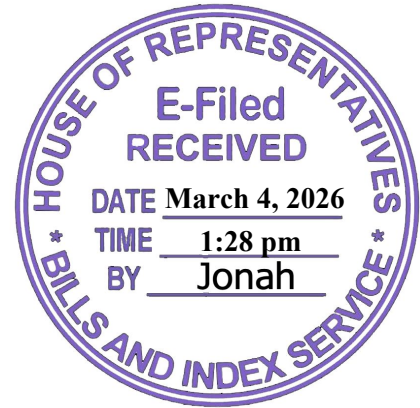




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8273



Introduced by Representative **ANTONINO B. ROMAN III**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Cable and satellite television services remain essential platforms for public information, education, entertainment, and civic awareness in the Philippines. For many households—particularly in areas with limited internet connectivity—cable and direct-to-home (DTH) satellite television continue to serve as primary sources of news, public advisories, educational programming, and cultural content.

Despite their vital role, subscribers frequently experience prolonged service outages, signal disruptions, or material degradation of reception, often without timely compensation or automatic billing adjustments. While existing consumer protection mechanisms allow subscribers to file complaints, the burden of initiating claims for refunds or credits rests largely upon the consumer. In practice, many affected subscribers either remain unaware of their entitlement or are discouraged by the inconvenience of filing individual requests. As a result, consumers are often charged for services that were materially unavailable.

This proposed measure addresses that inequity by mandating cable television operators and satellite television service providers to institute a system of automatic pro-rated refunds or bill adjustments in cases of prolonged service outages or disruptions not attributable to subscribers. By requiring refunds to be applied automatically—without the need for a subscriber-initiated claim—the bill strengthens consumer protection, enhances billing fairness, and promotes greater accountability within the broadcast distribution sector.

At the same time, the measure recognizes legitimate operational realities. It expressly excludes outages arising from properly notified scheduled maintenance,

fortuitous events, and circumstances beyond the reasonable control of service providers. This balanced approach ensures that providers are not penalized for unavoidable disruptions while safeguarding subscribers against unfair charges for undelivered services.

The bill also empowers the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) to enforce compliance through administrative sanctions, thereby reinforcing regulatory oversight and promoting service reliability across the industry.

Ultimately, this measure affirms the principle that consumers should only pay for services actually rendered. By institutionalizing an automatic refund mechanism, the proposed law advances transparency, fairness, and public trust in the cable and satellite television sector, consistent with the State's policy of protecting consumer rights and ensuring the responsible regulation of public service providers.

Immediate passage of this measure is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Antonino B. Roman III', with a stylized flourish at the end.

ANTONINO B. ROMAN III



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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8273

Introduced by Representative **ANTONINO B. ROMAN III**

**AN ACT MANDATING CABLE TELEVISION OPERATORS AND SATELLITE
TELEVISION SERVICE PROVIDERS TO INSTITUTE AN AUTOMATIC
REFUND MECHANISM FOR SERVICE OUTAGES AND DISRUPTIONS,
PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF**

*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 “Automatic Refund for Cable and Satellite Television Service Outages and Disruptions Act.”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. - The State recognizes the vital role of broadcast distribution, cable television, and satellite television services in public information, education, entertainment, and national development. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to regulate cable television operators and satellite television service providers to ensure service reliability, protect consumer rights, and guarantee fair and accurate billing. Subscribers shall not be charged for services that are materially unavailable due to prolonged outages or disruptions not attributable to them.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. - As used in this Act:

- a. *Cable Television Operator* refers to any person, partnership, corporation, cooperative, or entity duly authorized by franchise and/or registered with the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) to construct, install, operate, and maintain a cable television system for the delivery of television programming to subscribers for a fee.

- b. *Fortuitous event* refers to either an “act of God” or a natural occurrence, such as floods, typhoons, storms, earthquakes and the like, or an “act of man,” namely riots, strikes, wars, governmental prohibitions, robbery, theft sabotage, cyberattacks, deliberate destruction, or accidental damage to telecommunications facilities by third parties and the like.
- c. *Satellite Television Service Provider* refers to any person, partnership, corporation, cooperative, or entity duly authorized by franchise and/or registered with the NTC to provide direct-to-home (DTH) or other satellite-based television distribution services to subscribers for a fee.
- d. *Service Outage or Disruption* refers to the complete loss or material degradation of cable or satellite television signal reception affecting subscribed channels or services.
- e. *Fortuitous Event* refers to acts of God such as typhoons, floods, earthquakes, and similar natural disasters; or acts of man such as riots, wars, governmental prohibitions, sabotage, or other events beyond the reasonable control of the service provider.
- f. *Subscriber* refers to any person or entity subscribing to cable television or satellite television services, whether on a prepaid or postpaid basis.

SEC. 4. Coverage. - This Act shall apply to all cable television operators and satellite television service providers operating within the Philippines.

SEC. 5. Network Maintenance. - Planned repairs, upgrades, or scheduled system maintenance necessary for service sustainability shall not be considered a service outage, provided that:

- a. Subscribers are notified at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to such scheduled maintenance; and
- b. The cumulative duration of scheduled maintenance shall not exceed forty-eight (48) hours within a calendar month.

Emergency maintenance necessitated by unexpected technical failures shall likewise not be deemed a service outage, provided that reasonable notice is given as soon as practicable.

SEC. 6. Automatic Refunds for Cable and Satellite Television Service Outages. - Cable television operators and satellite television service providers shall, on a pro-rated basis, provide an automatic refund credit or bill adjustment to subscribers

adversely affected by a service outage or disruption for an aggregate period of at least twenty-four (24) hours within a billing month, except when such outage is due to:

- a. Scheduled maintenance pursuant to Section 5;
- b. A fortuitous event; or
- c. Acts or fault of the subscriber or third party.

The refund shall be automatically applied without the need for any request from the subscriber. Nothing shall preclude a subscriber from filing a complaint with the NTC, the appropriate administrative or quasi-judicial agency, or in court.

Subscribers on prepaid plans shall likewise be entitled to equivalent credit adjustments or extension of service validity.

SEC. 7. Penalties. - Any cable television operator or satellite television service provider who fails to comply with this Act shall, after due notice and hearing, be subject to the following administrative sanctions by the National Telecommunications Commission:

- a. A fine of not less than Fifty Thousand Pesos (₱50,000.00) but not more than Two Hundred Thousand Pesos (₱200,000.00) for each count of violation; and
- b. In case of repeated violations, in addition to fines, suspension, revocation, or cancellation of the operator's certificate of authority, registration, or franchise, as may be applicable, including the waiver of pre-termination fees of affected subscribers and the timely disbursement of any remaining credits resulting from excessive downtime.

SEC. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), in coordination with the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) and other concerned agencies, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for its effective implementation.

SEC. 9. Repealing Clause. - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 10. Separability Clause. - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder shall not be affected thereby.

SEC. 11. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least one (1) newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,