

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 9204

Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE AUDREY KAY T. ZUBIRI**

AN ACT
STRENGTHENING AND MODERNIZING THE PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD TO
ENSURE MARITIME SAFETY, SECURITY, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION,
AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is fundamentally an archipelagic nation. Comprising 7,641 islands, our country boasts the fifth-longest coastline in the world, stretching over 36,289 kilometers. Furthermore, our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) covers an expansive 2.26 million square kilometers of maritime territory¹. Within these waters lie our nation's sovereign wealth—abundant marine life, crucial trade routes, and untapped mineral resources.

As the frontline agency tasked with guarding this immense maritime domain, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) carries a monumental responsibility. The agency is mandated to ensure maritime safety, maritime environmental protection, and maritime security. However, stark realities highlight a severe mismatch between its current capabilities and the vastness of the territory it must protect. Currently, the PCG operates within a workforce of around 22,000 personnel as of 2022². This equates to less than one Coast Guard personnel for every kilometer of our coastline, leaving our waters dangerously stretched and vulnerable to encroachment, illegal poaching, and transnational crimes.

¹ <https://cpbrd.congress.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/PB2025-01-Coastal-and-Marine-Resource-Management.pdf>

² <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1599442/coast-guard-personnel-expected-to-exceed-24000-in-2022>

In recent years, our maritime domain has faced unprecedented challenges. The continuous incursions and coercive activities in our waters threaten our sovereignty and territorial integrity. Environmental catastrophes, such as devastating oil spills and widespread coral reef destruction, have severely impacted our coastal communities and the broader blue economy. Furthermore, as an archipelago situated in the Pacific Typhoon Belt, the country experiences an average of 20 typhoons annually, requiring a highly mobile and well-equipped Coast Guard to rapidly protect citizens from disasters and ecological damage.

To address these pressing gaps, this measure seeks to enact the "PCG Strengthening and Modernization Act". It proposes a comprehensive, 12-year modernization program structured into four tiers, with each tier spanning three years. The bill outlines the systematic acquisition and upgrading of floating and air assets, the construction of climate-resilient response bases, and the enhancement of Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) capabilities through digital surveillance and unmanned systems.

To ensure swift and decisive implementation, this Act appropriates One Hundred Billion Pesos (PhP 100,000,000,000.00) for the first tier, covering the initial three years of the program. It also establishes a dedicated PCG Strengthening and Modernization Act Trust Fund to ensure continuous financial support. Beyond physical hardware, this measure heavily prioritizes the professionalization of the PCG's human resources and the integration of inclusive, gender-responsive approaches into its search, rescue, and disaster response operations.

By 2035, this modernization program envisions a PCG that operates as a "world-class guardian of the sea," capable of projecting maritime presence, defending our national patrimony, and institutionalizing coastal climate resilience.

In view of the urgent national security and environmental imperatives to secure our waters and protect the Filipino people, the swift passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



AUDREY KAY T. ZUBIRI
Representative, 3rd District of Bukidnon

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

1 **SECTION 1. *Short Title*** - This Act shall be known as the "*PCG Strengthening and*
2 *Modernization Act.*"

3
4 **Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy*** - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to modernize
5 the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) to a level where it can effectively and fully perform its
6 statutory mandates to ensure the maritime safety, maritime environmental protection, and
7 maritime security of the Republic of the Philippines. Toward this end, the principal thrusts of
8 the modernization program under this Act shall be:

9 (a) The development of a more mobile and visible coast guard force that will establish
10 its vision of a "world-class guardian of the sea" by 2035;

11 (b) The enhancement of the capacity of the PCG to promote, support, and safeguard
12 sustainable economic activities within the maritime territory of the country, in
13 alignment with blue economy principles and environmental protection;

14 (c) The acquisition and upgrading of appropriate technology and equipment;

15 (d) The doctrinal, organizational, and personnel strengthening of the PCG; and

16 (e) The strategic improvement and construction of bases, installations, and other PCG
17 facilities, with due regard to gender sensitivity, accessibility, and the protection of
18 vulnerable and marginalized coastal communities.

