

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7723



Introduced by Honorable EULOGIO "LEO" R. RODRIGUEZ

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution mandates that the State shall promote a just social order to ensure the prosperity of the nation through policies that provide adequate social services and improve quality of life for all. As an archipelagic nation, the Philippines relies heavily on its maritime transport as a vital public service, where the mobility of people and goods largely depends on safe, accessible, and well-regulated sea transport system.

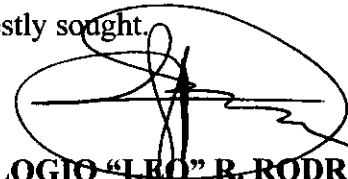
As an island province, Catanduanes is dependent on maritime transportation for inter-island connectivity, trade, tourism, and delivery of vital government services. Currently, the nearest Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) office that can serve Catanduanes is the Legazpi Regional Office, located across the sea. Residents from the Municipality of Virac are required to travel nearly one hundred (100) kilometers, while residents from the Municipalities of Pandan and Bagamanoc, the island's northern municipalities, travel more than one hundred fifty (150) kilometers to reach the mainland office.

As a result, shipowners, seafarers, fisherfolks, and maritime workers must endure significant financial burdens and extended travel time to process vessel registrations, seafarer certifications, safety compliance requirements, and other essential maritime transactions. This accessibility challenge disadvantages small-scale operators and residents in the rural areas.

The absence of a dedicated MARINA office within the province hampers effective regulation, monitoring, and development of the local maritime industry. With maritime activity in Catanduanes steadily growing, the demand for accessible and efficient maritime services likewise increases to ensure maritime safety, environmental protection, and compliance with national standards.

To address these challenges, this bill seeks to establish a MARINA extension office in the Municipality of Virac. This office will bring essential maritime services closer to the people, enhance public service delivery, stimulate economic activity, and contribute to the inclusive growth of the Province of Catanduanes.

Hence, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


EULOGIO "LEO" R. RODRIGUEZ

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING AN EXTENSION OFFICE OF THE MARITIME INDUSTRY
AUTHORITY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF VIRAC, PROVINCE OF
CATANDUANES, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. There shall be established an extension office of the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) in the Municipality of Virac, Province of Catanduanes.

SEC. 2. The Secretary of the Department of Transportation, through the Administrator of MARINA, shall immediately include in the Department's program the operationalization of the MARINA Virac Extension Office.

SEC. 3. The amount necessary for the effective implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 4. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,