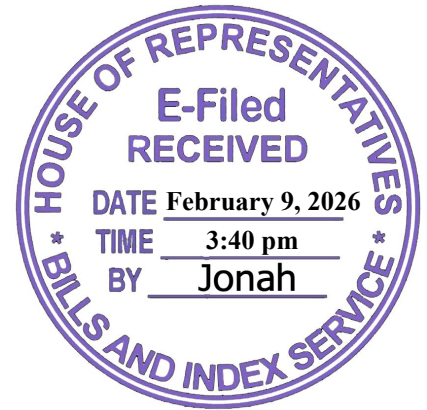




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City
TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



House Bill No. 7688

Introduced by Representatives King Collantes, Eric L. Olivarez, and Sonny “SL” Lagon

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Taal Volcano Protected Landscape (TVPL) is a nationally significant protected area known for its distinctive geological features, rich biodiversity, and vital contribution to the ecological stability and socio-economic well-being of surrounding communities. As part of the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS), as reinforced by the Expanded NIPAS (E-NIPAS) Act, the TVPL continues to face mounting pressures arising from population growth, land-use conversion, environmental degradation, and recurring natural hazards, underscoring the need for a more streamlined, accountable, and responsive governance framework.

This proposed measure seeks to strengthen the protection, sustainable management, and balanced development of the TVPL through the institutionalization of the Taal Volcano Protected Landscape Authority (TVPLA). In line with the government’s rightsizing and rationalization initiatives, the bill consolidates and streamlines existing institutional arrangements by subsuming the current Protected Area Management Office (PAMO) and replacing the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) with a single governing Board of Directors. This approach reduces institutional fragmentation, clarifies mandates, avoids duplication of functions, and enhances administrative efficiency, while remaining consistent with the policy objectives of the E-NIPAS law.

The measure adopts a holistic ridge-to-reef approach to ecosystem management, including the inclusion of the entire stretch of the Pansipit River within the Authority's jurisdiction. It prioritizes ecological integrity, biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, and climate resilience, while allowing for carefully regulated ecotourism, fisheries, and other sustainable livelihood activities. The bill likewise harmonizes enforcement powers, administrative fines, and penalties with E-NIPAS jurisprudence, firmly anchoring regulatory action on the principles of proportionality, due process, environmental precaution, and the polluter-pays principle.

Importantly, this proposed bill is the product of extensive consultations and technical refinement undertaken by a duly constituted Technical Working Group during the Nineteenth Congress. Through rigorous inter-agency coordination, stakeholder engagement, and expert review, the measure was refined to ensure policy coherence, operational viability, and consistency with existing environmental, administrative, and local governance frameworks.

Ultimately, this legislation aims to establish a leaner, more accountable, and more effective institutional mechanism that harmonizes environmental protection with socio-economic development, strengthens inter-agency and multi-sectoral coordination, empowers local communities, and ensures the long-term sustainability of the Taal Volcano Protected Landscape for present and future generations.



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AN ACT
STRENGTHENING THE PROTECTION, SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TAAL VOLCANO PROTECTED LANDSCAPE (TVPL), RATIONALIZING ITS PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT OFFICE (PAMO), THEREBY INSTITUTIONALIZING THE TVPL AUTHORITY, PRESCRIBING ITS POWERS, FUNCTIONS, AND DUTIES, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT (R.A.) 7586, KNOWN AS AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF NATIONAL INTEGRATED PROTECTED AREAS SYSTEM (NIPAS) ACT OF 1992, AS AMENDED BY R.A. 11038 ENTITLED: EXPANDED NIPAS ACT OF 2018

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the Philippines in session assembled:

SECTION 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be officially known as the **Taal Volcano Protected Landscape Authority (TVPLA) Act.**

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the state to promote the protection and accelerate the sustainable management and development and balanced growth of the Taal Volcano Protected Landscape (TVPL), within the context of national and regional plans and policies, for social and economic development. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the

maintenance of TVPL's ecological balance, its biodiversity, and the protection and enhancement of its natural resources shall be the paramount consideration of the Authority.

Towards this end, the State shall formulate and implement policies, plans, programs, and projects, particularly adopting the user-pays and polluter-pays principles, to ensure adequate provision for environmental management and protection, the preservation of ecological systems, and the prevention of human-induced ecological disturbances, resource degradation, and pollution, resulting in an improved quality of life.

The objectives shall be executed with the highest regard to appropriate provisions for the conservation, rehabilitation, preservation, restoration, and maintenance of the TVPL, consistent with the plans and programs embodied in Republic Act (RA) 9275 known as the *Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004*, RA 9003 or the *Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000*, and other pertinent laws.

The State shall likewise ensure an efficient and effective utilization of the natural resources of the TVPL, encourage the participation of all sectors of society, and maximize public involvement in natural resource management, conservation, and protection.

