

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session



COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 648

Submitted by the Committee on Legislative Franchises on September 29, 2026

Re: House Bill No. 11537

Recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 9368

Sponsors: Representatives Jeffrey P. Ferrer and Ferdinand L. Hernandez

Mr. Speaker:

The Committee on Legislative Franchises, to which was referred House Bill No. 9368, introduced by Representative Ferdinand L. Hernandez, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING A FRANCHISE TO THE SOUTH COTABATO I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC. (SOCOTECO I) TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE, OWN, MANAGE AND MAINTAIN DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM FOR THE CONVEYANCE OF ELECTRIC POWER TO END-USERS IN THE CITY OF KORONADAL AND IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF TAMPAKAN, TANTANGAN, BANGA, SURALLAH AND NORALA IN THE PROVINCE OF SOUTH COTABATO”

has considered the same and recommends that the attached House Bill No. 11537, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING THE SOUTH COTABATO I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE, OWN, MANAGE AND MAINTAIN DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS FOR THE CONVEYANCE OF ELECTRIC POWER TO THE END-USERS IN THE CITY OF KORONADAL, AND THE MUNICIPALITIES OF TAMPAKAN, TANTANGAN, BANGA, SURALLAH, AND NORALA, ALL IN THE PROVINCE OF SOUTH COTABATO”

be approved in substitution of House Bill No. 9368 with Representatives Ferdinand L. Hernandez, Dibu S. Tuan, and Jeffrey P. Ferrer as authors thereof.

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jeffrey P. Ferrer', with a stylized flourish at the end.

REP. JEFFREY P. FERRER

Chairperson

Committee on Legislative Franchises

**THE HONORABLE SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
QUEZON CITY**

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. **11537**
(In substitution of House Bill No. 9368)

Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand L. Hernandez, Dibu S. Tuan, and
Jeffrey P. Ferrer

AN ACT

GRANTING THE SOUTH COTABATO I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE, OWN, MANAGE AND MAINTAIN DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS FOR THE CONVEYANCE OF ELECTRIC POWER TO THE END-USERS IN THE CITY OF KORONADAL, AND THE MUNICIPALITIES OF TAMPAKAN, TANTANGAN, BANGA, SURALLAH, AND NORALA, ALL IN THE PROVINCE OF SOUTH COTABATO

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

1 **SECTION 1. Nature and Scope of Franchise.** – Subject to the provisions of the
2 Constitution and applicable laws, rules and regulations, there is hereby granted to South
3 Cotabato I Electric Cooperative, Inc. (SOCOTECO - I), hereunder referred to as the
4 Grantee, its successors or assignees, a franchise to construct, install, establish, operate,
5 own, manage and maintain in the public interest and for commercial purposes, a
6 distribution system for the conveyance of electric power to the end-users in the City of
7 Koronadal, and the Municipalities of Tampakan, Tantangan, Banga, Surallah, and Norala,
8 all in the Province of South Cotabato.

9 As used in this Act, “distribution system” refers to the system of wires and
10 associated facilities including subtransmission lines belonging to or used by a franchised
11 distribution utility extending between the delivery point on the national transmission
12 system or generating facility and the metering point or facility of the end-user.

13 **SEC. 2. Manner of Operations of Facilities.** – All electric distribution facilities,
14 lines and systems for electric services constructed, installed, established, operated,
15 owned, managed and maintained by the Grantee, its successors or assignees, shall be
16 operated or maintained at all times in a superior manner, and it shall be the duty of the
17 Grantee, its successors or assignees, whenever required to do so by the Energy
18 Regulatory Commission (ERC), or its legal successor, or the Department of Energy, or
19 its legal successor, or the National Electrification Administration (NEA), or its legal

1 successor, or any other government agency concerned to modify, improve and change
2 such facilities or systems in such manner and to such extent as the progress in science
3 or technology and improvements or innovations in electric power services may render
4 reasonable and proper.

5 Whenever practicable, and for purposes of maintaining order, safety and
6 aesthetics along the highways, roads, streets, alleys, or right-of-way, the Grantee may
7 allow the use of free spaces in its poles, facilities, or right-of-way by interested parties
8 upon reasonable compensation to the Grantee considering the costs incurred to
9 accommodate and administer the use of the Grantee's facilities by such parties. The ERC
10 shall decide in case of dispute or disagreement between the parties.

11 **SEC. 3. Authority of the ERC and NEA.** – The Grantee shall secure from the
12 ERC or the NEA or any government agency having jurisdiction over its operations, a
13 Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity and any other license, permit or authority
14 indispensable for the construction and operation of the electric power distribution
15 system.

