



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 11130

Introduced by REP. RODOLFO "OMPONG" M. ORDANES

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR AN AUTOMATIC TOLL RELIEF MECHANISM DURING
MAJOR TOLL FACILITY DISRUPTIONS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Toll facilities are established to ensure the safe, efficient, and reliable movement of motorists and vehicles. However, natural disasters, accidents, fires, landslides, infrastructure failures, and other emergencies may substantially disrupt their normal operation, resulting in prolonged delays, severe congestion, and significant hardship to motorists and passengers.

The recent flooding along the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX), particularly in the Tulaoc area and San Simon, Pampanga, underscores the need for a clear and predictable mechanism to address such disruptions. The flooding rendered portions of the expressway impassable, severely restricted traffic flow, and resulted in motorists being stranded for extended periods. The incident also demonstrated the difficulties faced by passengers who may require food, water, sanitation, medical attention, or other forms of assistance while trapped in prolonged traffic.

In response to the situation, government authorities directed the provision of assistance to affected motorists and subsequently implemented toll-free passage along the San Fernando–Pulilan stretch of NLEX. The Department of Transportation and Toll Regulatory Board has also directed the NLEX Corporation to provide toll relief to assist motorists affected by the flooding and resulting traffic congestion, with the

measure remaining in effect until normal conditions return, including the provision of food and drinking water and the setup of portable toilets for stranded motorists.

While such measures provide necessary relief, the circumstances also highlight the need for a standing mechanism that does not rely solely on ad hoc decisions after a major disruption has already occurred. Motorists should not have to wait for separate directives before knowing whether they are entitled to toll relief when objectively verifiable conditions have substantially impaired their use of a toll facility.

This measure therefore seeks to establish an Automatic Toll Relief Mechanism that will provide appropriate temporary suspension, waiver, reduction, credit, refund, or other adjustment of toll fees when defined conditions constituting a major toll facility disruption are met. The mechanism will provide uniform standards for determining when toll relief shall commence, the extent of relief to be provided, and when regular toll collection may resume.

It likewise recognizes that the effects of major disruptions extend beyond traffic congestion and toll charges. Motorists and passengers may be exposed to prolonged periods of confinement, limited access to food, water, sanitation, medical assistance, and safe areas. Accordingly, toll operators shall be required to provide appropriate roadside and emergency assistance, facilitate access to safe locations when practicable, and give priority response to senior citizens, persons with disabilities, children, pregnant women, persons requiring medical attention, and others requiring immediate assistance.

It also promotes timely and adequate public information during major disruptions so that motorists can make informed decisions regarding their routes and travel. Clear information on affected areas, available routes, emergency assistance, and applicable toll relief can help prevent motorists from entering severely affected portions of a toll facility and further aggravating congestion.

The recent experience in San Simon, Pampanga demonstrates that major toll facility disruptions can occur with little warning and can affect thousands of motorists and passengers. Establishing an automatic and uniform mechanism before the next emergency will enable the government and toll operators to respond more efficiently, provide appropriate relief, and better protect the public.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Rodolfo Ompong M. Ordanes', written over a horizontal line.

RODOLFO "OMPONG" M. ORDANES



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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 “*Automatic Toll Relief*
2 *Act.*”

3 SEC. 2. **Declaration of Policy.** – It is the policy of the State to promote a just and
4 dynamic social order that shall ensure an improved quality of life for all, uphold social
5 justice in all phases of national development, protect the dignity of every human
6 person, and protect and promote the right to health of the people.

7 The State recognizes that major disruptions in toll facilities caused by natural
8 disasters, accidents, infrastructure failures, and other emergencies may result in
9 prolonged delays and hardship to motorists and passengers. As such, the State shall
10 establish a clear and automatic mechanism for toll relief during major toll facility
11 disruptions.

12 SEC. 3. **Definition of Terms.** – For the purposes of this Act, the following terms
13 are defined as:

14 (a) *Affected toll facility* refers to a toll facility, toll plaza, entrance, exit, lane,
15 carriageway, or section thereof directly affected by a major toll facility
16 disruption, including such adjoining or alternative sections as may be
17 determined necessary by the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB) to address the
18 effects of the disruption;

- 1 (b) *Automatic toll relief* refers to the temporary suspension, waiver, reduction,
2 credit, refund, or other appropriate adjustment of toll fees imposed on users
3 of an affected toll facility during a major toll facility disruption;
- 4 (c) *Major toll facility disruption* refers to an event or condition, whether natural or
5 human-induced, that substantially impairs, restricts, or prevents the normal
6 passage of vehicles through a toll facility or any section thereof for a period
7 and under circumstances prescribed under this Act and its Implementing
8 Rules and Regulations;
- 9 (d) *Toll operator* refers to any person, corporation, or entity authorized under
10 existing laws, franchises, Toll Operation Certificates, Toll Operation
11 Agreements, or other lawful authority to construct, operate, maintain,
12 manage, or collect tolls from a toll facility;
- 13 (e) *Toll Regulatory Board* or *TRB* refers to the agency created under Presidential
14 Decree No. 1112 responsible for supervising, monitoring, and regulating the
15 construction, operation, and maintenance of toll facilities as well as setting
16 toll rates.

