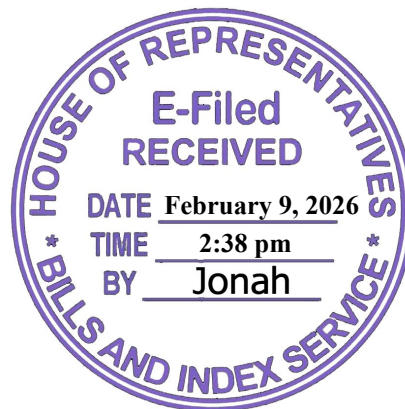


TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
House Bill No. 7676



Introduced by REP. CLAUDINE DIANA D. BAUTISTA-LIM

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD, DEFINING
ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Transportation remains a vital pillar of national development, economic growth, and social mobility. Every day, millions of Filipinos rely on land, air, and maritime transport to conduct business, access essential services, and sustain their livelihoods. A safe, reliable, and efficient transportation system is therefore indispensable to national progress.

Despite this, transportation accidents continue to exact a heavy toll on Filipino lives, property, and the environment. Road crashes, maritime mishaps, and aviation incidents persist with alarming regularity. Just recently, the sinking of M/V *Trisha Kerstin* 3 off the coast of Basilan resulted in at least 45 confirmed deaths and dozens of people still missing and the disappearance of MBCA Amejara in waters off Southeastern Mindanao, underscoring vulnerabilities in maritime safety and response mechanisms.

On land, fatal collisions such as the bus crash on the Subic–Clark–Tarlac Expressway (SCTEX) in May 2025 that killed 10 people and injured dozens¹, and a tragic incident in February 2026 in Negros Oriental where a truck plunged into a ravine, killing nine workers, highlight continuing road safety challenges across the country.²

In the air, records from the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines show multiple small aircraft accidents in 2025, including collisions with terrain and structures that caused injuries and raised ongoing safety concerns.³

¹ Boton, C. (2025, May 2). Solid North bus operations suspended after SCTEX crash. *Philstar.com*. https://qa.philstar.com/headlines/2025/05/03/2440148/solid-north-bus-operations-suspended-after-sctex-crash?utm_source

² 9 killed as truck plunges into ravine on Philippine mountain road | AP News. (2026, February 4). AP News. <https://apnews.com/article/philippines-truck-accident-negros-oriental-f23822e64a42746f7e937ccab6f6a4f5>

³ 2025 accidents | Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines. (n.d.). <https://www.caap.gov.ph/2025-accidents/>

These incidents, like many others before them, expose systemic weaknesses in accident investigation, safety oversight, and inter-agency coordination. At present, transportation accident investigations in the Philippines are conducted by multiple regulatory and enforcement agencies whose primary mandates include licensing, enforcement, and commercial oversight. While these agencies perform vital functions, their involvement in accident investigations often results in fragmented findings, delayed conclusions, and limited follow-through on safety recommendations. Moreover, the absence of a single, independent body dedicated exclusively to determining root causes and preventing recurrence undermines the development of a comprehensive, science-based national transportation safety strategy.

This bill seeks to establish the **National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)** as an independent, non-regulatory body attached to the Department of Transportation. The NTSB shall have jurisdiction over land, air, and maritime transportation accidents and shall be empowered to conduct impartial investigations, undertake safety studies, collect and analyze accident data, and issue evidence-based safety recommendations. It shall serve as the focal point of transportation safety in the country, ensuring consistency, objectivity, and transparency in accident investigations.

The proposed NTSB will institutionalize a proactive approach to transportation safety by identifying recurring hazards, promoting compliance with international safety standards, and fostering collaboration among government agencies, the academe, civil society, and industry stakeholders. By separating accident investigation from regulatory and enforcement functions, the NTSB will enhance public trust and strengthen accountability while focusing on accident prevention rather than fault-finding.

Ultimately, the creation of the National Transportation Safety Board is a crucial step toward saving lives, reducing injuries, protecting property and the environment, and restoring public confidence in the Philippine transportation system. The tragic loss of life in incidents such as the *M/V Trisha Kerstin 3* sinking, road collisions on major expressways, and other multi-modal accidents must compel decisive legislative action to ensure that lessons learned from disasters translate into concrete reforms.

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


REP. CLAUDINE DIANA D. BAUTISTA-LIM
DUMPER-PTDA Partylist

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*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 "National
Transportation Safety Board Act."

Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State
to establish and maintain a safe, reliable and secure transportation system; promote and
ensure a safe, viable, efficient, and dependable transportation system as an essential
instrument for national development and economic progress. The State is committed to
prevent accidents, reduce fatalities and injuries, save lives and to protect property and
environment across all modes of transportation.

Consistent with this policy, the State recognizes the necessity to create an
independent non-regulatory agency to be known as the National Transportation Safety
Board to promote impartial and objective accident investigation, identify systematic
safety issues, to issue actionable safety recommendations and serve as the focal point
of transportation safety.

Sec. 3. Creation of the National Transportation Safety Board. – Pursuant
to the foregoing policy, there is hereby created a National Transportation Safety Board
(NTSB), hereinafter referred to as the "Board", which shall be attached to the
Department of Transportation.

Sec. 4. Coverage. – The NTSB shall cover all transportation accidents and/or
mishaps within the territorial jurisdiction of the Philippines whether land, air, or water or
outside the territorial jurisdiction of the Philippines, *Provided, That* such aircraft, ship or

any vehicle similar thereto is registered under Philippine laws.

The NTSB shall also cover all types of accidents whether alarming in nature which results in serious physical injury or loss of life or property or causing substantial damage to or destruction of property or surroundings.

Sec. 5. Powers and Functions of the NTSB. – The NTSB shall have the following powers and functions:

- (a) To assess and systematize transportation safety standards in accordance with the international safety caliber of applicable conventions, treaties, and best practices in transportation safety including those developed by transportation agencies, and recommend its implementation to all sectors of Philippine transportation.
- (b) To conduct investigations and, if necessary, hearings concerning any transportation accident and incidents across all major modes of transportation, including maritime, air, or land, in order to determine the probable cause thereof and identify safety issues that need to be addressed to prevent the same in the future. *Provided*, That other agencies mandated to investigate concurrently such accidents shall coordinate with, cooperate with and extend its full support to the Board during the conduct of investigation. *Provided further*, that the Board may compel the presence of an indispensable party or organization or agency whether public or private, to any case or investigation conducted by the Board;
- (c) To conduct a broader and/or special studies to identify and address recurring safety problems or emerging issues. These studies may focus on specific technologies, human factors, or regulatory practices across different modes of transportation. *Provided*, That the Board shall not be prevented from making further inquiries on accidents subject of past investigations and shall require the investigating bodies to submit the pertinent records, reports, findings, and recommendations;
- (d) To collaborate and require the participation of the members of the academe and the non-government organizations in investigations that shall require their expertise and knowledge;
- (e) To promulgate transportation safety standards and recommend such standards to the concerned government agencies and private organizations the adoption thereof;
- (f) To prepare written reports regarding its investigations and special studies, including the findings and safety recommendations thereon and make such reports available to the public; and

- (g) To assess and evaluate the techniques and methods of accident investigation and prepare and publish from time to time the recommended procedures for accident investigations.

Sec. 6. Composition, Qualifications, and Appointment of the Members of the Governing Board. –

- (a) The Board shall be composed of seven (7) full-time members, including a Chairperson who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines. A member of the Board must be natural-born Filipino citizen and must have at least three (3) years of actual experience in the administration, operation and management of a transport utility firm or regulatory agency in either air, land, sea or rail transportation and knowledgeable in accident reconstruction, safety engineering or transportation and traffic safety: Provided, That three (3) of the full-time members must come from the commuting public, including a representative from organizations advocating road safety;
- (b) The members shall be Filipino citizens and residents of the Philippines, at least thirty-five (35) years of age, and persons of good moral character, unquestionable integrity, and recognized probity and competence.
- (c) The Chairman shall have a term of five (5) years but may be renewed for a non-extendible period of one (1) year: Provided, That the term of the initial appointees shall be staggered such that the Chairman shall hold office for a term of five (5) years, the next three (3) members for three (3) years and the other three for two (2) years.
- (d) Upon the expiration of their respective terms, they shall continue to serve until their successor shall have been appointed and qualified. In case a member fails to complete his/her term, his/her successor shall only serve the unexpired portion of the term of his/her predecessor.
- (e) A member may be removed from office by the President for cause in accordance with the Civil Service rules and regulations.
- (f) In case of incapacity or absence of the Chairperson, the members shall choose from among themselves an acting Chairperson.
- (g) The Board shall establish and maintain distinct appropriately staffed bureaus, divisions, or offices, to investigate and report on accidents involving each of the following modes of transportation:

1. Aviation;

2. Highway and motor vehicle;
3. Pipeline, railroad, and tracked vehicle; and
4. Marine transport carriers.

Sec. 7. Chairperson; Duties and Powers. – The Chairperson shall be the chief executive and administrative officer of the NTSB. The Chairperson shall:

- (a) Administer oaths and issue subpoena duces tecum or subpoena ad testificandum; *Provided, That* subpoenas shall be issued under the signature of the Chairperson and may be served by any officer, personnel, or employee of the NTSB as designated by the Chairperson;
- (b) Execute and carry out policies, decisions, orders, and resolutions approved by the Board;
- (c) Direct and supervise the operations and internal administration of the NTSB, including enforcement of disciplinary actions;
- (d) Sign appointments, make temporary assignments, rotate, and transfer personnel in accordance with law;
- (e) Prepare the annual budget of the NTSB for approval by the Board;
- (f) Supervise the expenditures of the NTSB;
- (g) Delegate his/her authority, in whole or in part, to other officials of the NTSB in accordance with Executive Order No. 292 (E.O. No. 292), otherwise known as the Administrative Code of 1987, as amended, and the rules and regulations of the Board; and
- (h) Perform such other functions as may be authorized by the Board.

Sec. 8. Duties and Powers of the Board. – The Board shall:

- (a) Initiate and conduct studies on matters pertaining to safety in transportation and avoiding injury to persons and damage to property;
- (b) Gather, analyze, maintain, and publish periodic data and statistics on transportation accidents;
- (c) Prescribe requirements for persons and institutions regarding data gathering, reporting, the preservation, proper handling, conservation, and protection of evidence, records files, and/or specimens related to any accident;

- (d) Issue periodic reports to Congress, the President, and make them available to government agencies and instrumentalities, and non-government organizations concerned with transportation safety upon request, including public transportation carriers who may be concerned with the findings of the Board and to interested persons. Such reports shall contain proposals for corrective measures to make the transportation of persons safe and free from the risk of injury as possible, including steps to minimize human injuries from transportation accidents: *Provided, That* the said reports shall be made public within sixty (60) days from its submission to Congress or to the President, as the case may be;
- (e) The Board may require and shall be furnished a copy of reports by the officials concerned on any transportation-related accident, the Board may order, if necessary, the autopsy, or require other tests of such persons as may be needed for the investigation of the accident;
- (f) The Board may call the assistance of, and use any available services, equipment, facilities of the Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Transportation (DOTr), the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), Department of National Defense (DND), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Philippine National Police (PNP), and other agencies and instrumentalities of the government;
- (g) The Board may enter into such contracts, leases, agreements, and other transactions as may be necessary in the conduct of its functions and duties;
- (h) The Board may create advisory committees composed of qualified private citizens and government officials with whom the Board may consult in the implementation of its functions and duties, and to pay honoraria of these persons for meetings actually attended. Whenever necessary, the Board may likewise appoint or retain the services of recognized expense as consultants on the accidents under investigation. Such consultants shall be paid compensation as fixed by the Board: *Provided, That* not more than three (3) consultants shall be appointed for each accident being investigated: *Provided, further, That* no officer, external auditor, or legal counsel of any private company or enterprise primarily engaged in the transportation industry shall be eligible for appointment as a consultant of the Board within three (3) years from his/her retirement, resignation, or separation therefrom;
- (i) Appoint advisory committees composed of qualified private citizens and officials of the national government and LGUs as appropriate;

- (j) Any law to the contrary notwithstanding, accept voluntary and uncompensated services;
- (k) Accept donations and gifts of money and other property;
- (l) Enter into contracts with non-profit entities to carry out studies related to the duties and powers of the Board for its operating expenses;
- (m) The Chairman of the Board may determine the number of committees that are appropriate to maintain effective liaison with other departments, agencies and instrumentalities of the national government and LGUs, non-government organizations, and independent standard-setting authorities that carry out programs and activities related to transportation safety. The Board shall designate a representative to serve in the committees;
- (n) The Board or any officer, or employee designated by the Chairperson, may conduct an inquiry to obtain information related to transportation safety; and
- (o) The Board or its designated officer or employee may require by order, a department, agency, or instrumentality of the national government, LGUs or a person, natural or juridical, which transports persons or goods, to submit to the Board a written report and answers to request and questions pursuant to the powers of the Board under this Act. The Board shall prescribe the time within which the reports and the answers thereto must be submitted to its designated officer or employee. Copies of the report and the answers thereto shall be made public within sixty (60) days from submission to the Board.

Sec. 9. Quorum. – The presence of at least four (4) members shall constitute a quorum and the majority vote of members present shall be necessary for the adoption of any rule, ruling, order, resolution, decision, or other acts of the Board.

Sec. 10. Compensation. – The salary of the Chairperson and the members of the Board shall have the rank of a Department Undersecretary and Assistant Secretary, respectively. They shall receive the compensation and other emoluments corresponding to those of a Department Undersecretary and Assistant Secretary, respectively.

