement of relief goods is often hindered by logistical challenges, including high transportation and freight costs. Government agencies, local government units (LGUs), and accredited civil society organizations shoulder significant expenses to deliver food, water, medicine, and other emergency supplies to impacted areas. These costs not only delay humanitarian response but also reduce the volume of assistance that can be mobilized.

This proposed measure seeks to address these barriers by mandating free freight services for the transport of relief goods to calamity-stricken communities, whether by land, air, or sea, through common carriers, freight companies, and other transport operators. By institutionalizing free freight during officially declared states of calamity, the bill ensures timely, reliable, and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The measure supports and strengthens the State's policy under Republic Act No. 10121, or the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010, which upholds the protection of life and property and promotes swift and effective disaster response. It likewise recognizes the vital role of private sector partners in humanitarian operations and encourages their participation through clear guidelines and incentives.

With a streamlined logistics framework and reduced financial burden on responders, this Act will significantly enhance disaster response capability and reinforce our commitment to safeguarding the welfare of all Filipinos, especially the most vulnerable.

This bill has already passed third reading in the previous Congress and its passage in the 20th Congress is earnestly sought.


JOSEPH "JOJO" L. LARA

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6373

Introduced by **HON. JOSEPH "JOJO" L. LARA**

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

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 "Relief Goods Free Transportation Act".

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. Towards this end, the State shall encourage altruism among the citizens and engage the services of public and private common carriers, freight forwarders, freight companies, and other 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) Arrastre refers to the fee charged for the handling and hauling of cargo at port. It covers the cost of unloading cargo from ships, moving it within the port area, and loading it onto trucks or other means of transportation for further delivery;
- (b) Common carriers refer 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 to the public;

- (c) Disaster refers to a serious disruption of 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 community or society to cope using its own resources;
- (d) Pilotage refers to the services provided by the marine pilot, who is an experienced ship captain with in-depth knowledge of a specific port, harbor, or navigable waterway;
- (e) Relief refers to interventions to alleviate, ease, or mitigate a distressed or critical situation affecting persons, families, groups or communities;
- (f) Relief goods refer to food packs and non-food items such as clothing articles, mats, blankets, mosquito nets, kitchen wares, water containers, hygiene kits, and medical and health-related products to be given directly to the victims of a disaster or an emergency; and
- (g) State of calamity refers to a condition involving mass casualty or major damages to property, disruption of means of livelihoods, roads and the normal way of life of people in the affected areas as a result of the occurrence of natural or human induced hazard.

SECTION 4. Free Freight Services. – The National and Regional Logistics Cluster led by the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), 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 companies providing logistic services in the Philippines shall provide free freight services to duly registered relief organizations in the transportation of emergency relief goods and donated articles to areas declared to be in a state of calamity by the President of the Philippines or by a local government unit (LGU) through its Sanggunian. When the area of destination is not accessible, the relief goods shall be delivered and consigned to the local chief executive of the nearest LGU.

In availing the free freight services of common carriers, private carriers, freight forwarders, and other companies providing logistic services, the areas where these entities operate shall be considered.

The shipping auxiliary cost, such as those for arrastre services, pilotage, and other port charges, as well as the airport charges, such as those for landing and takeoff fees, aircraft parking, navigation charges, and other related airport charges, that are routinely passed on to customers, shall be waived by the concerned port and airport authorities: Provided, That container van costs, turnaround time, and volume of cargo being shipped free of charge shall be considered in order to minimize the loss of profits for the private sector.

SECTION 5. Vigilance Over Relief Goods. – The National and Regional DRRM Councils through their Response Clusters shall facilitate the speedy movement of people, goods, and equipment to the affected population and responding agencies in coordination with local law enforcement agencies, port authorities, and organizations with similar mandates and responsibilities.

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 such as the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Bureau of Customs (BOC), Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Health (DOH), LGUs, and other government agencies authorized to distribute the relief goods and articles, and in consideration of prevailing policies of freight service and logistics companies and carriers

SECTION 7. Tax Incentives. – The 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 are entitled to one hundred percent (100%) additional deduction from the gross income of the full amount of the operating cost incurred for the service provided, including the salaries and allowances of personnel involved in transporting the relief goods, subject to the rules and limitations set forth under the National Internal Revenue Code, as amended.

SECTION 8. Oversight Agencies. – The OCD and the Department of Transportation (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 providing free freight services as provided under Section 4 of this Act.

SECTION 9. 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, PPC, DSWD, Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), and the association or authorized representatives of freight service companies and freight forwarders, common and private carriers and other companies offering logistics services in the country, issue 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 remaining provisions not affected shall remain in force and effect.

SECTION 11. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are repealed or amended 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,