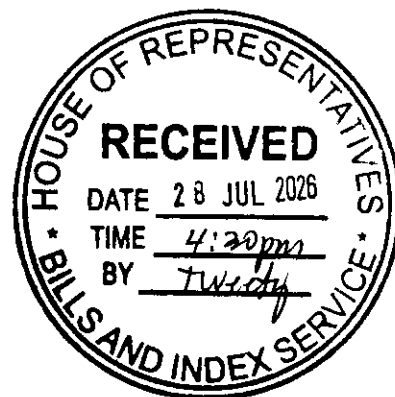




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

20th CONGRESS
2nd Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10323



Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE JENNIFER A. LAGBAS**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

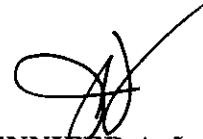
The Philippines has no comprehensive statute regulating the registration, sale, or operation of drones; the existing framework rests entirely on Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) administrative issuances, and despite several bills filed in past Congresses, none has been enacted into law. The regulatory gap has had real consequences: multiple unauthorized drone flights near the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in late 2024 forced runway holds and flight delays, prompting CAAP to expand the airport exclusion zone from roughly 5–6 kilometers to 10 kilometers through Memorandum Circular 026-2025. As of October 2025, only about 1,432 drone operators nationwide held an active Remote Pilot License, a figure far below actual drone ownership, showing widespread non-registration, while enforcement authority remains fragmented among CAAP, the PNP, and more than 42,000 barangays and cities that may pass their own ordinances, producing inconsistent rules across jurisdictions.

Unregulated drone importation, sale, and operation create risks to aviation safety, to critical infrastructure and government installations, and to individual privacy through unauthorized surveillance; drones may also be weaponized or used to facilitate smuggling, drug trafficking, or espionage. Article II, Section 5 of the 1987 Constitution, which obliges the State to maintain peace and order, protect life, liberty, and property, and promote the general welfare, provides the basis for regulating airspace and ground and maritime unmanned systems that pose such risks, while the bill's restrictions on drone-enabled surveillance draw on Article III, Sections 2 and 3 on the right against unreasonable searches and the privacy of communication, operationalized through the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

To close these gaps, the bill creates an Inter-Agency Council on Unmanned Systems, chaired by the Department of Transportation, to harmonize policy across the security, aviation, trade, and technology sectors. It institutes mandatory nationwide registration, with a narrow exemption for recreational drones under 250 grams, mandatory Remote Operator's Licensing, and DTI/CAAP

accreditation of importers, manufacturers, and sellers with mandatory sales reporting. Drones are classified by weight and operational risk, each tier carrying tailored requirements, and the bill sets concrete operating rules on altitude, visual-line-of-sight, and no-fly zones around airports, critical infrastructure, and temporary flight restriction areas, while expressly prohibiting weaponization and privacy-violating surveillance. It empowers the PNP and AFP to inspect, ground, and seize non-compliant drones and to use counter-drone technology against imminent threats, and prescribes escalating administrative fines and criminal penalties, up to reclusión perpetua for espionage-related use, while making drone use a special aggravating circumstance in the commission of other crimes.

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



HON. JENNIFER A. LAGBAS
Representative
First District, Misamis Oriental



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HOUSE BILL NO. 10323

Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE JENNIFER A. LAGBAS**

AN ACT
REGULATING THE POSSESSION AND OPERATION OF UNMANNED SYSTEMS,
PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

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

ARTICLE I
GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the “Unmanned Systems Regulation and Safety Act of 2026”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is the declared policy of the State to promote and govern the use of technology for national development while safeguarding the life, liberty, property, and security of its citizens. The State recognizes the immense potential of drones, formally known as Unmanned Systems (US), for commercial, recreational, scientific, and public service applications. However, the State also acknowledges the inherent risks they pose to public safety, national security, and individual privacy.