Sec. 3. Definition of Terms:

- a. **Lakeshore Buffer Zone** shall refer to a land area adjacent to a shoreline feature that is, or will be, vegetated with native shoreline species and which acts as a natural transition zone between the coast and adjacent land development. It is the region where lakeshore disasters such as typhoon-driven waves, storm surge, or nearshore currents are reduced or eliminated;
- b. **Lakeshore Greenbelt** shall refer to at least 20-meter-wide strip of natural or planted lakeshore vegetation extending from the highest water mark of Taal Lake landward, in cases where mangroves are absent. Its function is to absorb wave energy during storms thereby reducing wave damage, preventing lakeshore erosion, and protecting human lives and property;
- c. **Polluter-pays Principle** shall refer to the principle that those causing pollution should meet the costs to which it gives rise. TVPLA shall endeavor to promote the internalization of environmental costs and the use of economic instruments, taking into account the approach that the polluter should, in principle bear the cost of pollution, with due regard to the public interest and without distorting international trade and investment;

- d. ***User-pays Principle*** shall refer to the variation of the polluter-pays principle that calls upon the user of a natural resource to bear the cost of running down natural capital;
- e. ***Protected Area*** shall refer to identified portions of land and water set aside because of their unique physical and biological significance, managed to enhance biological diversity and protected against destructive human exploitation; and
- f. ***Ridge to Reef Approach*** - shall refer to an integrated approach to freshwater and lakeshore area management emphasizing the interconnections between the natural and social systems from the mountain ridges of volcanic islands, through lakeshore watersheds and habitats, and across lakeshore lagoons to the fringing reef environment associated with the TVPL.

Sec. 4. *Administrative Jurisdiction.* – The Authority shall have jurisdiction over the following seventeen (17) local government units (LGUs), currently covered by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources’ Protected Area Management Office (DENR-PAMO) - TVPL, based on the technical description (TD) set forth in the Annex of Republic Act No. 11038 or the *Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (E-NIPAS) Act of 2018*, Page 59, Item (29). The TD shall be reverified anew by the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA), upon the enactment of this measure:

Provincial District	City/ Municipality
Batangas 1 st District	1. Calaca City 2. Lemery 3. Taal
Batangas 3 rd District	1. Agoncillo 2. Alitagtag 3. Balete 4. Cuenca 5. Laurel 6. Malvar 7. Mataasnahoy 8. San Nicolas 9. Sta. Teresita 10. Talisay 11. Tanauan City
Batangas 4 th District	San Jose
Batangas 6 th District	Lipa City
Cavite 8 th District	Tagaytay City

The scope includes the coverage of the TVPL and the Taal Lake tributaries, with a total area covering approximately 62,292.16 hectares, more or less.

The four (4) municipalities of Agoncillo, Laurel, San Nicolas, and Talisay, all situated in the 3rd District of Batangas, shall be considered as focal areas, being the immediate environs surrounding the Taal Lake.

Sec. 5. *Inclusion of the Entire Stretch of the Pansipit River in the Coverage of TVPLA.* For a more holistic ridge-to-reef approach, the entirety of the Pansipit River shall be covered by the Authority's jurisdiction. The said river is also the sole drainage outlet of Taal Lake, which empties to Balayan Bay. The river stretches some nine (9) kilometers passing along the municipalities of Agoncillo, Lemery, San Nicolas, and Taal. The Authority shall ensure that the river's natural currents or flow of water shall not be disrupted or slowed down, to avoid stagnant spots. This is intended to ensure that the natural migratory paths of fish species that move between the lake and the sea shall not be blocked.

Sec. 6. *Creation of the TVPL Authority (TVPLA).* – To carry out the provisions of this Act, there is hereby created the ***TVPL Authority***, which shall be organized within sixty (60) days after the approval of this Act. The Authority shall execute the powers and functions herein vested and conferred upon it in such manner as will, in its judgment, aid to the fullest possible extent in carrying out the aims and purposes hereof.

The Authority shall prioritize the protection, preservation, and rehabilitation of the natural resources and biodiversity of the TVPL and shall be established as a self-sustaining commercial, financial, ecotourism, and investment institution, generating employment opportunities, and attracting and promoting local and foreign investments: ***Provided,*** That the exercise of the Authority's powers and functions shall in no way diminish the autonomy of the LGUs concerning purely local matters, within the framework, mandate, and limitations of the Constitution and the pertinent provisions of the Local Government Code of 1991.

The TVPLA shall be a corporate body within the coverage of Republic Act No. 10149, otherwise known as the ***GOCC Governance Act of 2011***, and shall be placed under the DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), being the administrator and manager of the NIPAS, for policy and program coordination and administrative supervision.

For this purpose, the PAMO-TVPL under the DENR shall be subsumed under the Authority, having the same objective to ensure the ecological integrity of the TVPL as a protected area.

The TVPL shall continue to be classified as a protected area under E-NIPAS law, except that the administration and control shall be transferred to the Authority. The current Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) shall be replaced by the TVPLA Board.

Sec. 7. *TVPL Administrative Jurisdiction Transfer to the Authority.* – Section 15 of R.A. 7586, as amended by R.A. 11038, is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Sec. 15. *Areas Under the Management of Other Departments and Government Instrumentalities.* – Should there be protected areas, or portions thereof, under the jurisdiction of government instrumentalities other than the DENR, such jurisdiction shall remain in the said department of government instrumentality: *Provided*, That the DENR shall retain its oversight function over such protected areas, and the concerned agency shall provide annual reports on the management of said areas focusing on the conservation of the biodiversity therein.”

THE AFORESAID PROVISION SHALL ALSO APPLY TO ALL PROTECTED AREAS THAT MAY BE BE SUBSUMED OR RELINQUISHED AND DEEMED MORE SUITABLE TO BE ADMINISTERED BY OTHER DEPARTMENTS OR GOVERNMENT INSTRUMENTALITIES, THROUGH AN ACT OF CONGRESS.

Sec. 8. *TVPL-PAMO Functions, and Personnel, Subsumed Under the Authority.* - The Authority shall entirely subsume the TVPL-PAMO, with its applicable powers, functions, personnel, funds, and appropriations, records, and equipment and property.

Sec. 9. *Location of the Principal Office.* – The Authority shall maintain its principal office at the current TVPL-PAMO office or could be transferred thereafter at a convenient place within the TVPL. The Authority may have satellite offices in other places, necessary for the conduct of its operation.

Sec. 10. *Establishment of a Lakeshore Greenbelt and Multi-Purpose Easement within the TVPL Permanent Danger Zone.* – The Authority shall prioritize the establishment of a lakeshore greenbelt along the shores of the Taal Lake in its management plan. The establishment of at least a twenty-meter (20-meter)-wide strip of natural or planted lakeshore vegetation extending from the lakeward edge toward land is crucial, the entirety of Taal Volcano Island being a permanent danger zone. Since the Taal Volcano Island is a permanent danger zone, no establishment, buildings, or structure of any kind shall be allowed within the 20-meter-wide strip of natural or planted coastal vegetation abovementioned, except those rights under Sec. 22 of RA 7586, as amended.

The Authority shall closely coordinate with the LGUs surrounding the Taal lake for the establishment of a multi-purpose easement. Notwithstanding, the ongoing bypass road project of the DPWH shall take priority. For areas with remaining easement leeway, it shall be used for multi-purpose beneficial uses like linear parks and the like, as deemed suitable by both the Authority and the LGUs.

Sec. 11. *Buffer Zone Enforcement.* – The Authority shall strengthen the mandate of Sec. 8. of RA 7586, as amended, that requires the establishment of buffer zones to protect the TVPL from potential harmful activities and shall be the recommendatory body for the designation of buffer zones for the purpose of providing extra layer of protection where restrictions may be applied.

Sec. 12. *Ecotourism and Aquaculture Zone.* – The TVPL shall be declared green ecotourism, aquaculture, open fishing, and fish reserve zones, and such shall be accorded priority for sustainable development by government agencies and instrumentalities and LGUs comprising therewith. All activities, businesses, or any other profitable venture within the TVPL for

eco-tourism, open fishing, and aquaculture shall comply with the regulations issued by the TVPLA and other government agencies involved therein, including the Department of Agriculture (DA) - Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR)'s regulations and guidelines on fish cages, mesh size, carrying capacity, and the like.

Sec. 13. *Special Powers and Functions of the Authority.* – In addition to the current powers and functions of the PAMB-TVPL and the PAMO under Section 11-A and 11-B of the NIPAS Act, as amended, the Authority shall have the following powers and functions:

- a) Issue orders or decisions to compel compliance with the provisions of RA No. 7586, as amended, and its implementing rules and regulations, after due notice and hearing, and exercise quasi-judicial powers over violations thereof: ***Provided***, That summary cease-and-desist orders may be issued only in cases of clear, imminent, and irreparable environmental damage, subject to confirmation after hearing;
- b) Make, alter, or modify orders requiring the discontinuance of activities or projects specifying the conditions and the time within which such discontinuance must be accomplished;
- c) Periodically conduct a comprehensive survey of the physical and natural resources and potentials of the TVPL particularly its social and economic conditions, biodiversity, hydrological characteristics, renewable energy prospects, development of scenic and eco-friendly tourist spots, conservation of water resources and such other matters, and on the basis thereof, to draft a comprehensive, sustainable, and detailed plan designed to conserve and utilize optimally the resources within the TVPL, to promote its rapid social and economic development and upon approval by the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) Board of such plan, to implement the same including projects in line with said plan: ***Provided***, That implementation of all fisheries plans and programs of the Authority shall require prior consensus of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and NFRDI to ensure that such plans and programs are science-based, consistent with the national

fisheries plans and programs. Priority protection and conservation of endemic fish species such as tawilis (*Sardinella tawilis*), and other fish species such as maliputo (*Caranx ignobilis*), two kinds of gobies (*Gnatholepis volcanus* and *Rhinogobius flavoventries*), as well as other rare species like the duhol (*Hydrophis semperi*), identified as one of the only two true sea snakes (*Hydrophiinae*) in the world, in Taal Lake area shall also be pursued. For the purpose of the said survey, public agencies shall submit and private entities shall provide necessary data;

- d) Provide the machinery for extending the necessary planning, management, and technical assistance to prospective and existing investors in the Taal Lake area;
- e) Collaborate with related agencies offering financial, technical, and physical assistance accorded to development and rehabilitation projects;
- f) Approve all plans, programs, and projects proposed by the local government offices or agencies within the TVPL, public corporations, and private persons or enterprises that may directly or indirectly affect the ecological integrity, sustainable use, or development objectives of the TVPL, and which are related to the plans, programs, or projects of the Authority under this Act.

The Authority shall issue the necessary clearances for approved plans, programs, and projects within thirty (30) days from complete submission of documentary requirements, unless the proposed plan, program, or project:

- (i) is not in consonance with the approved TVPL Management Plan;
- (ii) will contribute to significant or unmanageable pollution of the waters of Taal Lake or its tributaries; or
- (iii) will result in ecological imbalance or degradation of the TVPL.

The Authority is hereby empowered to issue cease-and-desist orders, and to initiate administrative, civil, or criminal actions, as warranted, against any person or entity

that implements or continues to implement any plan, program, project, or activity within the TVPL without prior clearance from the Authority, or in violation of the terms and conditions of such clearance.

Administrative fines and penalties shall be imposed in accordance with a graduated penalty system, taking into account the following factor

- (i) the gravity and duration of the violation;
- (ii) the area affected;
- (iii) the environmental damage caused;
- (iv) the project cost or economic benefit derived; and
- (v) whether the violation is a first, second, or subsequent offense.

All fines shall be proportionate, non-confiscatory, and commensurate to the damage caused, and shall be immediately executory in cases involving grave, imminent, or irreversible environmental damage, without prejudice to appeal, unless restrained or modified by the DENR.

Any local government office, agency, public corporation, private person, or enterprise whose plan, program, or project has been disapproved by the Authority may appeal such decision to the DENR within fifteen (15) days from receipt thereof, whose decision shall be final and executory.

The Authority may collect reasonable processing and clearance fees, as may be fixed by the Board of Directors. Expansion or modification of previously approved plans shall be treated as new applications, subject to review and payment of applicable fees;

- g) Employ proper research required for formulating or reformulating proper measures to be taken by the Authority for the TVPL's balanced economic development *vis-à-vis* environmental conservation, which research includes lake and surrounding land topography, geology, vegetation, fish capture, aquaculture, and wildlife;
- h) Aid the DENR in securing Taal Lake's unique biodiversity by implementing effective measures in properly managing invasive fish species, developing efficient systems to

reduce the negative ecological impacts of fisheries, agriculture, industrialization, and tourism;

- i) Impose administrative fines and penalties consistent with Section 20 of Republic Act No. 7586, as amended by Republic Act No. 11038 (E-NIPAS Act), and applicable jurisprudence, and in accordance with the graduated penalty system provided under this Act and its implementing rules and regulations.

Administrative penalties shall be imposed independently of, and without prejudice to, criminal and civil liabilities under existing laws.

The exhaustion of administrative remedies shall be required prior to the institution of criminal actions, except in cases of flagrante delicto violations, continuing offenses, or acts posing immediate threats to life, public safety, or irreversible environmental damage, consistent with E-NIPAS jurisprudence.

In determining the amount of fines, the Authority shall consider the extent of environmental damage, the area affected, the duration of the violation, and the economic benefit derived by the violator, ensuring that penalties serve both deterrent and restorative purposes.

The TVPLA shall impose fines based on the damage caused to the TVPL, the area covered by the violation, and the project cost. In addition to the existing prohibited acts mentioned, the following shall also be prohibited and fined:

1. Constructing unusually tall, unstable, or obstructive structures obscuring public view of the natural beauty of the surroundings. A structure or building shall be deemed unusually tall when it measures beyond the standard maximum 10 meters from the natural ground line to the roof top or the highest part of the structure or building;
2. Reclaiming land by any private person or entity from any part of the waters of the Taal Lake;
3. Raising or lowering the water level or water volume of the Taal Lake;
4. Introducing or releasing any invasive fish species into Taal Lake;
5. Planting invasive and non-native plant species within and around the Taal Lake;
6. All kinds of contaminants that would negatively affect the health of fishes and other aquatic resources in the Area;

7. Engaging in any activity that will cause, or likely to cause, any kind of water pollution;
8. Fraudulently, or through misrepresentation, acquiring permits, licenses, or clearances with the Authority, or engaging in activities different from that which was authorized by the Authority; and
9. Any other act or activity that will damage or cause deterioration of the Taal Lake or may endanger the unique endemic species within it.

Any person or entity who shall violate any of the prohibited acts shall be disqualified from acquiring permits, licenses, or clearances, except when they have rehabilitated the area of the TVPL which they damaged and upon payment of fines, penalties, and damages caused to the TVPL. The Authority shall likewise require them to present evidence of rehabilitation.

The Authority and national and local government offices, agencies, and public corporation shall efficiently coordinate their plans, programs, projects, and licensing procedures with respect to the TVPL, for updating the existing TVPL Management Plan which shall be binding upon all parties concerned;

- j) Plan, program, finance and undertake infrastructure projects such as river, flood, and tidal control works, waste water and sewerage works, water supply, roads, port works, irrigation, communications, housing and related works, when so required within the context of its development plans, and programs including the readjustment, relocation, or resettlement of the population within the TVPL as may be deemed necessary and beneficial by the Authority: ***Provided,*** That should any project be financed wholly or in part by the Authority, it is hereby authorized to collect reasonable fees and tolls as may be fixed by its Board of Directors subject to the approval of the DENR from users or beneficiaries thereof to recover cost of construction, operation, and maintenance of the projects: ***Provided further,*** That if the Authority should find it necessary to undertake such infrastructure projects which are classified as social overhead capital projects as determined by the NEDA, the

Authority shall be authorized to receive financial assistance from the government in such amounts as may be necessary to carry out the said project subject to terms and conditions as may be imposed by the government, upon the recommendation of the NEDA Board: *Provided, finally*, That such amount as may be necessary for the purpose is hereby authorized to be appropriated out of the funds of the National Treasury not otherwise appropriated;

- k) Plan and carry out incremental, consistent, and balanced improvements in the TVPL;
- l) Conduct studies and make experiments on fish production and aquaculture whenever necessary, with the collaboration and assistance of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and NFRDI, with the end-view of improving present techniques and practices as well as determining new ways to lessen the environmental impact of fish cage farming while improving fish quality;
- m) For the purpose of effectively regulating and monitoring activities in Taal Lake and its tributaries, the Authority shall have exclusive jurisdiction to issue new permits for the use of the lake water and its tributaries for any project or activities in or affecting the lake including navigation, construction, and operation of fish cages, fish enclosures, fish corrals, and the like, and to impose necessary fees for said activities and projects: *Provided*, That the fees collected for fisheries may be shared between the Authority and other government agencies and political subdivisions in such proportion as may be determined by the Secretary of the DENR upon recommendation of the Authority's Council: *Provided further*, That the Authority's Board of Directors may determine new areas of fishery development or activities, in consultation with BFAR and NFRDI, consistent with current the Fisheries Management Area (FMA) concept of the BFAR, taking into account the overall development plans and programs of the Taal Lake: *Provided finally*, That the Authority shall, subject to the approval of the Secretary of the DENR, promulgate such rules and regulations which shall govern fisheries development activities in the Taal Lake and its tributaries which shall take into consideration, among others, the

following: socio-economic amelioration of *bona fide* resident fishermen whether individually or collectively in the form of cooperatives, lakeshore town development, a master plan for fish cage construction and operation, communal fishing ground for lakeshore town residents in hiring laborers for fishery projects;

- n) Implement proper water management plans and ensure the good quality of Taal Lake's waters;
- o) Propose to cities and municipalities embraced within the TVPL to pass appropriate zoning ordinances and other regulatory measures necessary to carry out the objectives of the Authority and strictly enforce the same with the assistance of the Authority;
- p) Adopt water restoration to rehabilitate the TVPL to a healthier and cleaner state and ensure the sustainability of the ecosystem, enhance water quality, and preserve the lake and its tributaries;
- q) Act in coordination with existing governmental agencies in establishing safe water quality standards for industrial, agricultural, aquaculture, and municipal waste discharges into the lake and its tributaries and to cooperate with said existing agencies of government in enforcing such standards, or to separately pursue enforcement and penalty actions as provided in Section 9(d) and Section 23 of this Act;
- r) Establish emergency plans, policies, and strategies and disaster preparedness activities, in cooperation with the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council and to disseminate such plans, policies, and strategies to the LGUs within the Taal Lake;
- s) Undertake studies on the improvement and maintenance of the desirable water quality of Taal Lake and its tributaries, and in pursuance thereof, to prepare a water quality management program on a continuing basis, which the Authority shall carry out with

the assistance and support of all national and local government units involved in water quality management;

- t) Adopt, prescribe, and promulgate the rules and regulations governing the procedures of the Authority with respect to hearings, plans, specifications, designs, and other data for sewerage system and industrial waste disposal system, the filing of reports and the issuance of permits;
- u) Issue, renew, revoke, or deny permits, under such conditions as it may determine to be reasonable, for the prevention and abatement of pollution, for the discharge of the sewerage system, industrial waste, and for the installation or operation of sewerage and industrial disposal system or parts thereof: *Provided*, That the Authority, by rules and regulations, may require subdivisions, condominiums, resorts, inns, transient homes, hospitals, public buildings, and other similar human settlement to put up appropriate central sewerage system and sewage treatment works, except that no permits shall be required of any new sewerage system or changes to or extensions of existing sewerage system that discharge only domestic or sanitary wastes from a single residential building provided with septic tanks or their equivalent. The Authority may impose reasonable fees and charges for the issuance or renewal of all permits herein required.