Sec. 11. Offices of the NTSB. – For the proper management and effective implementation of the objectives of the NTSB, the following offices are hereby established:

- (a) Office of the Executive Director. – The NTSB shall have an Executive Director who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines upon recommendation of the Board. The Executive Director must be at least thirty-

five (35) years of age at the time of appointment, a member of the Philippine bar, and engaged in the practice of law for at least ten (10) years prior to the date of appointment. The appointee must not have been a candidate for any elective position in the elections immediately preceding the appointment.

The Executive Director shall assist the Chairperson in the discharge of his/her functions as executive and administrative head of the Board and be responsible for the day-to-day management of the NTSB; record and report the proceedings of the Board; have custody of records, maps, profiles, reports, and other documents filed in connection with any case or proceedings before the NTSB; supervise the NTSB laboratory; and, perform such other functions as may be assigned by the Chairperson or the Board.

- (b) Office of Aviation Safety. – The Office of Aviation Safety shall conduct investigation of all aviation accidents and submit the corresponding reports and necessary transportation safety recommendations to the Board.
- (c) Office of Maritime Safety. – The Office of Maritime Safety shall conduct investigations of all maritime accidents and submit the corresponding reports and necessary transportation safety recommendations to the Board.
- (d) Office of Surface Transportation Safety. – The Office of Surface Transportation Safety shall conduct investigations of road transportation, railroad, and pipeline accidents, and submit the corresponding reports and necessary transportation safety recommendations to the Board.
- (e) Office of Transportation Safety Standards. – The Office of Transportation Safety Standards shall prescribe safety standards in all transportation systems; establish and update transportation safety standards through continuing research and in-depth studies; and oversee the implementation of the safety recommendation programs of the NTSB.
- (f) Office of Research and Engineering. – The Office of Research and Engineering shall provide technical advice and services to the NTSB; conduct research and carry out analytical studies and tests on all aspects of the NTSB's transportation accident investigation, accident prevention, and safety promotion activities; conduct safety studies on specific safety issues; perform statistical analyses of transportation accidents and incident data; maintain archival records of the NTSB's accident investigation and safety promotion activities; and, support the NTSB's data processing, computing, and information management requirements.
- (g) Office of the General Counsel. – The Office of the General Counsel shall

provide legal advice and assistance to the NTSB and its officers, personnel and employees: prepare rules, opinions, and orders; and represent the NTSB in court actions and other proceedings.

(h) Office of Public Affairs. – The Office of Public Affairs shall provide the general public, including Congress and national agencies, the transportation industry, and the media with current and accurate information concerning the activities, programs, and objectives of the NTSB.

(i) Administration Office. – The Administration Office shall provide administrative support in the following aspects: budget; accounting and audit; human resources management, information and automatic data processing management; property, space, communications, facilities, and transportation management; and, printing, publications, correspondence, procurement, contracting, and accident inquiry services.

Sec. 12. Personnel. – Subject to civil service laws, rules and regulations, and the approval of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), the Board shall determine its own staffing pattern and the number of personnel of the organization. The Board shall, in accordance with existing laws and policies, select, appoint, employ, and fix the compensation of such officers and employees, including investigators, and attorneys, as may be necessary to carry out its powers and duties.

Sec. 13. Prohibited Interests. – The Chairperson, members of the Board, officers, and employees shall not, during their tenure, hold any other office or employment. Neither shall they engage in the practice of any profession or in the active management or control of any business which, in any way, may be affected by the functions of their office, nor shall they be financially interested, directly or indirectly, in any contract with, or in any franchise or privilege, granted by the government and its subdivisions, agencies, or instrumentalities, including government-owned or controlled corporations or their subsidiaries. They shall directly avoid conflict of interest in the conduct of their office.

No spouse or relative by consanguinity or affinity within the fourth civil degree and no law, business, or professional partner or associate of the Chairperson or Members may appear as counsel or agent on any matter pending before the Board or transact directly or indirectly therewith.

The disqualification shall apply during the tenure of the official concerned and one (1) year thereafter.

Any violation of this section shall be a ground for removal from the NTSB as well as administrative, civil, or criminal prosecution under applicable laws.

Sec. 14. Recommendations of the Board. – The Board shall submit a recommendation regarding transportation safety to the appropriate government agencies of which they shall respond to each recommendation formally and in writing not later than thirty (30) days after receipt thereof. The failure on the part of the concerned agency to abide by the recommendation of the Board without any justifiable reason shall be a ground for administrative liability of the head of the agency or concerned official as well as other sanctions as provided under existing laws.