1
2 **Sec. 3. Objectives** - The PCG Strengthening and Modernization program shall be
3 implemented in accordance with the following objectives:

- 4 (a) To develop its capability to uphold the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and
5 sovereign rights of the Republic of the Philippines and to maintain security and
6 safety of the maritime domain from all forms of maritime incidents and
7 transnational crimes;
- 8 (b) To strengthen its capability for maritime domain awareness, digital surveillance,
9 cyber-resilience, and the deployment of unmanned and autonomous systems to
10 enhance operational effectiveness in a modern and complex maritime environment;
- 11 (c) To develop its capability to support other government agencies in the preservation
12 of the national patrimony, including the country's living and non-living marine,
13 submarine, mineral, coastal forest, and other natural resources located within its
14 territory and its exclusive economic zone (EEZ);
- 15 (d) To enhance its capability to protect the Filipino people not only from armed threats
16 at sea but from the ill effects of life threatening and destructive consequences of
17 disasters and calamities, including typhoons, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic
18 eruptions, oil spills, major accidents in the far-flung or inaccessible areas at sea, and
19 from all forms of ecological damage;
- 20 (e) To institutionalize its role in building coastal and marine climate resilience,
21 including through early warning, ecological enforcement, and disaster risk
22 reduction in collaboration with local governments, international partners, and
23 relevant agencies;
- 24 (f) To improve capability and capacity in the enforcement of domestic and foreign
25 policies as well as international accords against smuggling, piracy, armed robbery,
26 poaching, illegal fishing, smuggling, drug trafficking, hijacking of seacraft and
27 vessels, trade in human beings and other serious international crimes, drug-
28 trafficking, and the transport of toxic and other ecologically-harmful substances
29 taking place in or through Philippine territory;
- 30 (g) To integrate gender-responsive and inclusive approaches in PCG operations,
31 particularly in disaster response, evacuation, search and rescue, and community
32 engagement, with attention to the needs of women, children, persons with
33 disabilities, and other vulnerable sectors;

- 1 (h) To enhance its capability towards inter-agency coordination in terms of maritime
2 law enforcement and maritime counter-terrorism; and
3 (i) To develop its capability to support national development.
4

5 **Sec. 4. *Development of PCG Capabilities*** - The PCG Strengthening and Modernization
6 program shall be geared towards the development of the following capabilities:

7 (a) Development of floating assets - The enhanced fleet operations shall enable the
8 PCG to:

- 9 i. Patrol and enforce laws across the Philippine maritime jurisdiction,
10 including the exclusive economic zone, contested waters, and maritime
11 traffic corridors;
12 ii. Project maritime presence and uphold sovereign rights in areas subject to
13 encroachment or coercive activity;
14 iii. Protect and preserve coastal, nearshore, and riparian ecosystems, including
15 reef systems and marine protected areas;
16 iv. Provide rapid transportation of personnel, supplies, and relief goods in times
17 of natural disaster and humanitarian emergency;
18 v. Conduct maritime search and rescue operations in response to incidents such
19 as vessel collisions, fire at sea, grounding, flash floods, and oil or chemical
20 spills, among others; and
21 vi. Integrate with Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) systems, including
22 radar, satellite, and unmanned platforms, for real-time law enforcement and
23 disaster coordination.

24 (b) Development of air assets - The enhanced air operations shall enable the PCG to:

- 25 i. Patrol, detect, monitor, and challenge, if necessary, any vessel and aircraft
26 operating or illegally intruding into or passing through the Philippines' EEZ
27 management, up to areas near or around the Philippine territorial limits;
28 ii. Conduct maritime air operations in support of PCG missions, including but
29 not limited to: interdiction, environmental protection, and disaster response
30 missions;
31 iii. Provide airlift, search and rescue, rapid deployment, logistical and other
32 related support in disaster and other civilian relief operations, including in
33 isolated and disaster-stricken areas;

- iv. Deploy unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for surveillance, environmental monitoring, and search and rescue coordination; and
 - v. Support the operations of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and other civilian maritime agencies through joint air-sea coordination.
- (c) Development of Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) capabilities - The PCG shall acquire and upgrade contemporary, modern, and state-of-the-art equipment and systems to enhance its MDA capabilities in the performance of its mandate.
- (d) Development of fleet support and infrastructure - The PCG shall acquire, construct, develop, and upgrade its infrastructure and facilities for the following:
- i. Response bases for all operational units of the PCG;
 - ii. Coast Guard stations and substations; and
 - iii. Training, ship/aircraft repair and maintenance, and logistics for PCG operating units;
- (e) Development of national headquarters capabilities - The modernization of the PCG requires the renovation and development of the national headquarters capabilities for command, control, communications, and information systems networks.

Sec. 5. Components of the PCG Strengthening and Modernization Program - The PCG Strengthening and Modernization program shall be divided into four tiers in line with the capabilities and include the following:

- (a) First Tier - Development of PCG Response Bases and Enhancement of Maritime Domain Awareness Capabilities
- i. Response Bases - The PCG Strengthening and Modernization program shall entail the construction and development of climate-resilient permanent response bases to house all PCG operational units, such as Marine Laboratories, Search and Rescue Vessels (SARVS), Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV), Maritime Pollution Vessels (MARPOL vessels), and others to allow the PCG to rapidly respond to maritime emergency calls in the most efficient and effective manner.
 - ii. Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) Capabilities - The PCG Strengthening and Modernization program shall entail the acquisition and upgrade of equipment and systems such as Radar Stations, Lighthouses, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), Unmanned Underwater Vehicles (UUVs), and SARVs to enhance MDA capabilities.

1 (b) Second Tier - Development of Infrastructure and Interdiction Capabilities

- 2 i. Interdiction Capabilities - The PCG Strengthening and Modernization
3 program entails the acquisition of state-of-the-art vessels and equipment to
4 enhance interdiction and law enforcement capabilities.
- 5 ii. Coast Guard Stations and Substations - The PCG Strengthening and
6 Modernization Program shall entail the improvement, development, and
7 standardization of infrastructure and facilities for Coast Guard stations and
8 substations nationwide. Each shoreline municipality shall have at least one
9 (1) fully equipped and operational substation designed to support local
10 maritime operations, with consideration for strategic location, accessibility
11 by land and sea, and proximity to critical maritime areas. All stations and
12 substations shall, as far as practicable, incorporate climate-resilient design
13 features, including typhoon- and flood-resistant structures, renewable
14 energy systems, and disaster response integration. Substations shall serve as
15 the frontline operational arms of their respective Coast Guard stations and
16 shall be designed to expand modularly as needed in times of heightened
17 maritime activity or emergency response. Substations shall be under the
18 supervision of larger Coast Guard stations.
- 19 iii. MARPOL (Maritime Pollution) Vessels - The PCG Strengthening and
20 Modernization program shall acquire MARPOL vessels to strengthen the
21 marine environment protection mandate of the PCG.
- 22 iv. Development and Improvement of Training Facilities - The PCG
23 Strengthening and Modernization program shall entail the development and
24 improvement of training facilities for study, training, professional progress,
25 and exercise.

26 (c) Third Tier - Acquisition and Development of Patrol Vessels and Air Capabilities

- 27 i. Offshore Patrol Vessels - The PCG Strengthening and Modernization
28 program shall develop and acquire new OPVs to strengthen coastal defense
29 and the management of the country's EEZ. The acquisition of OPVs shall
30 enable the PCG to:
- 31 1. Patrol, detect, intercept, engage, and challenge, if necessary, any
32 vessel illegally intruding into or passing through the Philippines'
33 EEZ, up to areas near or around the Philippine territorial limits;

- 1 2. Provide transportation of personnel and material in times of natural
- 2 disaster and rescue operations;
- 3 3. Conduct search and rescue operations during maritime incidents;
- 4 and
- 5 4. Support the Philippine naval armed forces.
- 6 ii. Aircraft - The PCG Strengthening and Modernization shall acquire and
- 7 develop aircraft to enable the PCG to:
- 8 1. Strengthen maritime and airspace security in different areas and
- 9 stations;
- 10 2. Patrol, detect, and challenge, if necessary, any vessel and aircraft
- 11 illegally intruding into or passing through the Philippines' EEZ
- 12 management, up to areas near or around the Philippine territorial
- 13 limits;
- 14 3. Support its operations as a law enforcement arm and nautical
- 15 services; and
- 16 4. Support the Philippine naval armed forces.

17 (d) Fourth Tier - Infrastructure and Facilities Development

- 18 i. Construction and Development of Shipyards - The PCG Strengthening and
- 19 Modernization program shall provide for the construction and development
- 20 of strategically located shipyards that promote regional industrial
- 21 development, disaster response readiness, and national security interests.
- 22 Wherever feasible, shipyard designs shall incorporate green building
- 23 principles, renewable energy systems, and climate-resilient features to
- 24 minimize environmental impact and promote sustainability.
- 25 ii. Construction and Development of Hangars - The PCG Strengthening and
- 26 Modernization program shall entail the construction and expansion of
- 27 climate-resilient hangars to protect air assets from extreme weather
- 28 conditions and direct sunlight, and to support critical operations such as
- 29 maintenance, repair, production, assembly, and safe storage of aircraft.
- 30 Hangars shall be designed with energy-efficient systems, water-saving
- 31 facilities, and provisions for emergency mobilization and disaster relief
- 32 operations.