The Authority shall not allow or issue permits, clearances, or licenses for projects, activities, or businesses for the following purposes:

- i. Large-scale quarrying, commercial quarrying, or any other activity in guise of quarrying within the TVPL;
- ii. Poaching, killing, destroying, disturbing of any wildlife including in private lands within the TVPL;
- iii. Dumping, throwing, using, or causing dumping of any toxic chemical, noxious or poisonous substance or nonbiodegradable material, untreated sewage or animal waste or products whether in liquid, solid or gas state, including pesticides and other hazardous substances as defined under

Republic Act No. 6969, otherwise known as the "Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Waste Control Act of 1990", detrimental to the TVPL, or to the plants and animals or inhabitants therein. No sanitary landfills shall be established within the TVPL;

- iv. Engaging in 'kaingin' or, any manner, causing forest fires inside the TVPL;
 - v. Mutilating, defacing, destroying, excavating, vandalizing or, in any manner damaging any natural formation, religious, spiritual, historical sites, artifacts and other objects of natural beauty, scenic value or objects of interest to Indigenous Peoples/Indigenous Cultural Communities;
 - vi. Littering or depositing refuse or debris on the ground or in bodies of water;
 - vii. Possessing or using blasting caps or explosives anywhere within the TVPL;
 - viii. Undertaking mineral exploration or extraction within the TVPL; and
 - ix. Any project or activity that will cause grave and irreparable damage to the TVPL and its biodiversity;
- v) After due notice and hearing, the Authority may revoke, suspend, or modify any permit issued under this Act whenever the same is necessary to prevent or abate pollution, to prevent destruction or ecological imbalance in any area of the TVPL or to prevent obstruction and illegal encroachment in the said area;
- w) Deputize in writing or request assistance of appropriate government agencies or instrumentalities for the purpose of enforcing this Act and its implementing rules and regulations and the order and decisions of the Authority;
- x) Authorize its representatives to enter at all reasonable times any property of the public domain and private property devoted to industrial, manufacturing, processing, or commercial use without doing damage, for the purpose of inspecting and investigating conditions relating to pollution or possible imminent pollution;

- y) Enter into contracts, memoranda, agreements, and other cooperative arrangements with public and private entities, whether here or abroad, for purposes of carrying out the provisions of this Act;
- z) Accept donations, contributions, grants, bequests, or gifts in cash in kind from various sources, domestic or foreign, in consonance with existing laws and regulations. The cash donations shall not be used to fund the personal services requirement of the Authority; and
- aa) Perform other related functions as deemed necessary to achieve the objectives of the Authority.

SEC. 14. *Corporate Powers.* - The Authority shall have the following corporate powers:

- a. To succeed on its corporate name;
- b. To sue and be sued in such corporate name;
- c. To adopt, alter, and use a corporate seal;
- d. To undertake justifiable activities to explore, extract, utilize, and develop the economic potentials of the Taal Lake area that are environmentally friendly and non-competitive with the private sector;
- e. To enter into contracts of any kind and description, to enable it to carry out its purpose and function under this Act;
- f. To acquire, buy, purchase, hold or lease, personal and real property as it deems necessary or convenient in the transaction of its business or in relation to carrying out its purposes under this Act; and to lease, mortgage, sell, alienate, or otherwise encumber, utilize, or dispose such personal and real property held by the Authority, subject to prior or existing individual or communal right or private parties or of the government, or any agency or enterprise thereof;
- g. To exercise the power of eminent domain whenever the Authority deems it necessary for the attainment of the objectives of the Authority under this Act;
- h. To borrow funds from any local or foreign financial institution, to carry out the purposes of this Authority under this Act;

- i. To issue rules and regulations necessary to effectively carry out the powers and the purposes provided herein, including plans, programs, and projects of the Authority, subject to the approval of the TVPL Management Board of Directors; and
- j. For carrying on its business, or for the purpose of attaining its objectives, to perform any acts which a corporation, partnership, or natural person is authorized to perform under the current laws, or which may be enacted hereafter.

SEC. 15. TVPL Board of Directors. – The governing board and policymaking body of the Authority shall be vested in and exercised by a Board of Directors, herein referred to as the Board, which shall be composed of fifteen (15) members, as follows:

1. **DENR** Secretary as the ex-officio Chairperson;
2. **DA** Secretary as the ex-officio Vice-Chairperson;
3. **DOST** Secretary as ex-officio member;
4. **DOT** Secretary as ex-officio member;
5. **DPWH** Secretary as ex-officio member;
6. **Batangas Provincial Government** Representative;
7. **Batangas 3rd District Congressman** Representative;
8. **Aquaculture Investors** Representative;
9. **Fisherfolk Sector** Representative;
10. **Batangas State University** Representative;
11. **Municipality of Talisay** Representative;
12. **Municipality of Laurel** Representative;
13. **Municipality of San Nicolas** Representative;
14. **Municipality of Agoncillo** Representative; and
15. **Three (3) Representatives from the rest of the 13 cities or municipalities** within the jurisdiction of the TVPL.

The focal area representatives of the four (4) municipalities of Agoncillo, Laurel, San Nicolas, and Talisay, shall have permanent seats in the Board, while the 13 LGUs shall have a rotation every three (3) months, or as decided by the Board, through a resolution.

Provided, That no representative from the same city or municipality shall serve consecutively.

The ex officio board members of the Authority may designate their respective ex officio alternates, who are officials next in rank, whose acts shall be considered the acts of their principals.

The compensation, term limits, shortlisting, appointment and removal of all appointive directors shall be in accordance with RA 10149.

SEC. 16. *Powers and Functions of the Board.*

- a. Formulate, prescribe, amend, and repeal rules and regulations that govern the conduct of business of the Authority;
- b. Approve plans, programs, and projects deemed necessary and sustainable to carry out the provisions of this Act;
- c. Determine the organizational structure, staffing pattern, compensation of officers and employees of the Authority in accordance with RA 10149 and Civil Service rules;
- d. Approve the annual and supplemental budget of the Authority; and
- e. Perform such other acts or functions as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 17. *General Manager (GM).* – The General Manager, who shall be the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Authority, shall exercise overall administrative supervision to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the policies laid down by the Authority.

