

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 4061**



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**Introduced by Rep. Precious Hipolito Castelo**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

It has been nineteen (19) years since Republic Act No. 8792 or the "E-Commerce Act" was passed as a law. Said landmark legislation gave legal recognition to electronic data messages, electronic documents, and electronic signatures.

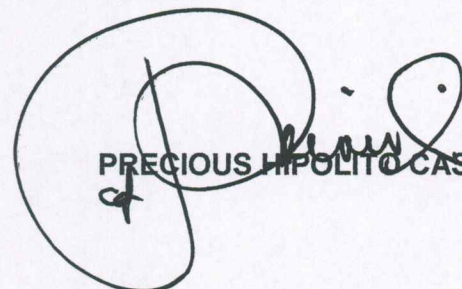
Undeniably, said law indirectly aims to do away with the practice of printing multiple copies of papers through the utilization of information and communications technology (ICT) as an instrument to develop and enhance services and transactions in the private sector.

Despite this, many transactions in our country are still indisputably "paper-filled", since it is somewhat legally safer to store the hard copies of documents due to the principle of "best evidence" under our laws. As a result, many companies allocate large areas of their office spaces just for storing papers and documents. These spaces could have been more productively used for other purposes.

Since 2013, the judiciary has implemented the "Efficient Use of Paper Rule" to curb the use of excessive quantities of costly paper when it comes to the filing of pleadings. Specifically, said rule limits the practice of printing multiple copies of papers by also requiring the submission of electronic copies of each document filed.

This bill seeks to mimic the example set by courts and institutionalize the "paperless" scheme throughout the country. Through this measure, we can save forests and trees, and consequently, mitigate the worsening effects of climate change that our world is experiencing.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

  
**PRECIOUS HIPOLITO CASTELO**



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**AN ACT**  
**MANDATING THE SUBMISSION OF ELECTRONIC COPIES OF DOCUMENTS**  
**FILED WITH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC COMPANIES IN ORDER TO LIMIT AND**  
**CURB THE EXCESSIVE USE OF PAPER AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Efficient Use of Paper Act”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State recognizes the vital role of information and communications technology (ICT) in nation-building, as well as the right of the people to a balance and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature.

SEC. 3. *Efficient Use of Paper.* – Every entity, whether public or private, must limit the excessive use of paper by not requiring from their clients the filing of multiple copies of paper documents in its transactions.

SEC. 4. *Submission of Electronic Documents.* – Any transaction which involves the filing or submission of a paper document must be accompanied by the submission of an electronic or scanned copy of such paper document.

SEC. 5. *Legal Recognition of Electronic Forms of Documents.* – A document shall not be denied legal effect, validity or enforceability solely on the ground that it is an electronic document, *Provided that*, said electronic document shall maintain its integrity and reliability, and can be authenticated so as to be usable for subsequent reference.

SEC. 6. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) shall issue pertinent guidelines to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 7. *Separability Clause.* – If, for any reason, any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other sections or provisions not so declared shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 8. *Repealing Clause.* – All issuances, laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof not consistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 9. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

*Approved,*