

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1257



Introduced by HONORABLE LUIS RAYMUND F. VILLAFUERTE, JR.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Section 17 of Republic Act 7160 or the Local Government Code of the Philippines lists the responsibilities of local government units (LGUs), including the construction and maintenance of municipal, city, and provincial roads that are funded by the LGUs' coffers. It is through these local roads that trade thrives, and social services flow. They are the bane and boon of our economic growth. Hence, the bill seeks to ensure an equitable distribution of road infrastructure in the Philippines, and an efficient system of construction, maintenance, and repairs of roads in all parts of the country - especially in the peripheries.

The current laws provide that all roads connecting cities and municipalities without traversing national roads as well as those connecting national roads to barangays through rural areas (provincial roads); roads within towns and those that provide inter-barangay connections to major municipal and city infrastructure without traversing provincial roads (municipal and city roads); and other public roads within barangays (barangay roads) are constructed and maintained by each LGU.

This arrangement has resulted to regional disparities in infrastructure brought about by various factors – primarily geographical, economic, and political. For example, studies have revealed that centers like the National Capital Region (NCR) do not only have the longest combined road lengths, but also have abundant concrete roads while peripheral areas suffer from insufficient and subpar gravel or unpaved roads¹.

Likewise, there are different government agencies handling different kinds of road projects: the Department of Agriculture handles the Farm to Market Roads, the

¹ <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/de60/2c671cfdd033359259526ec40fa4ec99f44b.pdf>

Department of Interior and Local Government handles the Kalsada Program, the Road Board also handles a few road projects and so on and so forth.

The bill therefore proposes the creation of the National Local Roads Development Bureau (NLRDB) under the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH). Through the NLRDB, the bill aims to reduce the adverse effects of local political patronage on the country's road infrastructure, and streamline the overall development of our road networks. It shall effectively place in one body the responsibility of examining local roads, identifying problem areas, and designing a master plan that is not only cohesive, but also equitably and fairly distributes resources among regions, provinces, cities, municipalities, and barangays for truly inclusive economic growth.

The critical role of our local roads for growth and poverty reduction is emphasized by the fact that the Philippines has more than 170,000 kilometers of local roads compared to just 32,000 kilometers of national roads. The benefits of an excellent rural road network cannot be overemphasized. At the outset, it will reduce the costs of transporting passengers, goods, and services from one place to the other - immediately stimulating trade and business. Over time, a good transportation network could also help address the congestion in city centers by inspiring the migration of employees and workers from the cities to nearby rural areas.

As stated in a Paper entitled Local Roads for Economic Growth by Gilberto M. Llanto for Philippine Institute for Development Studies, *"An important dimension of transport infrastructure is the network of roads that provide a physical link to various communities in urban and rural areas with outside markets. A good network of roads at the local level is indispensable in the timely movement of people and transport of goods with low transaction costs. Good local road infrastructure is correlated not only with local economic growth but also instrumental with poverty reduction as shown by several studies."*

We humbly reiterate the need to centralize the efforts and resources required in the development of our local roads in one body - the National Local Roads Development Bureau (NLRDB). In consideration of the foregoing premises, the passage of this bill is urgently sought.


LUIS RAYMUND "LRAY" F. VILLAFUERTE, JR

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AN ACT
CREATING THE NATIONAL LOCAL ROADS DEVELOPMENT BUREAU
(NLRDB), PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the National Local Roads Development Act of 2018.

Section 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to pursue a more equitable distribution of opportunities and government services to all Filipinos in all sectors and regions for a truly inclusive economic growth and social engagement.

It is also the policy of the State to ensure the efficient and judicious use of the public funds, and the prudent and timely completion of government projects.

It is likewise the policy of the State to develop an extensive web of quality roads that meet global infrastructure, environmental and safety standards for the benefit of all Filipinos.

Section 3. *Objectives.* – This Act specifically intends to achieve the following objectives:

- a) To create a body that shall develop one local roads development master plan which provides guidelines for the identification, construction, and maintenance of local roads all over the country;
- b) To establish a harmonious, extensive and quality road infrastructure that efficiently and safely links all kinds of roads from barangay, municipal, city, provincial to national thereby improving the overall mobility of individuals and transport of goods;
- c) To rehabilitate or improve existing local roads, especially those that are unpaved, graveled, or just earth roads;
- d) To oversee the maintenance of all local roads;

- e) To bolster economic vitality, especially in rural areas, by reducing the average travel time of individuals and goods from all sectors thereby reducing production costs and improving productivity;
- f) To enhance the quality of life of Filipinos, especially in rural areas, through safe, quality, disaster-resistant, and environmental-friendly road networks; and
- g) To ensure the efficient implementation of local road development projects, as well as the judicious use of government funds duly allotted therein.

Section 4. Definition of Terms. – For the purposes of this Act, the following terms shall be used as:

- a) Road – a limited highway and other routes used for public traffic;
- b) Local roads – provincial, city or municipal, and barangay roads;
- c) Sidewalk – a road section demarcated with curb lines or fences, or any other similar structures in order to make such part available for the passage of pedestrians;
- d) Roadway – a road section demarcated with curb lines or fences, or any other similar structures or road markings in order to make such part available for the passage of vehicles;
- e) Main roadway – a roadway consisting of the main lanes of a national expressway or a limited highway;
- f) Vehicle – a motor vehicle, motor-bicycle, light road vehicle, or trolleybus;
- g) Motor vehicle – a vehicle that employs a motor, the driving of which does not require the presence of rails or overhead wires; this definition does not include motor-bicycles, bicycles and wheelchairs for persons with physical disabilities;
- h) Secretary – the Secretary of the Department of Public Works and Highways;
- i) Department – Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).