The GM of the Authority shall be elected by the members of the Board from among its ranks, in accordance with RA10149.

SEC. 18. *Powers and Functions of the GM.* – The GM shall have the following powers and duties:

- a. Submit for consideration of the Board the policies and measures which the GM believes to be necessary to carry out the purposes and provisions of this Act;
- b. Execute and administer the policies, plans, programs, and projects approved by the Board;
- c. Direct and supervise the operation and internal administration of the Authority. The GM may delegate some of the administrative responsibilities to other officers of the Authority subject to the rules and regulations of the Board;
- d. Appoint all subordinate officers and employees who shall enjoy security of tenure and may be removed for cause in accordance with law. The GM may engage the services of experts/consultants either on full time or part-time basis, as may be required in the performance of his/her functions and duties;
- e. Submit quarterly reports to the Board on personnel selection, placement, and training and exercise the power to discipline subordinate officials and employees under the provisions of law;
- f. Submit to the Board an annual report and such other reports as may be required, including the details of the annual and supplemental budgets of the Authority; and
- g. Perform such other functions as may be provided by law.

SEC. 19. *Quorum.* – A majority of the members of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business.

SEC. 20. *Board Meetings.* – The Board shall meet at least once a month. The Board shall be convened by the Chairperson of the Board or upon written request signed by majority of the members.

SEC. 21. *Transition of PAMO-TVPL to TVPLA.* – Upon its organization, for a smooth transition, the TVPLA Board of Directors shall formulate and report to the DENR in the utmost expeditious manner, but in no case longer than one (1) year, its plans and recommendations for the accelerated but balanced, and sustainable development of the TVPLA in accordance with the aims and purposes of this Act.

Sec. 22. TVPLA Organizational Structure. In carrying out the activities of the Authority, the GM shall be assisted by an Assistant General Manager (AGM) for Technical Services and an AGM for Management Services who shall have powers, duties, and functions that may be delegated to them by the GM.

Any of the AGM shall act as GM in the absence or in case of temporary incapacity of the GM, until such time that a new GM is duly appointed.

The Authority shall have the following services under the direct supervision and control of the GM:

- a. A ***Conservation and Development Service*** which shall conduct studies and research, and prepare reports and other publications relating to operational trends, and program objectives and accomplishments on rehabilitation, biodiversity, and ecotourism. Monitor and evaluate all activities related to implementation of policies, rules and regulations for ecotourism, preservation of biological diversities, and other activities in the TVPL;
- b. An ***Administrative Service*** which shall be responsible for providing services relating to personnel, training, information, records, supplies general services, equipment and security;
- c. A ***Legal Service***, to be headed by a Legal Counsel who shall represent the Authority in legal actions and proceedings. This unit shall be responsible for providing staff advice and assistance on legal matters;
- d. A ***Finance Service*** which shall be responsible for providing staff advice and assistance on budgetary and financial matters, and safekeeping of corporate assets;
- e. A ***Project Management Service*** which shall be responsible for the operation of approved projects, project evaluation, and management improvement matters;

- f. A ***Planning and Project Development Service*** which shall be responsible for providing services relating to planning, programming, statistics and project development;
- g. An ***Engineering and Construction Service*** which shall be responsible for providing services relating to detailed engineering plans and the construction and maintenance of project facilities;
- h. A ***Clearances and Permits Service*** which shall be responsible for the implementation of PD 1586 (Environmental Impact Statement System) within the region. In particular, it evaluates Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) applications for projects located in Environmentally Critical Areas. It also issues Certificates of Non-Coverage (CNC) for projects determined to be outside the purview of the Philippine EIS System; and
- i. A ***Regulatory and Enforcement Service*** which shall be responsible for the effective implementation and compliance with this law, R.A. 7586, as amended, and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR), PD 1586 (Environmental Impact Statement System), RA 8749 (The Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999), RA 9275 (The Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004), RA 9003 (The Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000), RA 6969 (Toxic Substances and Nuclear and Hazardous Waste Control Act of 1990), and other laws related to the protection and preservation of the TVPL.

The business and activities of each of these services shall be directed by its Service Directors.

The Board may create other services and positions as may be deemed necessary for the efficient, economical, and effective conduct of the activities of the Authority.

Sec. 23. Police and Enforcement Powers. In the exercise of its police and enforcement powers, the Authority shall establish its own police force, hereinafter referred to as TVPL Rangers, as frontliners in the performance of maritime safety, security, marine environmental protection and law enforcement functions. A portion of the collected fees shall be allotted for the utilization of

personnel, maintenance, and operation of equipment, assets and resources to be used within the TVPL.

The TVPL Rangers shall enforce this law and RA No. 7586, as amended, investigate and prevent violation of aforesaid laws, effect the arrest of criminal offenders, bring offenders to justice, and assist in their prosecution for such violations. The Philippine National Police shall not exercise their powers under existing laws, rules, and regulations over the TVPL for violations of RA No. 7586, as amended, except when duly authorized or requested by the Board for law enforcement support of the TVPL Rangers, or when public safety or order requires otherwise.