Therefore, the State shall establish a comprehensive regulatory framework to ensure that the importation, manufacture, sale, ownership, and operation of drones are conducted responsibly and safely. This framework shall balance innovation with security, empower law enforcement agencies, and prescribe clear penalties to deter unlawful use and exploitation.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* - As used in this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- a) Agricultural Operation - refers to the use of an Unmanned System for agricultural purposes, including but not limited to, crop dusting, seeding, pest control, crop health monitoring, and livestock management;
- b) CAAP Regulations - Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines rules, including Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) Part 11 and Part 14 and CAAP Memorandum Circular No. 29-15, governing UAS operations;
- c) Commercial Operation - refers to any authorized use of a drone for work, business, or in connection with any form of compensation or hire;
- d) Controlled Airspace - refers to airspace of defined dimensions within which Air Traffic Control service is provided;
- e) Critical Infrastructure - refers to assets, systems, and networks so vital to the Republic of the Philippines that their incapacitation or destruction would have a debilitating impact on national security, economic stability, public health, or safety;
- f) Drone Operator or Remote Pilot - refers to any natural or juridical person who commands, controls, operates, and manipulates the flights controls of an Unmanned System;
- g) Drone Owner - refers to the natural or juridical person in whose name the drone is registered;
- h) Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) - refers to the Philippine National Police (PNP), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), and the other government agencies authorized by law to conduct law enforcement functions;
- i) Law Enforcement Operation - refers to the broad range of activities undertaken by government agents to enforce the law. This encompasses the practical, on-the-ground duties and responsibilities performed by the PNP and other law enforcement agents to maintain public order, prevent and detect crime, and apprehend offenders;
- j) Modification - refers to any alteration to a drone's hardware or software that changes its flight capabilities, payload capacity, or operational range from its original manufacturer specifications;
- k) Prohibited or No-Fly Zone - refers to a designated area over which drone flight is strictly prohibited for national security or public safety reasons;
- l) Public Safety and Security Operation - refers to the authorized use of an Unmanned System by a government entity for public service purposes, such as but not limited to: search and rescue, law enforcement, reconnaissance, tactical operations, disaster response, and other purposes deemed necessary to promote law and order, safety, and security;

- m) **Recreational Operation** - refers to the authorized use of an Unmanned System for personal interest, hobby, or amusement purposes, with no commercial or professional intent;
- n) **Restricted Zone** - refers to a designated area over which drone flight is subject to specific conditions or limitations;
- o) **Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS)** - refers to an unmanned system designed for flight in the atmosphere or aerial surface;
- p) **Unmanned Ground-Based System (UGS)** - refers to an unmanned system designed for operation on land surfaces;
- q) **Unmanned Maritime System (UMS)** - refers to an unmanned system designed for operation on the surface of or underneath the water, including submersible and semi-submersible vehicles;
- r) **Unmanned System** - refers to any remotely, automatically, or autonomously controlled vehicle and its associated control systems, operating in the air, on land, or in water, without a human pilot or operator on board;
- s) **Visual Line of Sight (VLOS)** - refers to the operator's ability to see the drone with their own eyes (without visual aids like binoculars) at all times during flight; and
- t) **Weaponized Drone** - refers to any Unmanned System equipped with or used to deploy any firearm, explosive, chemical, biological, radiological, or any other hazardous payload intended to cause harm, injury, or death.

SEC. 4. *Categories and Classifications of Drones.* - All drones shall be classified based on their Maximum Take-Off Weight (MTOW) and/or operational risk as follows:

- a) **Based on Weight**
 - i) **Category 1 (Micro):** Less than 250 grams. Exempt from registration if used recreationally;
 - ii) **Category 2 (Small):** 250 grams to 7 kilograms. Requires registration and licensing;
 - iii) **Category 3 (Standard):** Over 7 kilograms but not exceeding 25 kilograms. Requires stricter certification; and
 - iv) **Category 4 (Large):** Over 25 kilograms. Regulated similarly to manned aircrafts.
- b) **Based on Operational Risk:**
 - i) **Class 1 (Low-Risk):** Recreational flights in approved areas;
 - ii) **Class 2 (Medium-Risk):** Commercial operations with VLOS, such as aerial photography or mapping; and
 - iii) **Class 3 (High-Risk):** Specialized operations like Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) flights, nighttime operations, or drone deliveries, which require special permits.