Section 5. Creation of the National Local Roads Development Bureau. – There is hereby created a **NATIONAL LOCAL ROADS DEVELOPMENT BUREAU (NLRDB)** under the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) which shall be the primary authority of the government in charge of the development and construction of all local roads across the country. The Bureau shall be empowered to perform the following functions:

- a) To plan, design and supervise the construction of local roads, intended to be classified as motorways and main roads;
- b) To carry out or cause to be carried out the upgrading of motorways and main roads and their routine and periodic maintenance;
- c) To maintain existing bridges, tunnels and associated works on motorways and local roads;
- d) To plan, design and supervise the construction and reconstruction of bridges, tunnels and associated works on motorways and local roads;
- e) To advise the Secretary on the formulation of a local road development policy;
- f) To advise the Secretary on the management policy of local roads;
- g) To prepare and implement road development schemes;
- h) To conduct and coordinate research and investigation on materials required for road construction;
- i) To control the display of advertisements along or visible from motorways and main roads;

- j) To regulate undertakers' works in relation to motorways and main roads.

Section 6. Composition. – The National Local Roads Development Bureau (NLRDB) shall be headed by a Director who shall be appointed by the Secretary of Public Works and Highways, and shall receive the monthly compensation and benefits received by an Assistant Cabinet Secretary.

The composition and size of the personnel of the National Local Roads Development Bureau (NLRDB) shall be determined by the Director of the Bureau, including its presence in the Regional Offices of the Department.

The Director of the Bureau shall, upon consultation with the Civil Service Commission and upon approval of the Secretary, shall determine the salary of the Deputy Director/s.

All other employees of the Bureau shall receive compensation in accordance with the Salary Standardization Law (SSL).

Section 7. Inter-agency Convergence Programs. – The Bureau may coordinate with other government departments, agencies, and offices, upon approval of the Secretary, to develop convergence programs to address the concerns of economic sectors and local government units (LGUs).

Every convergence program shall be headed and executed by the Bureau from its commencement to completion. The convergence programs shall cover the identification, evaluation and prioritization of critical access roads for the general commuting public in the rural areas, and in support of economic sectors with recognized significant contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP).

All existing and valid convergence programs of the Department with other government departments, offices and agencies involving road development in rural areas shall immediately be turned over to the Bureau for review and project assessment within 60 days from the effectivity of this Act.

The Director shall be the primary DPWH representative to oversee the completion of all existing local road projects upon the passage of this Act.

Section 8. Private Sector Engagement. – The Bureau is authorized to engage with the private sector in the development of rural roads. Such engagement may include, but is not limited to, consultation, planning, development of road infrastructure programs, funding, and construction; Provided that all engagements of the Bureau with any party that is not an instrumentality or agency of the government shall be with the written approval of the Secretary.

Section 9. Policy Guidelines and Project Supervision. – The Bureau shall create and publish the National Local Roads System (NLRs) within twelve (12) months from approval of the preliminary composition of the NLRDB. The Director shall create a Committee for the Guidelines to be composed of the following:

- a) Secretary, Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH);

- b) Secretary, Department of Tourism (DOT);
- c) Secretary, Department of Agriculture (DA);
- d) Secretary, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);
- e) Secretary, Department of Transportation (DoTr);
- f) Secretary, Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG);
- g) President, Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP);
- h) Dean, University of the Philippines School of Urban and Regional Planning; and
- i) A Representative from the Private Sector.

The NLRB must be of national scope, comprehensive, and subject to mandatory annual review.

Section 10. *Implementation.* – Six (6) months after the effectivity of this Act, the President shall appoint the Director of the NLRDB with the recommendation of the Secretary.

- a) The newly-appointed Director shall appoint two (2) Deputy Directors with the approval of the Secretary, forming the NLRDB Executive Committee (ExeComm).
- b) The ExeComm shall present for approval the preliminary composition, including the job description, and compensation and other benefits package of the NLRDB within six (6) months from the appointment of the Director. The composition is subject to the approval of the President upon the recommendation of the Secretary.
- c) The ExeComm is hereby tasked to formulate the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of this Act within six (6) months from the approval by the President of the preliminary NLRDB composition, but not later than twelve (12) months from the effectivity of this Act.

Section 11. *Monitoring and Assessment.* – The NLRB is hereby tasked to formulate and maintain the following reportorial requirements to be submitted to the Secretary and the President:

- a) National Local Roads System (NLRB): a biennial comprehensive report mapping out the entire national and local road network, upon consultation with local government units and in partnership with private organizations. The NLRB shall allow for the clear identification of sites and sections that are in particular need of improvement, fixing, or development. The NLRB shall include a specific plan of action to address such sections and areas that need countermeasures. Additionally, it is envisioned that the NLRB shall include in the road networks those local roads that are currently under construction and/or with completion date of three (3) years from the publication of the NLRB.
- b) Annual Bureau Accomplishment Report (AAR): an annual report providing an overview of what has been achieved by the Bureau in the past year with regard to the deliverables set.

Section 12. *Appropriation and Financing.* – The Bureau is hereby allotted PhP 1 billion pesos (PhP 1,000,000,000.00) for the first year of its operations, subject to the review of the Secretary upon submission of the AAR.

SECTION 13. *Separability Clause.* – If any section or provision of this Act shall be declared invalid or unconstitutional, such shall not invalidate any other section or provision of this Act.

SECTION 14. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, issuances, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 15. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a major daily newspaper of national circulation whichever comes earlier.

Approved,