

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL No. 9338

Introduced by REP. RAMIL L. HERNANDEZ

**AN ACT MANDATING THE INSTALLATION OF SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS
IN ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS, ESTABLISHING THE SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS PROGRAM,
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines stands at a critical intersection where the challenges of education reform and energy security meet. The summer of 2024, characterized by heat indices reaching "danger" levels of up to 53 degrees Celsius, forced the suspension of face-to-face classes in over 7,000 schools. This environmental crisis has exacerbated an existing educational one, where Filipino students continue to struggle in global assessments like the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

However, the solution to our stifling classrooms also offers a solution to our energy dependence. Solar energy remains our most abundant and underutilized renewable resource. By mandating the installation of solar energy systems in all public schools, this bill serves a dual purpose: it creates climate-resilient learning spaces while accelerating the State's policy to increase access to sustainable energy and mandate the development of renewable sources.

Public schools are the ideal staging ground for the nation's solar transition for several reasons:

- **Geographic Reach:** With public schools located in nearly every community, they serve as the most effective "hubs" for decentralized power, especially in remote, off-grid areas.
- **Economic Modernization:** Transitioning schools to solar reduces the national dependence on imported fossil fuels, which are subject to volatile global prices and contribute heavily to greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Educational Integration:** Beyond providing power for cooling and ventilation, these installations serve as "living laboratories," exposing the next generation of Filipinos to the practical application of green technology and renewable energy careers.
- **Fiscal Responsibility:** Through the introduction of **Net-Metering**, schools can transform from being mere energy consumers into energy "prosumers," contributing power back to the grid and generating savings that can be reinvested into the public education system.

This measure shifts the narrative from merely "coping" with heat waves through class suspensions to proactively modernizing our infrastructure. It ensures that the "Off-Grid Solar Energy Systems in All Public Schools Act" is not just an education bill, but a cornerstone of our national strategy for energy independence and sustainable development.

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

Approved,

RAMIL L. HERNANDEZ
2nd District, Laguna

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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 “**Solar-Powered Schools Act.**”

Section 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to promote the use of renewable energy in public infrastructure to ensure climate resilience and a conducive learning environment. The State recognizes that extreme heat impacts student performance and seeks to modernize public schools through sustainable and cost-effective energy solutions.

Section 3. *The Sustainable Schools Program.* – The Department of Education (DepEd), in coordination with the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), shall implement a program to install solar energy systems in all public elementary and secondary schools.

The program shall prioritize:

- Schools located in areas with the highest recorded heat indices.
- Off-grid schools with no existing access to electricity.
- Schools with the highest student population density.

Section 4. *Implementation and Capacity Targets.* – The solar energy systems shall be designed to power essential academic facilities, including classrooms, laboratories, and libraries, with a priority on cooling and ventilation systems.

- **Initial Phase:** Within two (2) years, systems must cover at least twenty percent (20%) of the school's average monthly utilization (AMU).

- **Expansion Phase:** Within five (5) years, capacity shall be increased to cover at least fifty percent (50%) of the AMU.

Section 5. *Maintenance and Sustainability.* – To ensure the long-term practicality of the systems, the DOE shall provide technical training to school facility coordinators on the basic operation and maintenance of solar equipment. DepEd shall include a "Solar Maintenance Fund" in its annual budget to ensure the replacement of batteries, inverters, and other components as needed.

Section 6. *Net-Metering Option.* – For schools already connected to the main electrical grid, the installation of "On-Grid" or "Hybrid" systems shall be encouraged to allow for Net-Metering. Any credits or savings realized from selling excess energy back to the grid shall be retained by the school for the maintenance of the solar systems and other facilities.

Section 7. *Procurement.* – The procurement of solar energy systems under this Act shall be in accordance with Republic Act No. 12009, otherwise known as the "New Government Procurement Act." The Department of Education, as the procuring entity, shall prioritize the Most Economically Advantageous and Responsive Bid (MEARB), taking into consideration the life-cycle costs and the long-term energy efficiency of the systems.

Section 8. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's available appropriations of the Department of Education.

For the first two (2) years of implementation, the program shall be funded through the following sources:

1. The Basic Education Facilities (BEF) Fund of the DepEd;
2. The Renewable Energy Trust Fund (RETF) administered by the DOE; and
3. Savings or unprogrammed funds as identified by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

Thereafter, the funds necessary for the continued operation, maintenance, and expansion of the Solar-Powered Schools Program shall be included in the regular budget of the Department of Education in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).

Section 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOE, DepEd, and DPWH shall promulgate the necessary IRR.

Section 10. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 11. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 12. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,