

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill no. 3933



INTRODUCED BY REP. ALFRED VARGAS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article 13, Section 13 of the 1987 Constitution recognizes the need for rehabilitation, self-development, self-reliance and integration of persons with disabilities into the mainstream of society. Batas Pambansa Big. 344, or the Accessibility Law, required the installation of architectural facilities or structural features to enhance the mobility of disabled persons in certain buildings, institutions, establishments, and public utilities.

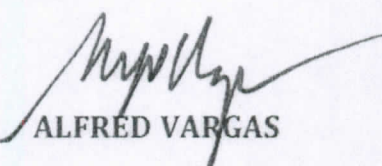
People who are blind or visually impaired cannot rely on traffic lights at every intersection they cross. Without sufficient visual information, they merely depend on the sound or sense of traffic to identify a time when traffic has stopped and crossing the street is possible. The Canadian National Institute of the Blind posits that this technique is not without risks such as: when traffic volumes are low and there are fewer cues to use; when an advanced green display allows cars to turn left or right, a pedestrian can mistakenly assume that the surge of traffic is a signal to walk; or when relying on the surge of traffic as a crossing cue, the pedestrian may take several seconds to begin crossing and not have the time to complete the crossing before the light has changed.¹ Although traffic sounds and vibrations can help a pedestrian safely cross a street, there are many intersections where this type of information is insufficient to assure a pedestrian who is blind or visually impaired a safe journey.

Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) are designed to assist these pedestrians so that they can navigate intersections with increased confidence. They provide pedestrians with reliable

information that they can use to know when traffic signals have required traffic to stop and have cleared the way for pedestrians to cross.

With over two million Filipinos who are blind or suffering from poor vision, the installation of APS in most, and ideally all, traffic signal posts shall aid them in being independently mobile and ensure a safe journey for everyone.

Early enactment of this measure is requested.



ALFRED VARGAS

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**AN ACT REQUIRING TRAFFIC SIGNAL POLES TO BE EQUIPPED WITH ACCESSIBLE
PEDESTRIAN SIGNALS**

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

Sec. 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as "Accessible Pedestrian Signals Act of 2019."

Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy. - Persons with disabilities are part of Philippine society, thus, the State shall give full support to the improvement of their total well- being and integration into the mainstream of society. Towards this end, the State shall adopt policies ensuring the self-reliance of this vulnerable segment of our population.

Sec. 3. Accessible Pedestrian Signal. - Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS) is defined as a device affixed to traffic signal poles that communicates information about the "WALK" and "DON'T WALK" intervals at signalized intersections in non- visual formats, such as audible, tactile, vibrotactile and other visible methods in order to provide crossing information to all pedestrians, including people who are blind or visually impaired.

When an APS uses audible tones, it shall have a specific tone for the walk interval and clearance phases utilizing internationally recognized standards.

Two distinct sounds shall be used for the WALK phase: one distinct sound for the North/South crossing and another distinct sound for the East/West crossing. In addition, there shall be a distinct sound for the North/South clearance phase and another distinct sound for the East/West clearance phase. The tones shall be at least two (2) decibels and no more than five (5) decibels greater than the ambient noise level, must be sensitive to level changes, and must be audible to the mid-point of the crossings.

Sec. 4. Installation of APS. - Subsequent to the effectivity of this Act, all new traffic signal poles that have yet to be installed shall be equipped with an APS. For existing traffic signal poles, an APS shall be installed in an order of priority following a criteria set by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), which shall give preference to locations most populated by Persons with Disabilities.

Sec. 5. Duty-free Importation. - The DPWH shall certify APS devices and parts that are unavailable in domestic markets and shall transmit such certification to the Department of Finance. The APS devices and parts so certified may be imported by any government agency or instrumentality exempt from taxes and duties on importation.

Sec. 6. Implementing Rules. - Within ninety (90) days from the approval of Department of Budget and Management, the Department of Finance, and the National Council on Disability Affairs shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

Sec. 7. Repealing Clause. - All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, presidential proclamations, letters of instruction, rules and regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Sec. 8. Separability Clause. - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, other parts or provisions hereof not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

Sec. 9. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,