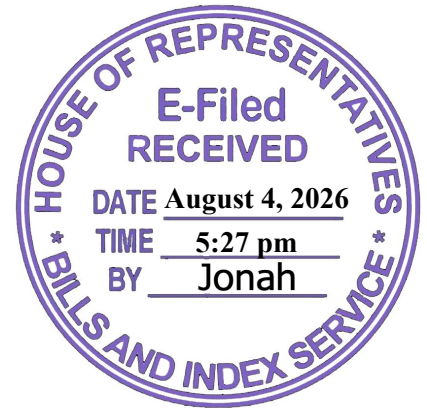


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10594



Introduced by:

HON. CHRISTOPHERSON "COCO" M. YAP

AN ACT

MANDATING THE PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT, CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE PANAON ISLAND CIRCUMFERENTIAL ROAD IN THE PROVINCE OF SOUTHERN LEYTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Panaon Island, home to the municipalities of Liloan, San Francisco, San Ricardo, and Pintuyan in the Province of Southern Leyte, has immense potential for economic growth, tourism, agriculture, and fisheries. Yet, despite its strategic location along the Maharlika Highway, many communities on the island continue to struggle with poor road connectivity. Families, farmers, fisherfolk, students, workers, and patients often have to travel long and difficult routes just to reach neighboring towns or access markets, schools, hospitals, and other essential services. This lack of reliable transportation slows economic progress, increases the cost of doing business, and limits opportunities for thousands of residents.

This bill seeks to address these longstanding challenges by directing the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to plan, construct, and maintain the Panaon Island Circumferential Road. The project will connect the municipalities of Liloan, San Francisco, San Ricardo, and Pintuyan through a safer and more efficient road network, making travel faster, reducing transportation costs, improving the delivery of goods and services, strengthening disaster response, and opening more opportunities for trade, tourism, and investment. The road alignment will be determined only after the necessary engineering, environmental, and right-of-way studies and consultations have been completed, ensuring that the project is safe, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of local communities.

For many years, the people of Panaon Island have dreamed of a road that will truly connect their communities and bring development closer to their homes. This measure, which has been consistently filed and approved in previous Congresses, reflects the continuing urgency of that dream and the government's commitment to inclusive and balanced regional development. By investing in this vital infrastructure, the State invests in the future of the people of Panaon Island, creating better opportunities, improving access to essential services, and building a more connected and prosperous Southern Leyte.

In view of the foregoing, **ug sa ngalan sa SERBISYONG TINUORAY**, the undersigned respectfully requests the immediate passage of this measure.


CHRISTOPHERSON "COCO" M. YAP
Representative, Second District of Southern Leyte

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PROVINCE OF SOUTHERN LEYTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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 “*Panaon Island Circumferential Road Act*.”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. — It is the policy of the State to promote equitable infrastructure development, improve mobility and connectivity among communities, reduce transport costs, facilitate access to markets and essential services, and support inclusive economic growth in geographically isolated and underserved areas.

The State recognizes the strategic location of Panaon Island along the Maharlika Highway and the need to improve connectivity among the municipalities of Liloan, San Francisco, San Ricardo, and Pintuyan in the Province of Southern Leyte.

SECTION 3. Construction of the Panaon Island Circumferential Road. — The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) shall plan, develop, construct, upgrade, and maintain a road network to be known as the **Panaon Island Circumferential Road**.

The road shall establish or improve an all-weather transport connection among the municipalities of Liloan, San Francisco, San Ricardo, and Pintuyan, and shall connect

with the existing national-road network and other appropriate transport facilities in the Province of Southern Leyte.

The final alignment, length, width, classification, design standards, bridges, slope-protection works, drainage systems, and other necessary components shall be determined by the DPWH on the basis of the feasibility study, detailed engineering design, geotechnical and geohazard assessments, environmental requirements, and consultations with affected local government units and communities.

SECTION 4. Components of the Project. —

The project shall include, as may be necessary:

- (a) Road opening, construction, widening, upgrading, paving, and improvement;
- (b) Bridges, causeways, culverts, drainage systems, retaining walls, slope-protection works, and other ancillary structures;
- (c) Road safety facilities, including signs, pavement markings, barriers, lighting where necessary, and other traffic-control devices;
- (d) Climate- and disaster-resilient design features appropriate to the conditions of Panaon Island;
- (e) Acquisition, donation, or other lawful arrangements for the required right-of-way;
- (f) Relocation assistance and other lawful compensation for affected persons, subject to existing laws and regulations; and
- (g) Other works necessary to make the road safe, accessible, and operational throughout the year.