Sec. 24. *Immunity from Suit.* – The board of directors, the GM, officers, and employees of the Authority, including the TVPL Rangers assigned to exercise police and enforcement powers of the Authority, shall not be subject to any action, claim, or demand, in connection with any act done or omitted in the performance of duties and exercise of powers, except for actions and intentional omissions done in evident bad faith or gross negligence.

Sec. 25. *Indemnity.*– Unless the actions of the board of directors, the GM, officers and employees of the Authority, including the TVPL Rangers assigned to exercise police and enforcement powers of the Authority, shall be found to be in willful violation of this act, performed with evident bad faith or gross negligence, the board of directors, the GM, officers, and employees of the Authority, including the TVPL Rangers, shall be held free and harmless to the fullest extent permitted by law, from any liability, and shall be indemnified for all liabilities, losses, claims, demands, damages, deficiencies, costs, and expenses of whatsoever kind and nature that may arise, in connection with the exercise of their powers and in the performance of their duties and functions.

The Authority shall underwrite or advance litigation costs and expenses, including legal fees and other expenses of external counsel, or provide legal assistance to its board of directors, the GM, officers, and employees of the Authority, including the assigned TVPL Rangers, in connection with any civil, criminal, administrative or any other action or proceeding, to which they are made a party by reason of, or in connection with, the exercise of their authority or the

performance of their duties and functions under this Act: Provided, That such legal protection shall not apply to any civil, criminal, administrative, or any action or proceeding that may be initiated by the Authority, against the board of directors, the GM, officers, and employees of the Authority, including the TVPL Rangers: Provided further, That the board of directors, the GM, officers, and employees of the Authority, including the TVPL Rangers assigned to exercise police and enforcement powers of the Authority, who shall resign, retire, transfer to another agency or be separated from the service, shall continue to be provided with such legal protection in connection with any act done or omitted done in good faith during their tenure or employment with the Authority: Provided finally, That in the event of a settlement or compromise, indemnification shall be provided only in connection with matters covered by the settlement as to which the Authority is advised by counsel that the persons to be indemnified did not commit any negligence or misconduct.

The costs and expenses incurred in defending the aforementioned action, suit, or proceeding may be paid by the Authority in advance of the final disposition of such action, suit, or proceeding upon receipt of an undertaking by, or on behalf of the board of directors, the GM, officers, and employees of the Authority, including the TVPL Rangers assigned to exercise police and enforcement powers of the Authority, to repay the amount advanced, should it ultimately be determined by the Authority that one is not entitled to be indemnified as provided in this section.

SEC. 26. *Prohibited Acts, Fines and Penalties, Criminal, and Civil Liabilities.* The Authority shall impose administrative penalties in accordance with the graduated fines-and-penalties schedule, without prejudice to criminal prosecution under RA 7586, as amended, PD 1586, RA 8749, RA 9003, RA 6969, and other applicable laws.

The imposition of administrative penalties shall not bar the filing of criminal or civil actions, consistent with E-NIPAS jurisprudence.

All enforcement actions of the Authority shall be guided by the principles of proportionality, due process, environmental precaution, and sustainable development.

The Board of Directors, through the recommendation of the Enforcement Service, shall periodically update the said register through a Board Resolution.

Sec. 27. *Transitory Provisions.* To ensure a smooth transition covering the activities of the affected DENR-PAMO-TVPL, pending the full implementation of the Authority's organizational structure and staffing pattern, all officials and employees of the interim DENR-PAMO-TVPL shall continue to exercise their duties and functions, and shall receive their salaries and allowances until they receive the notice of appointment, notice of transfer to the Authority, notice of change of duties and functions, and notice of transfer to another position.

All assets and properties under the accountability of the interim DENR-PAMO-TVPL and all its obligations, indebtedness, and liabilities, if any, shall be transferred and assumed by the Authority, subject to the guidelines that may be established by the GCG, Department of Budget and Management (DBM), OP, and Commission on Audit.

The civil service laws, rules and regulations pertinent to the displacement of personnel affected by this Act shall be strictly enforced. In case of displaced employees, the national government shall provide the amount necessary to pay their benefits at the rate mandated by the DBM, for every year of service: *Provided*, That if qualified for retirement under existing retirement laws, said employees may opt to receive the benefits thereunder.

SEC. 28. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Board of Directors, within 120 days after the approval of this Act, must issue the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 29. *Separability Clause.* – The provisions of this Act are hereby declared to be separable, and in the event any one or more of such provisions herein are held unconstitutional or illegal, they shall not affect the validity of the other provisions in this Act.

SEC. 30. *Repealing Clause.* Section 15 of R.A. 7586 or the NIPAS Act, as amended by Section 4 of RA 11038, or the *E-NIPAS Act of 2018, under Subsection 1.a, under Region 4A, Item 24, on Taal Volcano Protected Landscape*, is hereby amended accordingly. All other laws, orders, rules, and regulations and other issuances or parts thereof which are contrary or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 31. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,