

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8049



Introduced by Honorable EULOGIO "LEO" R. RODRIGUEZ

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Province of Catanduanes, while rich in natural resources and tourism potential, remains economically challenged due to its total dependence on maritime and air transport. The Maqueda Channel which separates the island from mainland Bicol is notorious for its turbulent waters and devastating typhoons. These geographic realities result in high logistics costs and isolation in times of calamities for the people of Catanduanes.

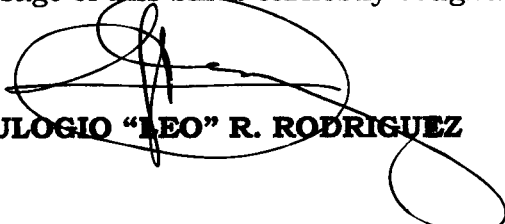
This bill provides for the construction of the Camarines Sur-Catanduanes Friendship Bridge, an endeavor that will fully integrate Catanduanes into the Luzon road, energy, and telecommunications infrastructure networks, driving greater economic growth and better disaster resilience.

As the Maqueda Channel presents extreme engineering challenges, this bill mandates that the feasibility study and engineering design shall be conducted by an international firm with a proven track record in maritime mega-projects, ensuring the global best practices in structural integrity and environmental stewardship.

Once realized, this link will eliminate reliance on weather-dependent maritime and air transport allowing trade efficiency and full socio-economic integration of Catanduanes to the Greater Luzon area, lowering logistics costs and facilitating transport of goods to broader markets. Further, this project will unlock the full tourism potential of the island, encouraging increased tourist arrivals, thereby creating more jobs and stimulating local micro-industries. Moreover, this facility addresses power and telecommunications challenges of the province by allowing connectivity to the Luzon grid and telecommunications infrastructure, a long-standing issue in Catanduanes. Finally, beyond the economic benefits, inter-island connectivity is a lifeline to Catandunganons who suffer from isolation when sea and air travels are suspended. The Friendship Bridge provides a permanent route for evacuation and relief efforts, regardless of weather conditions.

The Friendship Bridge is not only a realization of the aspirations of the people of Catanduanes to be connected to the mainland, but a fulfillment of their fundamental rights to mobility, equal protection against socio-economic inequities, and state protection of life and property, especially during calamities.

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


EULOGIO "LEO" R. RODRIGUEZ

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CAMARINES SUR-
CATANDUANES INTER-ISLAND CONNECTIVITY PROJECT, AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. This Act shall be known as the "Camarines Sur-Catanduanes Friendship Bridge Act."

SEC. 2. There shall be constructed under the supervision of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) a long-span bridge from the Province of Camarines Sur to the Province of Catanduanes, including access roads thereto.

SEC. 3. The feasibility study and engineering design shall be undertaken by a qualified international consulting firm with proven experience in similar long-span bridge projects. The design and construction phases shall include specific measure to minimize disruption to the marine ecosystem of Maqueda Channel.

SEC. 4. The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. The project may also be funded through Public-Private Partnership or Official Development Assistance.

SEC. 5. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,