ARTICLE II

GOVERNANCE, REGISTRATION, AND LICENSING

SEC. 5. *Inter-Agency Council on Unmanned Systems (IAC-US).* - To ensure a holistic and harmonized regulatory approach, an Inter-Agency Council on Unmanned Systems is hereby created. It shall be chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Transportation (DOTr) and shall be composed of the heads of the following agencies: DND, DILG, DTI, DICT, DOST, DA, NSC, CAAP, AFP, PNP, BFP, and PCG. The IAC-US shall be the primary body responsible for policy-making and overseeing the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 6. *Mandatory Unmanned System Registration.* - All Unmanned Systems, except for UAS weighing less than 250 grams used for recreational purposes, must be registered in the Philippine Unmanned Systems Registry. The IAC - US shall establish this central registry. The PCG shall manage the registration of UMS. The DOTr, in coordination with the PNP, shall manage the registration of UGS. Registration shall be renewable every three (3) years.

SEC. 7. *Mandatory Operator Licensing.* - No person shall operate an unmanned system covered by mandatory registration without a valid Remote Operator's License. The IAC-US, through its member agencies, shall establish license categories based on the domain, class, and risk level of operation. Applicants must pass knowledge examinations and practical skills assessments relevant to their intended domain of operation.

SEC. 8. *Accreditation of Importers, Manufacturers, and Sellers.* - Any entity engaged in the importation, manufacturing, assembly, sale, or lease of drones in the Philippines must secure accreditation from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in coordination with the CAAP. Accredited entities are required to:

- a) Maintain a record of all sales, including the buyer's name, address, and the drone's serial number;
- b) Provide a point-of-sale safety briefing or leaflet to buyers, outlining the key provisions of this Act; and
- c) Submit a quarterly sales report to the CAAP and the Philippine National Police (PNP).

ARTICLE III

RULES OF OPERATION

SEC. 9. *General Operating Rules.* - All unmanned system operations shall adhere to the following unless otherwise authorized:

- a) Operate within prescribed operational boundaries (e.g., altitude for UAS, depth for UMS, geographical limits for UGS);
- b) Maintain continuous visual line of sight (VLOS) with the system, unless specifically authorized for BVLOS or autonomous operations;

- c) For UAS, fly at a maximum altitude of 400 feet (122 meters) above ground level;
- d) Do not fly over crowds, schools, hospitals, or public gatherings;
- e) Do not operate a drone from a moving vehicle;
- f) Yield the right-of-way to all manned vehicles, vessels, or aircraft;
- g) Do not operate over crowds, critical infrastructure, or designated public gatherings without authorization;
- h) The operator must not be under the influence of alcohol or prohibited substances.

SEC. 10. *Prohibited Acts.* - The following acts are declared unlawful;

- a) Operating a drone without a valid registration and/or operator's license;
- b) Import, manufacture, lease, and sell drones, parts and their peripherals without accreditation;
- c) Sell or lease a drone to any individual without a valid Drone Operator's License;
- d) Weaponizing a drone or equipping it with any dangerous or hazardous material, including firearms, explosives, biological agents, or corrosive substances;
- e) Using a drone for the surveillance, harassment, or violation of the right to privacy of any individual as defined under Republic Act No. 10173 or the "Data Privacy Act of 2012";
- f) Using a drone to aid or commit any crime, including but not limited to smuggling, illegal drug trafficking, and reconnaissance for criminal or terrorist activities;
- g) Interfering with the operations of law enforcement, emergency responses, or disaster relief personnel;
- h) Hacking, spoofing, jamming, or illegally interfering with the command, control, or navigation signal of a registered drone;
- i) Operating a drone while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs; and
- j) Similar and analogous acts through the use of drones in the commission of illegal activities.