33 **Sec. 6. Organization and Personnel Capability** - In view of the enhancements in

34 capability, acquisition of new equipment, and establishment of new facilities, the PCG shall

1 implement organizational and personnel strengthening measures parallel to the modernization
2 program. These measures shall be carried out in the following manner:

3 (a) First Tier Development of Rationalized Systems and Organizational
4 Strengthening

5 i. Doctrinal Development - The PCG shall generate, evaluate, consolidate,
6 formalize, and update maritime doctrines necessary for lawful, effective,
7 and efficient operations.

8 ii. Doctrine Review and Validation - Conduct periodic reviews and validation
9 of doctrines through field application, testing, and exercises.

10 iii. Organizational Review and Streamlining - Undertake a comprehensive
11 review of the organization's structure and functions, including the
12 streamlining of units and offices. This process aims to eliminate overlapping
13 functions, simplify procedures, and improve response times.

14 (b) Second Tier - Professionalization and Training of Human Resources

15 i. Enhanced Recruitment - Establish enhanced recruitment processes to attract
16 highly qualified candidates to join the PCG.

17 ii. Comprehensive Training Programs - Formulate and implement
18 comprehensive training programs tailored to various specializations within
19 the PCG, ensuring personnel are well-educated, motivated, and highly
20 skilled.

21 The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) shall provide technical budgetary
22 assistance to the PCG to ensure it attains an optimal organizational size. This support will
23 enable the PCG to effectively operate its modernized equipment, manage new facilities, and
24 assume additional tasks.

25
26 **Sec. 7. Period of Implementation** - The strengthening and modernization program
27 under this Act shall be implemented in four (4) tiers, with each tier composed of three (3) years,
28 as used in Section 5 and 6 of this Act, for a total period of twelve (12) years. Provided, however,
29 that payments for the amortization of outstanding multi-year contract obligations incurred
30 under this Act may extend beyond this period.

31
32 **Sec. 8. Submission of the PCG Strengthening and Modernization Program –**

33 (a) Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the President, upon the
34 recommendation of the Secretaries of the Departments of Transportation, and

Budget and Management, shall submit the PCG Strengthening and Modernization program as provided for in this Act to Congress for its consideration and approval in a joint resolution of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The program shall indicate or show inter alia:

- i. Personnel, equipment, and facilities inventory before the commencement and during the various phases of the modernization program;
- ii. The target strengthening and modernization projects under it, including the major weapon and non-weapon equipment and technology acquisitions, any major infrastructure construction or improvement to be made, doctrinal and organizational review, and the particular objective(s) and component(s) under Sections 3 and 4, respectively, of this Act to which such intended acquisition, construction, or improvements belong;
- iii. The priorities, schedules as well as the estimated average cost for each strengthening and modernization project or upgrading to be undertaken; and
- iv. The specific and measurable success indicators, performance metrics, means of verification of the success of the activities and acquisitions composing the PCG Strengthening and Modernization program, and the monitoring and evaluation plan for its implementation.

(b) In the event Congress approves the PCG Strengthening and Modernization program, the joint resolution shall be the basis for subsequent executive and legislative actions to implement the PCG Strengthening and Modernization program until its complete and full realization.

Sec. 9. Appropriations - The annual appropriations for the PCG Strengthening and Modernization Program shall include the amounts necessary to support the funding requirements for all the modernization components approved by Congress under the preceding sections. The appropriated funds under this Act shall be considered distinct and separate from the regular appropriations for the Department of Transportation. Such funds shall be facilitated by the Secretary of the Department of Transportation for its proper implementation.

The amount of One Hundred Billion Pesos (PhP 100,000,000,000.00) for the first implementation period, or the first three years, shall be appropriated and shall be renewed every implementation period, as stated in this Act. Provided, that such amount may be increased thereafter.