SECTION 5. Feasibility Study and Detailed Engineering. — Within one hundred eighty (180) days from the effectivity of this Act, or within such period as may be reasonably necessary due to the technical complexity of the project, the DPWH shall undertake or complete the feasibility study and detailed engineering design of the project.

The feasibility study and detailed engineering design shall consider:

- (a) Traffic demand, population, economic activity, tourism potential, and access to public services;
- (b) Geotechnical, geological, seismic, hydrological, and geohazard conditions;
- (c) Climate change, flooding, storm surge, landslide, coastal erosion, and other disaster risks;
- (d) Environmental and social impacts;
- (e) The availability and status of the right-of-way;
- (f) The protection of private property, ancestral domains, protected areas, forests, coastal resources, and other environmentally sensitive areas; and
- (g) The most cost-effective and technically appropriate alignment and construction method.

No procurement for the principal civil-works components shall commence until the detailed engineering, right-of-way assessment, and other documentary requirements prescribed by law and applicable DPWH rules have been sufficiently completed.

SECTION 6. Implementation. — The DPWH shall be the lead implementing agency for the project and shall coordinate with the Provincial Government of Southern Leyte, the municipalities of Liloan, San Francisco, San Ricardo, and Pintuyan, the Southern Leyte Second District Engineering Office, and other concerned national government agencies.

The DPWH shall prepare a multi-year implementation program identifying the project's phases, estimated cost, target completion dates, funding requirements, and priority sections.

The project may be implemented by phases, taking into account engineering feasibility, right-of-way availability, connectivity benefits, urgency, and the availability of appropriations.

SECTION 7. Environmental, Social, and Disaster-Resilience Requirements. — The project shall comply with all applicable environmental, social-safeguard, occupational-safety, disaster-risk-reduction, and heritage-protection laws, rules, and regulations.

The DPWH shall conduct meaningful consultations with affected local government units, communities, landowners, indigenous peoples, and other stakeholders, whenever required by law.

The project shall adopt designs and construction methods that minimize environmental damage, protect public safety, and promote resilience to natural hazards.

SECTION 8. Right-of-Way. — The acquisition, donation, negotiation, expropriation, valuation, payment, and other arrangements concerning the right-of-way shall be undertaken in accordance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

No person shall be deprived of property without due process and just compensation as required by the Constitution and applicable law.

SECTION 9. Funding. — The amount necessary for the feasibility study, detailed engineering design, environmental and social studies, right-of-way acquisition, construction, and other activities necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

Thereafter, the Secretary of Public Works and Highways shall include the project in the Department's annual and multi-year infrastructure programs, subject to the usual budgetary, procurement, accounting, auditing, and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

Nothing in this Act shall be construed as an automatic or immediate appropriation of an amount not provided in the General Appropriations Act or in a duly enacted appropriations law.

SECTION 10. Maintenance and Classification. — Upon completion of any section of the project and its acceptance by the DPWH, such section shall be classified and maintained in accordance with applicable national-road standards and laws.

The DPWH shall include the completed road and its appurtenant structures in its regular annual maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, and improvement programs.

SECTION 11. Transparency and Reporting. — The DPWH shall submit to the Senate and the House of Representatives, through their respective committees on public works, an annual report on the implementation of this Act.

The report shall include:

- (a) The status of the feasibility study and detailed engineering;
- (b) The approved alignment and project scope;
- (c) The status of right-of-way acquisition;
- (d) The amount appropriated, obligated, and disbursed;
- (e) The physical and financial accomplishment of each project phase;
- (f) Major implementation issues and proposed solutions; and
- (g) The target dates for the commencement and completion of each phase.

The DPWH shall make the report available to the public in accordance with applicable laws on transparency and access to information.

SECTION 12. Implementing Rules and Regulations. — Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DPWH, in coordination with the concerned local government units and national government agencies, shall promulgate the rules and regulations necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 13. Separability Clause. — If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 14. Repealing Clause. — All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, regulations, issuances, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,