SEC. 11. *Prohibited and Restricted Zones.* -It is strictly prohibited to operate a drone:

- a) Within a 10-kilometer radius of any airport or airfield;
- b) Over Critical Infrastructure and designated national security areas, including but not limited to military bases, Malacanang Palace, and major government installations; and
- c) Over areas where a Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) is in effect, as declared by the CAAP for emergencies, major events, or public safety and security operations.

SEC. 12. *Protection of Privacy.* - The use of a drone for surveillance, eavesdropping, or capturing images, videos, or audio of any person or private property without explicit consent is strictly prohibited and shall be punishable under this Act, in addition to penalties provided under Republic Act No. 10173, or the Data Privacy Act of 2012."

SEC. 13. *Regulation on Drone Modification.* - Any modification to a drone that alters its flight performance, weight, or communication systems must be declared and approved by the CAAP. The weaponization of a drone, by attaching firearms, explosives, biological agents, hazardous materials, or any lethal or non-lethal weapon, is absolutely prohibited.

ARTICLE IV ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS

SEC. 14. *Role of Local Government Units.* - Consistent with the Local Government Code, LGUs may enact ordinances to regulate the operation of drones in areas of local jurisdiction, such as public parks, plazas, and heritage sites. Such ordinances shall be supplementary to this Act and its IRR and must not contradict the national policies and standards set by the CAAP and other national government agencies.

SEC. 15. *Use for National Security and Law Enforcement.* - Duly constituted government agencies, including the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP), may operate unmanned systems for national security, intelligence, law enforcement, border control, and counter-terrorism operations. The use of such systems, including the employment of counter-unmanned system technology, shall be governed by their existing rules of engagement and protocols established in the IRR.

SEC. 16. *Use for Disaster and Emergency Response.* - Government agencies such as the NDRMMC, PHILVOCS, BFP, NAMRIA, and PCG are authorized to deploy and operate unmanned systems as a critical component of disaster risk assessment, monitoring, search and rescue, and post-disaster recovery operations. They may apply for exemptions from standard operating rules during a state of calamity, provided safety is ensured through coordination with the IAC-US.

SEC. 17. *Use for Research and Development.* - The State shall encourage the use of unmanned systems for scientific research and technological development. The Department of Science and Technology (DOST), in coordination with the IAC-US, shall:

- a) Establish designated special-use areas for safe testing and experimentation;
- b) Develop a streamlined process for issuing experimental or research permits to accredited academic and scientific institutions; and
- c) Promote partnerships between the government, academe, and industry to advance local unmanned systems technology.

SEC. 18. *Use of Drones for Agricultural Purposes.* - The use of drones for agricultural activities is hereby recognized as a vital tool for enhancing food security and modernizing the agricultural sector. Such use shall be governed by the following:

- a) **Authorization and Scope.** The State shall support and regulate the use of agricultural drones for purposes including, but not limited to:
 - i) Precision Dispensing in applying fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, seeds, or water;
 - ii) Crop Management in conducting crop health monitoring, soil analysis, irrigation assessment, and yield estimation through multispectral or thermal imaging; and
 - iii) Livestock Monitoring to oversee livestock location, health, and grazing patterns.
- b) **Special Permit and Operator Certification.** The operation of a drone for dispensing any chemical, biological, or agricultural substances shall require a Special Agricultural UAS Permit from the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP)
- c) **Operators must obtain a Special Agricultural Drone Operator Certificate** in addition to their Remote Pilot License. This certification requires specialized training in the safe handling and application of agrochemicals, spray drift mitigation, and the operation of drone-mourned dispersal systems, conducted by training organizations accredited by the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA).
- d) **Operational Safety and Coordination.** All agricultural drone operations involving chemical dispensing must adhere to safety protocols established by the FPA and the DA, which shall include:
 - i) **Buffer Zones:** Maintaining mandatory buffer zones from residential areas, schools, bodies of water, and other sensitive areas to prevent contamination;
 - ii) **Public Notification:** Providing prior notification to the local government unit or barangay before conducting large-scale spraying operations; and
 - iii) **Extended Visual Line of Sight (EVLOS):** To facilitate operations over large plantations, flight operations beyond the direct sight of the remote pilot may be allowed, provided that trained visual observers are utilized to keep the drone in sight and maintain communication with the pilot, subject to CAAP approval.

SEC. 19. *Enforcement Authority.* - The PNP and other deputized law enforcement agencies are hereby authorized to enforce the provisions of this Act. They shall have the authority, but not limited to:

- a) Demand the presentation of the drone's registration and the operator's license during an inspection;
- b) Order the immediate landing and grounding of any drone believed to be operating in violation of this Act;
- c) Seize, confiscate, and impound any drone operated in violation of this Act or used in the commission of a crime without prejudice to the handling and processing of the drone and all data saved therein of evidentiary value; and
- d) Employ counter-drone technology in situations where a drone poses an imminent threat to public safety, national security, or the security of a high-value installation or event, subject to existing rules of engagement protocols and standard operational procedures.

SEC. 20. *Counter-Drone Measures.* - The PNP, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and other authorized national security agencies are hereby authorized to use reasonable and necessary force, including approved counter-drone technologies (e.g., jammers, net guns, directed energy systems), to detect, identify, disable, or neutralize any drone that poses an imminent threat to public safety, critical infrastructure, or national security. The use of such measures shall be governed by protocols to be established in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

ARTICLE V PENAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 21. *Fines and Penalties.* - Any natural or juridical person found in violation of the provisions of this Act shall be subject to the following penalties. The PNP and other deputized law enforcement agencies are hereby empowered to impose the following administrative fines and sanctions for violations of its regulations promulgated in accordance with this Act:

- a) Any person operating an unregistered drone required to be registered, or for failure to mark the drone with its registration number, shall be fined from Fifty Thousand Pesos (Php50,000) to One Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php100,000) and temporary suspension of the operator's license;
- b) Any person operating a drone without a valid Remote Pilot License shall be fined One Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php100,000) to Two Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php200,000) and disqualified from applying for a license for a period of one (1) year;
- c) Any person violating the General Operating Rules under Section 8 shall be fined Twenty Thousand Pesos (Php20,000) to Fifty Thousand Pesos (Php50,000) per violation;
- d) Any person who failed to comply with the accreditation requirements for importers, manufacturers, and sellers shall be fined from Three Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php300,000) to One Million Pesos (Php1,000,000) and suspension or revocation of the entity's business permit and accreditation;
- e) Any person who willfully operates a drone in a Prohibited Zone or in a manner that violates the conditions of a Restricted Zone shall be punished by *prisión correccional* in its medium and maximum periods (2 years, 4 months, and 1 day to 6 years) and a fine of Two Hundred Thousand (Php200,000) to Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php500,000);
- f) Any person who uses a drone to commit acts of surveillance or recording in violation of Section 10 shall be punished by *prisión correccional* in its minimum and medium periods (6 months and 1 day to 4 years and 2 months) and a fine of One Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php100,000) to Three Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php300,000). This is without prejudice to any separate liability under Republic Act No. 10173 (Data Privacy Act) or Republic Act No. 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention Act);
- g) The act of attaching any firearm, explosive, chemical, biological, radiological, or any other deadly weapon or hazardous material to a drone shall be punished by *reclusión*

temporal in its maximum period to *reclusión perpetua* and a fine of One Million Pesos (Php1,000,000) to Two Million Pesos (Php2,000,000);

