

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10931



Introduced by:

HON. CHRISTOPHERSON "COCO" M. YAP

AN ACT
CONVERTING THE SAINT BERNARD – HINUNANGAN DIVERSION ROAD IN THE
PROVINCE OF SOUTHERN LEYTE INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Saint Bernard–Hinunangan Diversion Road is a vital lifeline for the Pacific Towns of Southern Leyte. By providing a shorter and more direct route between the municipalities of Saint Bernard and Hinunangan, it reduces travel time, lowers transportation costs, and makes it easier for people to reach schools, hospitals, markets, government offices, and places of work. It also allows farmers, fisherfolk, and local entrepreneurs to transport their products more quickly and efficiently, creating greater opportunities for economic growth and improving the quality of life of communities along its route.

Beyond its economic value, the diversion road plays a critical role during emergencies and natural disasters. Whenever the Agas-Agas route becomes impassable due to landslides or other hazards, this road serves as an important alternative route for residents, emergency responders, relief operations, and the delivery of essential goods and services. Its importance was clearly demonstrated during Typhoon Odette, when access to several areas became difficult. This bill seeks to convert the Saint Bernard–Hinunangan Diversion Road into a national road, placing it under the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) for its continued improvement, maintenance, and development. The measure also ensures that the project will be implemented in accordance with engineering, environmental, disaster-resilience, and right-of-way requirements to guarantee a safe, durable, and reliable road network.

Converting this road into a national road is an investment in the future of Southern Leyte. It will strengthen connectivity among the Pacific Towns, promote tourism and investment, improve access to essential public services, enhance disaster preparedness and response, and support inclusive and sustainable development throughout the province. By providing the national government's sustained support for this vital infrastructure, the bill will help create better opportunities and a brighter future for the people of 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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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 “*Saint Bernard–Hinunangan Diversion Road Nationalization Act.*”

SECTION 2. Conversion into a National Road. — The Saint Bernard–Hinunangan Diversion Road, beginning at Barangay Mahayahay in the Municipality of Saint Bernard and ending at Barangay Badiangon in the Municipality of Hinunangan, Province of Southern Leyte, including its existing and succeeding road sections, bridges, drainage structures, slope-protection works, and other appurtenant facilities, is hereby converted into a national road.

The final technical description, length, alignment, road classification, and boundaries of the converted road shall be determined and certified by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), based on an approved inventory, survey, and detailed engineering design.

SECTION 3. Administration and Supervision. — The DPWH shall have administrative jurisdiction over, and shall be responsible for the planning,

programming, design, construction, improvement, rehabilitation, repair, and maintenance of the Saint Bernard–Hinunangan Diversion Road.

The DPWH shall coordinate with the Provincial Government of Southern Leyte, the Municipal Governments of Saint Bernard and Hinunangan, and other concerned government agencies in implementing this Act.

SECTION 4. Project Development and Implementation. — The DPWH shall undertake the necessary feasibility study, engineering surveys, geotechnical and geohazard assessments, environmental studies, right-of-way investigation, and detailed engineering design for the road.

The project shall be implemented in accordance with applicable laws, rules, regulations, DPWH standards, environmental requirements, public-procurement laws, and disaster-risk-reduction and climate-resilience standards.

The DPWH may implement the project by phases, taking into account the road's connectivity benefits, structural and safety requirements, right-of-way availability, technical readiness, and the availability of appropriations.

SECTION 5. Right-of-Way and Other Site Requirements. — The acquisition, donation, negotiation, expropriation, valuation, payment, and other arrangements concerning the right-of-way and project site shall be undertaken in accordance with the Constitution and applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

No private property shall be taken for the project without due process and payment of just compensation as required by law. The DPWH shall prioritize the prompt resolution of right-of-way issues to avoid unnecessary delay in project implementation.

SECTION 6. Funding. — The amount necessary for the feasibility study, engineering design, surveys, environmental and geohazard assessments, right-of-way acquisition, construction, improvement, rehabilitation, repair, and maintenance of the road shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

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

Nothing in this Act shall be construed as an immediate appropriation of a specific amount not provided in a duly enacted appropriations law.

SECTION 7. Maintenance. — Upon the completion or acceptance of any section of the road, the DPWH shall include that section and its appurtenant structures in its regular national-road maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, and improvement programs.

The DPWH shall ensure that the road remains safe, passable, and serviceable throughout the year, consistent with applicable national-road standards and available appropriations.

SECTION 8. Disaster Resilience and Road Safety. — In improving and maintaining the road, the DPWH shall prioritize measures addressing landslides, flooding, earthquakes, coastal hazards, road subsidence, and other foreseeable risks.

The DPWH shall also provide, where necessary, appropriate road signs, pavement markings, guardrails, lighting, drainage systems, retaining structures, slope protection, and other road-safety facilities.

SECTION 9. Reporting and Accountability. — The DPWH shall submit an annual report to the Senate and the House of Representatives, through their respective committees on public works, on the implementation of this Act.

The report shall include the status of the road's conversion, project plans, appropriations, obligations and expenditures, right-of-way acquisition, physical and financial accomplishments, implementation issues, and target completion dates.

SECTION 10. 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 other relevant government agencies, shall promulgate the rules and regulations necessary for its effective implementation.

SECTION 11. Separability Clause. — If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected by such declaration shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 12. 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 13. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,