

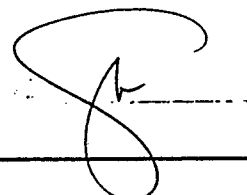
EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
Third Regular Session

SENATE

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Introduced by **SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA**

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### RESOLUTION

**DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE/S OF THE SENATE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE PLIGHT OF WORKERS IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR AND THE COMMUTING WORKERS AMIDST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**WHEREAS**, the transportation sector is a critical sector in the economy, which directly and indirectly impacts the growth of employment and movement of goods and people around the world;

**WHEREAS**, the onset of COVID-19 pandemic caused a sharp slump in the sector due to government-mandated quarantine restrictions which are intended to curb the further spread of the virus to individuals, with mobility limited to essential travel;

**WHEREAS**, the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) issued Resolution No. 101, s. 2021 that outlined the national government policy on land, air, and sea travel. The Resolution requires the use of the Integrated Terminal Exchange and prohibits bus companies or public transport from entering Metro Manila;

**WHEREAS**, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) issued the Guidelines for Public Transportation for Areas Under General Community Quarantine (GCQ), through LTFRB Memorandum Circular No. 2020-017, effective May 1, 2020, which reduced the capacities of different modes of public transport to observe social distancing. It also laid down safety and sanitary measures. The guidelines also indicated the minimum fare for PUBs and PUJs and preference for modern PUVs over traditional ones;

**WHEREAS**, the LTFRB also issued Memorandum Circular No. 2020-019, which rationalized routes, and indicated a preference for area-based fleet managed single operator. If no single-based operator qualifies, the area-based operators must consolidate;

**WHEREAS**, the LTFRB also issued Memorandum Circular Nos. 2020-023 and 2020-026 the operations of OFG-compliant jeepneys and traditional jeepneys in Metro Manila and to require consolidation of operators in identified routes;

**WHEREAS**, the continuous implementation of the jeepney modernization plan during the pandemic may result in an undue burden to jeepney drivers and small scale operators who may lose their right to service some routes if they do not upgrade their vehicles;

**WHEREAS**, before the pandemic, the readiness to implement the jeepney modernization plan has already been questioned. Implementing the said plan during the pandemic will make the situation intolerable for the jeepney drivers and operators;

**WHEREAS**, the consolidation may result in the replacement of existing franchises with new ones. The new franchises will also require the acquisition of new PUVs and will create additional costs to transport providers during the pandemic. Forcing companies to consolidate may also violate the rights to liberty and due process of the public transportation sector;

**WHEREAS**, the mandatory use of integrated terminals during the pandemic may increase the cost of transportation per passenger because of the need to do multiple transfers to get to their destinations. The absence of an intermodal form of transportation in some of the integrated terminals would inconvenience and discourage the riding public from utilizing public transportation and shift to "*colorum*" vans which are unregulated but can bring passengers directly to Metro Manila;

**WHEREAS**, "*colorum*" vehicles are unregulated and may put passengers and the community at greater risk by increasing the spread of COVID-19 and by utilizing vehicles that are inefficient and less safe;

**WHEREAS**, the use of integrated terminals might also result in a high degree of congregation and interaction between passengers during travel and may increase the risk of spreading COVID-19. Multiple ride transfers may pose a greater risk of spreading COVID-19 in Metro Manila and the provinces;

**WHEREAS**, despite the attempts of the DOTR and the LTFRB to implement the foregoing transportation policies, transportation remains limited, and commuting is still difficult for most Filipino commuters and may even result in higher fares for workers whose livelihoods are constantly under threat due to continuous losses brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic;

**WHEREAS**, in addition, despite the relaxation of the strict community restriction to General Community Quarantine (GCQ) allowing several establishments to reopen, very limited public transport vehicles were allowed to ply their routes, prompting transport groups to call for more inclusive transportation policies;

**WHEREAS**, out of approximately 14,000 provincial franchises for bus transportation, 13,720 are grounded, and only 280 remain, operating at 50% capacity, while a number of provincial bus transport groups have zero operations;

**WHEREAS**, in a 2016 study published by DOTR, together with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, there are 250,000 jeepneys in the Philippines, of which approximately 55,000 are in Metro Manila.<sup>1</sup> However, as of April 2021, only 950 modernized jeepneys and 37,246 traditional jeepneys ply Metro Manila roads;<sup>2</sup>

**WHEREAS**, as of May 2021, the number of employed workers in the transportation and storage sector is estimated to be around 2.913 million, compared to the estimated 3.086 million workers in the said sector as of February 2021, leaving 173,000 displaced workers in a span of three (3) months;<sup>3</sup>

**WHEREAS**, on the other hand, the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2020 Social Weather Survey (SWS) reveals that 82% of working respondents are non-home-based, 42% of whom claim that “going to work is very much harder than before the COVID-19 pandemic”;<sup>4</sup>

**WHEREAS**, as a result of the limited operation of public transportation operators despite the gradual reopening of the economy, workers have more difficulty in finding transportation to and from work, oftentimes forcing them to wait for a long time in terminals making these workers more vulnerable to COVID-19;

**WHEREAS**, there is a need to review the policies issued by the DOTr and the LTFRB to ensure a just implementation of transportation policies that are aligned with health and economic concerns of the public during the pandemic and give utmost consideration to the welfare of the public transportation sector and the riding public;

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<sup>1</sup> *Transforming Public Transport in the Philippines*, accessible at [https://www.changing-transport.org/wp-content/uploads/2016\\_Full\\_NAMA\\_Concept\\_Jeepney\\_NAMA.pdf](https://www.changing-transport.org/wp-content/uploads/2016_Full_NAMA_Concept_Jeepney_NAMA.pdf) (last accessed July 12, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> San Juan, Alexandria Dennise, *PUV Drivers Rejoice! LTFRB to make way for 4,400 more jeeps, buses next week*, Manila Bulletin, accessible at <https://mb.com.ph/2021/04/08/puv-drivers-rejoice-ltfrb-to-make-way-for-4400-more-jeeps-buses-next-week/> (last accessed July 12, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> Table B – Employment by Major Industry Group and Total Hours Worked, Philippines: February 2021, March 2021, April 2021, and May 2021, Philippine Statistics Authority Labor Force Survey, as of May 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Fourth Quarter 2020 Social Weather Survey: 42% of non-home-based working Filipinos say going to work is very much harder; 44% of them walk to work, accessible at <https://www.sws.org.ph/swsmain/artclisppage/?artcsyscode=ART-20210507063140> (last accessed July 12, 2021).

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES**, that the Senate Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resource Development and other appropriate Committee/s of the Senate, to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the plight of transport sector workers and the commuting workers amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and in light of the regulations of the DOTr and the LTFRB, including their programs, projects, activities, and budget utilization.

Adopted,

  
SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA