

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

Eighteenth Congress  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 717**



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**Introduced by Representative Lucy Torres-Gomez**

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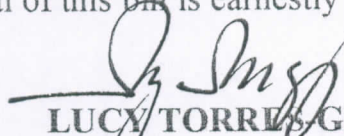
**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

According to the World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report 2016-2017, the Philippine railway infrastructure is currently ranked 84<sup>th</sup> out of 138 countries surveyed in terms of extensiveness and condition of efficiency. There is no doubt that the current state of our railroad network is a pale shadow of what it was once was during its so-called golden years.

Almost every study of the country's economic competitiveness lists poor infrastructure as one of the missing "links" needed for phenomenal growth. Out of these requisites, an efficient, safe and resilient mass transport system figures prominently in the government developmental agenda. Already, proposals for the establishment of a Mindanao Railway System has been floated lately as a possible spark plug for the long-delayed progress in that southernmost island.

It should not be forgotten, however, that apart from Mindanao, the Eastern Visayan region has consistently been among those areas left behind in the country's relentless drive towards prosperity. This measure seeks to address such continuing malady by establishing a railway system that would energize the slowly emerging growth centers in that region. In the momentum towards growth, it is believed that the region would play a vital and indispensable role, given the right infrastructural support.

Thus, the immediate approval of this bill is earnestly requested.

  
**LUCY TORRES-GOMEZ**  
Representative  
Fourth District of Leyte

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**AN ACT**  
**PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A RAILWAY**  
**SYSTEM IN THE EASTERN VISAYAN REGION, FROM THE**  
**ENTRY OF THE PROVINCE OF SAMAR TO THE**  
**MUNICIPALITY OF SAN RICARDO IN THE PROVINCE OF**  
**SOUTHERN LEYTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS**  
**THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Visayan Railroad Act of 2019.”

SEC. 2. *Establishment of the Visayan Railway System.* – There shall be established a railway system in the Eastern Visayan Region under the administration of the Philippine National Railways, connecting the provinces of Samar, Leyte and Southern Leyte from the entry of the Province of Samar to the Municipality of San Ricardo in the Province of Southern Leyte.

SEC. 3. *Route, Alignment, Safety and Efficiency of the Visayan Railway System.* – The Department of Transportation (DoTr), in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)



and the Philippine National Railways (PNR), shall undertake a comprehensive study of the Visayan Railway System to determine the most feasible and optimal route, taking into consideration the agro-industrial, tourism and ecozone potentials of the concerned provinces to be serviced by the railroad. The said departments and agency shall also conduct an immediate technical study on the safety, efficiency and resiliency of the railway system, including the preparation of the necessary land surveys for areas to be acquired under the program, taking into consideration the growth centers of population, trade and commerce in each of the provinces.

SEC. 4. *Establishment of Visayan Railway Working Group.* – The Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the DPWH and the PNR, shall establish a working group which shall include, but not limited to, local chief executives of affected local government units, and lawmakers of affected districts. This working group shall be consulted on all matters concerning the Visayan Railway System.

SEC. 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the Visayan Railway Working Group shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 6. *Funding.* - The amount necessary for the conduct of the necessary technical studies, shall be sourced from the current budget of the DoTr and the PNR. Other funding mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships, maybe be explored as per recommendation of technical studies and Visayan Railway Working Group.

SEC. 7. *Effectivity*. - 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,