- h) Any person who uses a drone to intentionally interfere with the operations of law enforcement officers, firefighters, or other emergency responders shall be punished by *prisión correccional* in its maximum period (4 years, 2 months, and 1 day to 6 years) and a fine of Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php500,000);
- i) Any person who uses a drone to unlawfully gather, collect, record, or transmit information, images, or electronic data from any military installation, critical infrastructure, or government facility for purposes of espionage or to aid any foreign power or entity hostile to the Republic of the Philippines shall be punished by *reclusión perpetua* (20 years and 1 day to 40 years) and a fine of Five Million Pesos (Php5,000,000) to Ten Million Pesos (Php10,000,000);
- j) If the offender is a public officer or employee, the penalty of perpetual absolute disqualification from public office shall be imposed in addition to the imprisonment and fine; and
- k) If the offender is a foreign national, they shall be prosecuted accordingly and deported immediately after serving the sentence without further proceedings.

SEC. 22. *Use of a Drone as a Special Aggravating Circumstance.* - In any crime punishable under the Revised Penal Code or any special penal law, the use of a drone in the planning, commission, facilitation, or concealment of said crime shall be considered a special aggravating circumstance. When this circumstance is present, the penalty to be imposed shall be the maximum period of the penalty prescribed by law for the offense committed.

ARTICLE VI IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS

SEC. 23. *Authority to Promulgate Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* - The Department of Transportation (DOTr), through the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP), as the lead implementing agency, is hereby mandated to formulate, in public consultation with relevant stakeholders, the rules and regulations necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

The IRR shall be prepared in coordination with the following government agencies:

- a) Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG);
- b) Department of National Defense (DND);
- c) Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);
- d) Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT);
- e) Department of Agriculture (DA);
- f) Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (DENR);

- g) National Privacy Commission (NPC);
- h) Philippine National Police (PNP);
- i) Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP); and
- j) Other agencies as may be deemed necessary.

SEC. 24. *Scope and Content of the IRR.* The IRR shall be promulgated within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act and shall provide detailed procedures and standards for the following matters:

- a) **Registration and Marking:** The procedure for drone registration, renewal, transfer of ownership, deregistration, fees, and the specific requirements for displaying registration markings;
- b) **Licensing and Training:** The curriculum, standards, and procedures for the aeronautical knowledge examination, practical skills assessment, and issuance of Remote Pilot Licenses for various categories and classes of operations. It shall also establish for accredited drone pilot training organizations;
- c) **Airspace and Flight Rules:** The precise definition and publication of Prohibited and Restricted Zones, and the process for establishing Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs) for emergencies or special events;
- d) **Special Operations Permits:** The application process and safety requirements for Class 3 (High-Risk) operations, including Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS), nighttime operations, and drone delivery services;
- e) **Law Enforcement Protocols:** The rules of engagement and standard operating procedures for the PNP and other law enforcement agencies in the inspection, seizure, and disposition of drones, as well as the authorized use of counter-drone technologies;
- f) **Governmental Use Protocols:** The specific guidelines for drone use by the BFP, PNP, AFP, and other government agencies, including inter-agency coordination during joint operations;
- g) **Privacy and Data Protection:** The specific guidelines to ensure compliance with the Data Privacy Act, particularly for drones equipped with advanced surveillance and data capturing technologies;
- h) **Accreditation and Sales Monitoring:** The detailed requirements and procedures for the accreditation of drone importers, manufacturers, and sellers, and the mechanism for reporting sales data; and
- i) **Fines and Penalties:** A detailed schedule of administrative fines and a clear procedure for the adjudication of administrative offenses.

SEC. 25. *Retroactivity Clause.* - This Act shall have retroactive effect. All drone owners who have not yet registered their drones or obtained permits to operate their drones are given six (6) months from the effectivity of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of this Act to register and obtain permits without fear of sanction.

SEC. 26. *Separability Clause.* - Any portion of or provision of this Act that may be declared unconstitutional or invalid shall not have the effect of nullifying the other portions or provisions hereof as long as such remaining portion or provision can still subsist and be given effect in its entirety.

SEC. 27. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations or other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 28. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or any two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,