16 **SEC. 4. Excavation and Restoration Works.** – For the purpose of erecting,
17 laying and maintaining the poles, wires, cables, conductors or other facilities necessary
18 for its operation, it shall be lawful for the Grantee, its successors or assignees, with the
19 prior approval of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) or the local
20 government unit (LGU) concerned, as may be appropriate, to make excavations or lay
21 conduits in any of the public places, highways, roads, streets, lanes, alleys, avenues,
22 sidewalks, or bridges of the province, cities or municipalities: *Provided, however,* That a
23 public place, highway, road, street, lane, alley, avenue, sidewalk, or bridge disturbed,
24 altered, or changed by reason of erection of poles or other supports or the underground
25 laying of wires, other conductors or conduits, shall be repaired and replaced in efficient
26 manner by the Grantee, its successors or assignees, in accordance with the standards
27 set by the DPWH or the LGU concerned. Should the Grantee, its successors or
28 assignees, after the ten (10)-day notice to repair or replace, fail, refuse or neglect to repair
29 or replace any part of public place, highway, road, street, lane, alley, avenue, sidewalk,
30 or bridge altered, changed, or disturbed by the said Grantee, its successors or assignees,
31 then the DPWH or the LGU concerned shall have the right to have the same repaired and
32 replaced in good order and condition and charge the Grantee, its successors or
33 assignees, double the amount of the cost and expenses for such repair or replacement.

34 **SEC. 5. Responsibility to the Public.** – The Grantee shall supply electricity to
35 its captive market in the least costly manner. In the interest of the public good and as far
36 as feasible and whenever required by the ERC, the Grantee shall modify, improve, or
37 change its facilities, poles, lines, systems, and equipment for the purpose of providing
38 efficient and reliable service and reduced electricity costs. The Grantee shall charge
39 reasonable and just power rates for its services to all types of consumers within its
40 franchised areas in order that businesses and industries shall be able to compete.

41 The Grantee shall have the obligation to provide open and non-discriminatory
42 access to its distribution system and services for any end-user within its franchise area
43 consistent with Republic Act (RA) No. 9136, otherwise known as the "Electric Power

1 Industry Reform Act of 2001". The Grantee shall not engage in any activity that will
2 constitute an abuse of market power such as unfair trade practices, monopolistic
3 schemes, and other activities that will hinder competitiveness of businesses and
4 industries.

5 **SEC. 6. Rates for Services.** – The retail rates and charges for the distribution of
6 electric power by the Grantee to its end-users shall be regulated by and subject to the
7 approval of the ERC or its legal successor.

8 The Grantee shall identify and segregate in its electricity bill to the end-users the
9 components of the retail rate pursuant to RA 9136, unless otherwise amended. Such
10 rates charged by the Grantee to the end-users shall be made public and transparent. The
11 Grantee shall implement lifeline rate to marginalized end-users as mandated under RA
12 9136.

13 **SEC. 7. Promotion of Consumer Interests.** – The Grantee shall establish a
14 consumer desk that shall handle consumer complaints and ensure adequate promotion
15 of consumer interests. The Grantee shall act with dispatch on all complaints brought
16 before it.

17 **SEC. 8. Commitment to Provide and Promote the Creation of Employment**
18 **Opportunities.** – The Grantee shall create employment opportunities and shall allow on-
19 the-job training in its franchise operation: *Provided*, That priority shall be accorded to the
20 residents of the place where its principal office is located: *Provided, further*, That the
21 Grantee shall comply with the applicable labor standards and allowance entitlement under
22 existing labor laws, rules and regulations, and similar issuances.

23 **SEC. 9. Right of the Government.** – A special right is hereby reserved to the
24 President of the Philippines, in times of war, rebellion, public peril, calamity, emergency,
25 disaster or disturbance of peace and order: to temporarily take over and operate the
26 stations or facilities of the Grantee; to temporarily suspend the operation of any station or
27 facility in the interest of public safety, security, and public welfare; or to authorize the
28 temporary use and operation thereof by any agency of the government, upon due
29 compensation to the Grantee, for the use of the stations or facilities during the period
30 when these shall be so operated.

31 **SEC. 10. Right of Eminent Domain.** – Subject to the limitations and procedures
32 prescribed by law, the Grantee is authorized to exercise the right of eminent domain
33 insofar as it may be reasonably necessary for the efficient maintenance and operation of
34 its services. The Grantee is authorized to install and maintain its poles, wires, and other
35 facilities over and across public property, including streets, highways, and other similar
36 property of the Government of the Philippines, its branches, or any of its instrumentalities.
37 The Grantee may acquire such private property as is actually necessary for the realization
38 of the purposes for which this franchise is granted: *Provided*, That proper expropriation
39 proceedings shall have been instituted and just compensation paid.