17 **SEC. 4. *Automatic Toll Relief Mechanism.*** – There is hereby established an
18 Automatic Toll Relief Mechanism applicable to toll facilities under the regulatory
19 jurisdiction of the TRB, subject to existing laws, franchises, and lawful contractual
20 arrangements. The mechanism shall provide for the automatic activation of
21 appropriate toll relief when objectively verifiable conditions constituting a Major Toll
22 Facility Disruption are satisfied.

23 The TRB shall establish uniform standards for determining the commencement,
24 scope, duration, and termination of toll relief.

25 **SEC. 5. *Conditions for Automatic Toll Relief.*** – Automatic toll relief shall take
26 effect when the conditions established by the TRB pursuant to this Act are satisfied,
27 which shall include the following:

- 28 (a) prolonged closure, restriction, diversion, or substantial reduction in the
29 normal capacity or accessibility of an entrance, exit, lane, carriageway, toll
30 plaza, or substantial section of a toll facility due to major toll facility
31 disruption such as flooding, accidents, fires, landslides, infrastructure
32 damage, or similar emergencies;
- 33 (b) prolonged vehicle stoppage, severe traffic congestion, or other substantial
34 impairment of the normal use of a toll facility directly attributable to such
35 disruption;
- 36 (c) circumstances in which motorists are unable to substantially use the toll
37 facility or receive the normal benefit of passage for which the toll is imposed;
38 and
- 39 (d) other objectively measurable circumstances that the TRB determines to
40 constitute a major toll facility disruption.

41 **SEC. 6. *Forms of Automatic Toll Relief.*** – Depending on the severity, duration,
42 and extent of a major toll facility disruption, toll relief shall include:

- 43 (a) temporary suspension, waiver, or reduction of toll fees;

1 (b) automatic toll credits, refunds, or equivalent adjustments for toll fees already
2 paid, including adjustments to electronic toll accounts; and

3 (c) such other appropriate forms of relief as may be prescribed by the TRB.

4 SEC. 7. *Roadside Assistance and Priority Response.* – Toll operators shall
5 provide appropriate roadside and emergency assistance to motorists and passengers
6 affected by a major toll facility disruption, with priority response for senior citizens,
7 persons with disabilities, children, pregnant women, persons requiring medical
8 attention, and others requiring immediate assistance.

9 SEC. 8. *Safe Exits and Service Areas.* – During a major toll facility disruption, toll
10 operators shall, whenever safe and practicable, facilitate access by stranded motorists
11 and passengers to appropriate exits, service areas, rest areas, emergency facilities, and
12 other safe locations. Where normal exits are inaccessible, the toll operator shall
13 coordinate with emergency responders and concerned authorities to identify and
14 communicate alternative safe access points.

15 SEC. 9. *Emergency Information and Public Communication.* – The TRB and toll
16 operators shall provide timely and adequate information during a major toll facility
17 disruption, including the nature and location of the disruption, affected facilities and
18 routes, available assistance, applicable toll relief, and resumption of regular toll
19 collection.

20 Information shall be disseminated through appropriate communication
21 channels, including variable message signs, electronic toll systems, official websites,
22 mobile applications, hotlines, and other available means.

23 SEC. 10. *Prohibited Acts.* – Any toll operator, or any responsible officer,
24 employee, or agent thereof, is prohibited from:

25 (a) violating, refusing, or deliberately failing to implement any automatic toll
26 relief, including required toll credits or refunds;

27 (b) imposing unreasonable requirements or deliberately delay the processing of
28 toll credits or refunds;

29 (c) deliberately withholding required emergency information or fail to provide
30 reasonable emergency assistance when safely practicable;

31 (d) falsifying records concerning a major toll facility disruption or the
32 implementation of automatic toll relief; or

33 (e) deliberately circumventing the provisions of this Act or its Implementing
34 Rules and Regulations.

35 SEC. 11. *Administrative Sanctions.* – Any toll operator found to have violated
36 this Act or its Implementing Rules and Regulations shall be subject to such
37 administrative sanctions as the TRB may deem appropriate, including fines,
38 restitution, suspension, modification, or revocation of its authority to operate, in
39 accordance with existing laws and regulations. Improperly collected toll fees during
40 the effectivity of automatic toll relief shall be refunded or credited, without prejudice
41 to civil or criminal liability under existing laws.

42 SEC. 12. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from
43 the effectivity of this Act, the TRB, in consultation with Toll Operators, the

1 Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Transportation, and other
2 relevant government agencies, shall promulgate the rules and regulations necessary
3 for the effective implementation of this Act.

4 SEC. 13. *Compliance with Existing Laws and Agreements.* – Nothing in this Act
5 shall be construed to impair existing laws, franchises, toll concession agreements, or
6 other lawful arrangements, provided that their implementation shall remain
7 consistent with public safety, the general welfare, and the purposes of this Act.

8 SEC. 14. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared
9 unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in
10 full force and effect.

11 SEC. 15. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules,
12 regulations, and issuances, or parts thereof, inconsistent with the provisions of this
13 Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

14 SEC. 16. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
15 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

16 *Approved,*