The Board shall recommend to the appropriate government agencies the recall of any defective means of transportation and to cause the installation of the required part or parts to make it safe and notify not only the distributor or purchaser but also the public of such defect. It shall also recommend the grounding of any defective means of transportation pending the investigation of the cause or nature of its defect. Moreover, the Board may also recommend the denial, amendment, modification, suspension, or revocation of a certificate of public convenience, registration or franchise if the means of transportation, including the activities of a commercial carrier, have been found negligent, as well as suspension or revocation of license, as the case may be.

Sec. 15. Disclosure, Availability, and Use of Information. –

- (a) Except as provided in this section, any copy of record, information or report of investigation submitted to the NTSB shall be made available to the public upon request and payment of reasonable cost;
- (b) The Board shall not make the records available for purposes other than accident or incident investigation, unless the appropriate authority for the administration of justice determines that their disclosure outweighs the adverse domestic and international impact;
- (c) The Board shall not disclose any information related to a trade secret except:
 - 1. To another department, agency, or instrumentality of the national government, when requested for official use;
 - 2. To a committee of Congress having jurisdiction over the subject matter to which investigation is related, when requested by the committee;
 - 3. In a judicial proceeding under a court order that preserves the confidentiality of the information without impairing the proceeding; and
 - 4. To the public: *Provided, That* such disclosure shall be for the protection of public health and safety: *Provided, further, That* the disclosure shall be made in a manner designed to protect and preserve its confidentiality.
- (d) The Board shall not publicly disclose any part of a cockpit voice recording or transcript of oral communications by and between flight crew members and ground station related to an accident or incident investigated by the NTSB: *Provided, That* the NTSB shall make public any part of the transcript that it

deems relevant to the said accident or incident:

1. When the NTSB holds a public hearing on the accident or incident; or
2. When the NTSB make public its findings relative to the said accident or incident.

(e) Except as provided in Section 15 (b) of this Act, the Board shall maintain confidentiality of, and exempt from disclosure:

1. Laboratory records provided to the Board; and
2. Medical information related to the test or a review of the test voluntarily provided to the Board by the tested officer or employee.

(f) The Board may use a laboratory record of a person made available to it under this Act to develop an evidentiary record in its investigation of an accident or incident where the fitness of such person is at issue.

Sec. 16. Non-admissibility as Evidence. – No part of a report of the NTSB related to a transportation accident investigation may be admitted as evidence or shall be used in any civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. Furthermore, the NTSB shall have immunity from suits arising from its investigation, pronouncements, and findings.

Sec. 17. Relationship with Other Government Agencies. –

(a) Nothing in this Act shall deprive other government agencies from performing their intrinsic functions, including the investigation of accidents or making inquiries thereon, when those functions exist prior to the effectivity of this Act: *Provided, That* the Board, at its discretion, may require the submission of the records, findings, and recommendations of the investigation or inquiry;

(b) The PNP or any other law enforcement agency shall continue to investigate and record accidents involving motor vehicles and/or pedestrians for this purpose, the Board shall prescribe a uniform and standard operating system for investigation of such accidents which shall be mandatory on the part of the investigating body or person;

(c) The Board may require the submission of the records, findings, and/or recommendations of previous accidents and/or investigations of such accidents, from any government agency. For this purpose, the agency concerned shall transmit to the Board, within fifteen (15) days from receipt thereof, said records, findings, and/or recommendations; and

(d) In the exercise of its powers, the Board shall take into consideration the provisions of any treaty entered into by the Republic of the Philippines with other

countries relative to the investigation of accidents over which the Board assumed jurisdiction. For this purpose, the agency concerned shall transmit to the NTSB, within fifteen (15) days from the receipt of the NTSB's request, said records, findings, and recommendations;

- (e) In the exercise of its powers, the NTSB shall take into consideration the provisions of any treaty entered into by the Republic of the Philippines with other countries relative to the investigation of accidents over which the NTSB assumed jurisdiction.

Sec. 18. Appropriations. – The amount of Fifty Million Pesos (PHP50,000,000.00) is appropriated out of any funds in the National Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the initial organization and operations of the Board. Thereafter, such amounts as may be necessary and sufficient to finance its operations and activities shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Sec. 19. Annual Report. – The NTSB shall submit at the end of each year, an annual report on its findings and recommendations to both Houses of Congress and appropriate government agencies relating to the implementation of this Act.

Sec. 20. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the NTSB, in coordination with the Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Transportation (DOTr), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and the Philippine National Police (PNP), shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

Sec. 21. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other provisions hereof.

Sec. 22. Repealing Clause. – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders and rules and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Sec. 23. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,