

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

Eighteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 725



Introduced by Representative Lucy Torres-Gomez

EXPLANATORY NOTE

At a time when the country's premier airport has just heaved a sigh of relief in being delisted as the "world's worst airport" and is still basking under its newfound glory of being one of the "10 most improved airports" in the world, a fairly recent NAIA fiasco occurred.

On the evening of August 16, 2018 (a Thursday) shortly before midnight, a Xiamen Airlines passenger aircraft landed in the midst of heavy downpour before skidding off onto a muddy field, ripping its left engine and blocking the runway. It took a record 36 hours before the broken down airplane was removed, the debris cleared and airport operations returned to normal.

In the meantime, hundreds of flights were cancelled or diverted to other airports, stranding countless passengers and disrupting occupational, business and tourism plans. The economic and social costs to the country seemed incalculable.

The simple recurring question in the runway mess and the resulting massive disruption of airport operations was, "Why did the removal operations of the stalled airplane at the NAIA took too long?" This was certainly not the first time that an airplane veered away from the runway at the airport and one could imagine that by this time mechanisms or solutions are already in place to deal with such situations. Of course, there is always the element of incompetence or inefficiencies in the implementation of the standard operating procedures being followed by airport personnel.


However, on the basis of news reports, the explanation for the mess seems to focus on the equipment side. Airport authorities appeared to suggest that "moving the plane was complicated by heavy rains that

softened the ground, making it difficult to install the two cranes needed to lift the aircraft.”

Considering, however, the frequent rainfall in our country probably brought about by climate change, we, as policymakers, are not about to accept the intimation of our airport managers that the 36-hour aircraft recovery period is going to be the “new normal” for such situations. Otherwise, our main international gateway would be in danger of “skidding” back into notoriety as the world’s worst airport.

There is therefore an urgent need to upgrade and modernize the equipment at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport through the acquisition of state-of-the art aircraft recovery equipment. The technology we need exists as could be gathered from the International Airlines Technical Pool (IATP), an association of 108 Airline Members and 35 Associate (Supplier) Members.

In view of all the foregoing considerations, the early approval of this bill is earnestly requested.



LUCY TORRES GOMEZ
Representative
Fourth District of Leyte

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AN ACT
MANDATING THE PROCUREMENT OF STATE-OF-THE ART
AIRCRAFT RECOVERY EQUIPMENT FOR THE NINYO
AQUINO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (NAIA) AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. The Department of Transportation (DoTr), through the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA), is hereby mandated to acquire state-of-the-art aircraft recovery equipment for the sole and exclusive use of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), in accordance with the procurement laws.

SEC. 2. The MIAA shall operate and maintain in good working condition the aircraft recovery equipment. It shall also ensure the availability of an adequate number of highly trained personnel who are capable of quick and efficient recovery of stalled or damaged aircraft on or in the vicinity of the runways of the NAIA.

SEC. 3. The amount necessary for the acquisition, maintenance and operation of the aircraft recovery equipment shall be appropriated from the

national budget and shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act as part of the budget of the MIAA under the DoTr.

SEC. 4. All laws, rules and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 5. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication either in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. M. S. P.", written in a cursive style.