40 **SEC. 11. Term of Franchise.** – Unless sooner cancelled, this franchise shall be
41 in effect for a period of twenty-five (25) years from the expiration of the Grantee's previous

franchise granted by the NEA. This franchise shall be deemed *ipso facto* revoked in the event the Grantee fails to operate continuously for two (2) years.

SEC. 12. Warranty in Favor of the National and Local Governments. – The Grantee shall hold the national, provincial, city, and municipal governments of the Philippines free from all claims, accounts, demands, or actions arising from accidents causing injury to persons or damage to property, during the construction, installation, operation, and maintenance of the distribution system of the Grantee.

SEC. 13. Liability for Damages. – The Grantee shall be liable for any injury to persons and damage to property arising from accidents by reason of any defective construction under this franchise or of any neglect or omission to keep its poles and wires in safe condition.

SEC. 14. Sale, Lease, Transfer, Usufruct, or Assignment of Franchise. – The Grantee shall not sell, lease, transfer, grant the usufruct, or assign this franchise or the rights and privileges acquired thereunder to any person, firm, company, corporation, or other commercial or legal entity, or merge with any other corporation, or entity, or transfer the controlling interest of the Grantee, whether as a whole or in part, and whether simultaneously or contemporaneously, to any such person, firm, company, corporation, or entity without the prior approval of the Congress: *Provided*, That Congress shall be informed of any sale, lease, transfer, grant of usufruct, or assignment of franchise or the rights and privileges acquired thereunder, or of the merger, or transfer of the controlling interest within sixty (60) days after the completion of said transaction: *Provided, further*, That any such sale, transfer, or assignment is in accordance with the constitutional limitations: *Provided, furthermore*, That failure to report to Congress such change of ownership shall render the franchise *ipso facto* revoked: *Provided, finally*, That any person or entity to which this franchise is sold, transferred, or assigned, shall be subject to the same conditions, terms, restrictions, and limitations of this Act.

SEC. 15. Reportorial Requirement. – The Grantee shall submit an annual report to Congress, through the Committee on Legislative Franchises of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Public Services of the Senate, on its compliance with the terms and conditions of this franchise and on its operations on or before April 30 of every year during the term of this franchise. The reportorial compliance certificate issued by Congress shall be required before any application for permit or certificate is accepted by the ERC.

SEC. 16. Fine. – The failure of the Grantee to submit the requisite annual report to Congress shall be penalized with a fine in the amount of Five hundred pesos (P500.00) per working day of non-compliance which shall be collected by the ERC. The fine shall be collected separately from the reportorial penalties imposed by the ERC and shall be remitted to the Bureau of the Treasury.

SEC. 17. Equality Clause. – Any advantage, favor, privilege, exemption, or immunity granted under existing franchises, or which may hereafter be granted, upon prior review and approval of Congress, shall become part of this franchise and shall be accorded immediately and unconditionally to the herein Grantee: *Provided, however*, That

1 the foregoing shall neither apply to nor affect provisions concerning territory covered by
2 the franchise, the term of the franchise or the type of service authorized by the franchise:
3 *Provided, further,* That the foregoing shall not apply to the sale, lease, transfer, grant of
4 usufruct, or assignment of legislative franchises with prior congressional approval.

5 **SEC. 18. *Applicability of Existing Laws.*** – The Grantee shall comply with and
6 be subject to the provisions of Commonwealth Act No. 146 or the "Public Service Act", as
7 amended, RA 9136, and RA 10531 or the "National Electrification Administration Reform
8 Act of 2013".

9 **SEC. 19. *Existing Powers.*** – Existing mandates, powers, functions, and
10 privileges granted to electric cooperatives under existing laws, including Sections 9, 10,
11 and 13 of RA 10531, and Section 15 of RA 9513 or the "Renewable Energy Act of 2008",
12 shall remain valid and effective, unless expressly repealed by succeeding laws.

13 **SEC. 20. *Repealability and Non-Exclusivity Clause.*** – This franchise shall be
14 subject to amendment, alteration, or repeal by Congress when the public interest so
15 requires and shall not be interpreted as an exclusive grant of the privileges herein
16 provided for.

17 **SEC. 21. *Separability Clause.*** – If any of the sections or provisions of this Act is
18 held invalid, all other provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid.

19 **SEC. 22. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders,
20 letters of instruction, administrative rules and regulations or parts thereof which are
21 contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified
22 accordingly.

23 **SEC. 23. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
24 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,