

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



SENATE
S. No. 1518

Introduced by SENATOR PIA S. CAYETANO

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A NETWORK OF POP-UP BICYCLE LANES AND EMERGENCY
PATHWAYS FOR USE DURING THE DURATION OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us into a “New Normal”, where physical distancing and avoiding close contact with others has become the new way of life. This will be very difficult to implement once the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) is lifted and more people are allowed to go out, to travel to and from work, hospitals, schools, commercial places, or other essential destinations. Public transportation, which is already terribly congested prior to COVID-19, is a particular weak spot for physical distancing measures. Even private cars will find it difficult to keep their passengers one (1) meter apart.

Without public transportation during the ECQ, health workers and other essential workers were forced to explore other means of getting to their places of work. This is expected to continue after the ECQ due to limited mobility. Further, the expected economic downturn to follow the pandemic will mean less income for people to use on travel and transportation. It is imperative for the State to promote other modes of travel if we are to avoid a spike in COVID-19 cases after the ECQ is lifted.

Walking and biking stand out in this regard. While walking is free, the cost of buying and maintaining a bike is very low compared to owning a private vehicle and even commuting. They promote physical and mental health in a time of high anxiety, and

physical distancing is easy to implement. Further, they use less resources and will raise air quality due to reduced motorized vehicle use, lessening air toxins which are a leading cause of respiratory infection.¹ Other non-motorized vehicles also offer the same advantages.

The World Health Organization recognizes the benefits of walking and biking in its technical guidance on moving around during the pandemic, so people can “reach workplaces when possible, meet essential daily needs, or provide assistance to vulnerable people.”² Other countries have adopted these modes of travel long before the Philippines has, and have embraced them further during the pandemic -- urban cycling networks surged in countries like China, Germany, Ireland, the United Kingdom, and the United States.³ Cities around the world including New York, Mexico City, and Berlin have set up temporary bicycle lanes to facilitate mobility during the pandemic.⁴

This measure seeks to create a network of pop-up bicycle lanes and emergency pathways that are people-oriented and pedestrian-friendly, which shall connect users to essential destinations such as work, school, medical facilities, and other similar places that may be identified. This network may then be adopted permanently even after COVID-19, as may be appropriate, as a solution to the congested roads and pollution plaguing the country even before the pandemic.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this measure is urgently sought.


PIA S. CAYETANO

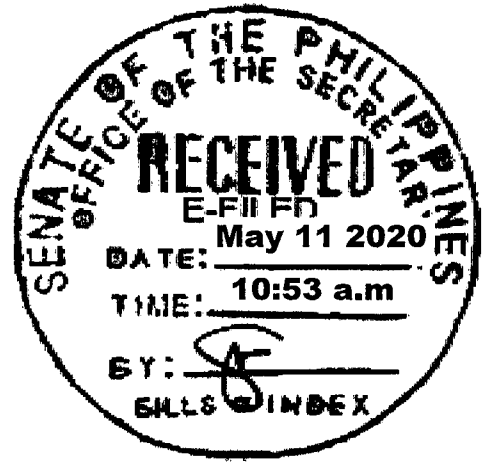
¹ “Air Pollution.” World Health Organization, World Health Organization, 15 Aug. 2017, www.who.int/ceh/risks/cehair/en/.

² Harker, J. (2020, April 21). "Consider Bicycles" During Covid-19 Outbreak, says World Health Organisation. Retrieved from <https://cyclingindustry.news/consider-bicycles-during-covid-19-outbreak-says-world-health-organisation/>

³ Schwedhelm, A., Li, W., Harms, L., & Adiazola-Steil, C. (2020, April 23). Biking Provides a Critical Lifeline During the Coronavirus Crisis. Retrieved from <https://www.wri.org/blog/2020/04/coronavirus-biking-critical-in-cities>

⁴ Ibid.

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

- 1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Safe Pathways Act*”.
- 2 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The Constitution mandates the State to protect
3 and advance the right of the Filipino people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord
4 with the rhythm and harmony of nature, and to protect and promote the right to health
5 of the people and instill health consciousness among them.
- 6 In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Action Plan Against COVID-19
7 provides that the State shall mitigate the consequences and impact of the COVID-19
8 pandemic to the social, economic, and personal security of the Filipino people.⁵
- 9 The State recognizes that the current transportation system does not address the
10 need for physical distancing.
- 11 The State likewise acknowledges the need for infrastructure and a change in
12 mindset to encourage and accommodate alternative modes of transportation such as
13 walking, bicycles and other non-motorized vehicles, and to provide safe and convenient
14 pathways for pedestrians and non-motorized travel. It also recognizes the urgency of this

⁵ Section A (4), Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Disease (IATF) Resolution No. 15, 24 March 2020.

1 need during the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure physical distancing and given the limited
2 forms of transportation available to frontliners and essential workers for so long as there
3 is reduced mobility.

4 Prioritizing walking, biking and the use of non-motorized vehicles will result in
5 reduced carbon emissions, less use of energy and resources, and provide multiple health
6 benefits and increase quality of life.

7 These are also in line with the State’s commitment to the Sustainable Development
8 Goals (SDGs), in particular: SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being); SDG 7 (Affordable and
9 Clean Energy); SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure); SDG 11 (Sustainable
10 Cities and Communities); SDG 13 (Climate Action); and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the
11 Goals).

12 For purposes of this Act, “Non-Motorized Vehicles” includes all forms of travel that
13 do not rely on an engine or motor for movement. This includes, but is not limited to,
14 walking, bicycles, and small-wheeled non-motorized transport (skates, skateboards, push
15 scooters and hand carts).

16 *Sec. 3. Safe Pathways Network.* – Immediately upon the effectivity of this Act, the
17 Department of Transportation (DOTr) with the Department of Public Works and Highways
18 (DPWH), and in coordination with Local Government Units (LGUs), shall identify and
19 create a network of pop-up bicycle lanes that may be used during the duration of the
20 COVID-19 pandemic. The pop-up bicycle lanes are strictly for bicycles and other non-
21 motorized vehicles only, and shall connect users to essential destinations such as medical
22 facilities, public and private facilities frequented by people, school, when they do open,
23 and other similar places that may be identified. The lanes may be marked with removable
24 tapes and mobile signs, which can easily be placed and removed as necessary. Other
25 physical barriers may also be used.

26 The pop-up bicycle lanes must have the necessary space to accommodate the
27 expected increase of users and the need for physical distancing at least one (1) meter
28 apart.

29 To complement the network of pop-up bicycle lanes, LGUs shall create a
30 designated network of people-oriented emergency pathways along local roads that will
31 provide pedestrians and bicycle and non-motorized vehicle users safe, convenient access
32 to frequented destinations by restricting motorized vehicle passage in these pathways

1 during peak hours. The emergency pathways shall be clearly marked with signage
2 containing restrictions.

3 The DOTr and DPWH shall identify priority areas for implementation.

4 *Sec. 4. Non-Motorized Vehicle Parking Spaces.* – All public places, government
5 offices, schools, places of work and major commercial establishments, including malls,
6 banks, hospitals, and the like, shall provide adequate parking spaces for bicycles and
7 other non-motorized vehicles as far as practicable.

8 *Sec. 5. Role of the Public and Private Sectors.* – Both the public and private sectors
9 shall promote walking and using bicycles and other non-motorized vehicles as an
10 alternative means of travel. They shall develop the necessary infrastructure, facilities and
11 programs for its implementation, including showers and changing areas and shall
12 continue following physical distancing measures during travel.

13 *Sec. 6. Permanent Adoption of Safe Pathways Network.* – The DOTr and DPWH,
14 in coordination with the appropriate agencies, shall prepare to permanently adopt the
15 established bicycle lanes and emergency pathways, as may be appropriate, once COVID-
16 19 is no longer a threat as declared by the proper authorities. Pursuant to this, non-
17 motorized parking spaces and other infrastructure shall also be made permanent as may
18 be appropriate and practicable.

19 *Sec. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within thirty (30) days from the
20 effectivity of this Act, the DOTr shall promulgate and issue the necessary guidelines for
21 the effective implementation of this Act. The implementing rules and regulations issued
22 pursuant to this Section shall take effect thirty (30) days after its publication in two (2)
23 national newspapers of general circulation.

24 *Sec. 8. Appropriations.* – The funds necessary for the initial implementation of this
25 Act shall be charged against the appropriations of the DOTr, DPWH, and LGUs as needed.
26 Thereafter, funding shall be included in the budget of the DOTr and DPWH under the
27 annual General Appropriations Act.

28 *Sec. 9. Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared
29 unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, the validity of the other provisions shall not be
30 affected thereby.

1 Sec. 10. *Repealing Clause.* – All other laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations,
2 other issuances, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby
3 repealed or modified accordingly.

4 Sec. 11. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication
5 in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,