1 **Sec. 10. PCG Strengthening and Modernization Act Trust Fund** - There is hereby
2 created a trust fund, to be known as the PCG Strengthening and Modernization Act Trust Fund.
3 This trust fund shall be used exclusively for the PCG Strengthening and Modernization Act
4 and shall be funded through the following:

- 5 (a) Appropriations for the PCG Strengthening and Modernization Program pursuant to
6 the provisions of this Act;
- 7 (b) Percentage (40%) of the annual proceeds of the Oil Pollution Management Fund
8 provided for under RA 9483;
- 9 (c) Sale of proceeds from the sale, lease or joint development of assets, and disposal of
10 excess and/or uneconomically repairable equipment and other movable assets of the
11 PCG;
- 12 (d) Dues, fines, and penalties collected by the PCG in the exercise of its functions;
- 13 (e) Grants, donations and endowments from various domestic and foreign sources;
- 14 (f) Unused or undisbursed funds, other than unused appropriations for salaries and
15 benefits of the PCG personnel, remaining from all previous appropriations;
- 16 (g) Savings from austerity measures by the PCG, generated in the previous fiscal year;
17 and
- 18 (h) All interest income of the Trust Fund.

19 The trust fund shall be administered by the Secretary of Transportation, in accordance
20 with existing government auditing rules and regulations.

21
22 **Sec. 11. Multi-year Contracts and Other Contractual Arrangements –**

- 23 (a) The Secretary of Transportation, pursuant to the PCG Strengthening and
24 Modernization program, projects and appropriations approved by Congress, may,
25 subject to the approval by the President, provisions of existing laws and regulations
26 including those of the Commission on Audit and under such terms and conditions
27 most favorable to the government, enter into multiyear contracts, lease and lease-
28 purchase agreements.
- 29 (b) For multi-year contracts, Congress shall, upon certification by the President, make
30 the corresponding appropriation for the ensuing fiscal year: Provided, that Congress
31 shall appropriate only such funds as may be necessary to pay any unpaid amount
32 where such funds mentioned in Sections 8 and 9 of this are not sufficient or
33 available to meet such payment in full or in part.

1 (c) The Secretary of Transportation shall submit to Congress, through the
2 Congressional Oversight Committee, copies of these multi-year contracts and other
3 agreements/arrangements to enable Congress to appropriate funds.
4

5 **Sec. 12. PCG Procurement System** - The Department of Transportation and the PCG
6 shall strengthen its systems and procedures for equipment acquisition, taking into account new
7 requirements under the PCG Strengthening and Modernization Program. Contract negotiations,
8 and equipment, vessel and facilities acquisition shall be treated as two sequential but separate
9 steps, each requiring the separate decision of the Secretary of Transportation. Both the
10 decision-making and contract negotiation processes for its acquisition shall start at the PCG
11 level and be submitted to the Secretary of the Department of Transportation. In its systems and
12 procedures for equipment acquisition, the provisions of RA 9184, as amended, and other
13 applicable laws shall apply.
14

15 **Sec. 13. Guidance for the President** - To meet unforeseen national security
16 emergencies, the President, upon the recommendation of the Secretary of Transportation, may
17 modify the program through substitution or revision of a component project therein: Provided,
18 however, that he/she shall report such action to Congress within thirty (30) days.
19

20 **Sec. 14. Annual Reports** - Not later than the end of the first quarter of the succeeding
21 year:

22 (a) The Secretary of Transportation shall submit to the President and Congress an
23 annual report on the status of the PCG Strengthening and Modernization Act Trust
24 Fund, as provided for in Section 9 of this Act; and
25

26 (b) The Commandant of the PCG shall submit to the President and Congress, through
27 the Secretary of Transportation, an annual report containing the progress of the
28 implementation of the strengthening and modernization program under this Act to
29 include the PCG Strengthening and Modernization Activities implemented prior to
30 the approval of this Act. This report shall include PCG's actual performance based
31 on the identified specific and measurable success indicators, its means of
32 verification, and the results of progress monitoring and evaluation.
33

1 **Sec. 15. *Joint Congressional Oversight Committee*** - A Joint Congressional Oversight
2 Committee is hereby created to monitor and oversee the implementation of the provisions of
3 this Act. The Committee shall be composed of six (6) members each from the Senate and the
4 House of Representatives who are to be appointed by the Senate President and the Speaker of
5 the House of Representatives, respectively. The minority shall have at least two (2)
6 representatives from both Houses. The Joint Congressional Oversight Committee shall be
7 jointly chaired by the Chairpersons of the Committees on Transportation of both the Senate
8 and the House of Representatives. The Committee shall be convened by the Chairpersons
9 within thirty (30) days after the effectivity of this Act.

10
11 **Sec. 16. *Repealing Clause*** - All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations or parts
12 thereof which are inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed
13 or modified accordingly.

14
15 **Sec. 17. *Separability Clause*** - If any provision of this Act is held invalid or
16 unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid and subsisting.

17 **Sec. 18. *Effectivity*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in
18 the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

19 *Approved,*