

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



22 OCT 27 P3:58

SENATE
S. No. 1426

RECEIVED BY: _____

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "R. Bong Revilla, Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

Introduced by SENATOR RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

AN ACT
CREATING THE EASTERN VISAYAS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (EVDA)
DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, AND PROVIDING FUNDS
THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Our Constitution provides that "all sectors of the economy and all regions of the country shall be given optimum opportunity to develop." It is incumbent upon the State to ensure that the regions, especially the rural areas, shall be adequately supported and empowered to realize economic prosperity which brings benefits to the grassroots level.

Eastern Visayas or Region VIII is composed of three main islands – Samar, Leyte and Biliran. Despite having the two largest islands in the country, which are blessed with abundant natural resources, the region remains one of the poorest. While poverty incidence among the population in the region has reduced over the years, 31 out of 100 individuals still belong to the poor. Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) show that in 2018, poverty incidence among population in Eastern Samar was estimated at 49.5%; Northern Samar at 34.0%; Samar at 29.0%; Leyte at 28.6%; Southern Leyte at 23.6%; and Biliran at 19.7%¹. It is also worth noting that their geographic location makes the region vulnerable to typhoons, which add to the terrible condition of the residents, as experienced during the onslaught of super typhoon Yolanda in 2013, one of the strongest typhoons recorded in modern history.

¹ "Poverty situation in Eastern Visayas (Full Year 2018)." <http://rso08.psa.gov.ph/article/poverty-situation-eastern-visayas-full-year-2018#sthash.J1mUh2vL.QK0wLHKy.dpbs>

This measure seeks to establish the Eastern Visayas Development Authority that shall be mandated to plan, accelerate and facilitate the growth of the region.

It is hoped that with the creation of this special body, whose singular focus will be the achievement of social and economic progress of the region, more Filipino families can be lifted out of poverty and their standard of living is improved.

In this light, the consideration of this bill is earnestly sought.



RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.



Senate

Office of the Secretary

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**CREATING THE EASTERN VISAYAS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (EVDA)
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THEREFOR**

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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Eastern Visayas*
2 *Development Authority (EVDA) Act.*”

3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to promote and
4 accelerate the sound and balanced industrial, economic and social growth of Eastern
5 Visayas and ensure its speedy rehabilitation in the aftermath of Super Typhoon
6 Yolanda by increasing trade, tourism and investments, encouraging private enterprise,
7 and advancing efforts towards progress and development within the context of
8 national plans and policies in order to provide jobs to the people, especially those in
9 rural areas, increase their productivity and their individual and family incomes, and
10 thereby improve the quality of their living conditions.

11 Towards this end, an effective institutional mechanism shall be established in
12 order to address the need for a coordinated and integrated approach in the
13 formulation and implementation of plans, programs, and projects geared towards
14 economic growth and development in the Eastern Visayas region, including the
15 establishment of special economic zones, among others.

1 Sec. 3. *Creation.* – The Eastern Visayas Development Authority, hereinafter
2 referred to as the “*Authority*”, is hereby created, which shall promote, coordinate and
3 facilitate the active and extensive participation of all sectors in the socioeconomic
4 development of Eastern Visayas.

5 Sec. 4. *Coverage.* – The Authority shall cover all the provinces of Northern
6 Samar, Eastern Samar, Western Samar, Leyte, Biliran and Southern Leyte, the
7 independent city of Ormoc and the highly urbanized City of Tacloban.

8 Sec. 5. *Main Office.* – The Authority shall have its main office in Tacloban City.
9 The Authority shall have a term of twenty five (25) years from the effectivity of its
10 Act, renewable for the same period unless otherwise provided by law.

11 Sec. 6. *Purpose.* – The Authority shall have the following purposes and
12 objectives:

- 13 a) To promote the development of Eastern Visayas by initiating or undertaking,
14 by itself or otherwise, development and business projects of corporate,
15 economic nature whether in agriculture, power, infrastructure, energy,
16 public utilities, land development, manufacturing, exploration or utilization
17 of natural resources and other fields or projects;
- 18 b) To integrate government and private sector efforts and resources in the
19 pursuit of sustainable development and balanced growth of Eastern Visayas,
20 as proposed in the post-Yolanda rehabilitation plan and other relevant
21 development plans, programs and projects;
- 22 c) To facilitate investments in any field as would enhance the economic
23 development of the region; and
- 24 d) To provide a model for the full implementation of a comprehensive regional
25 industrialization and agricultural modernization policy.

26 Sec. 7. *Powers and Functions of the Authority.* – The Authority shall have the
27 following powers and functions:

- 28 a) Formulate an integrated development framework for Eastern Visayas that
29 is, as far as practicable, consistent with the peace and development
30 initiatives of the National Government;
- 31 b) Provide strategic direction for the long-term economic development of
32 Eastern Visayas;

- 1 c) Integrate, prioritize, program and implement, whenever allowed and
2 authorized by applicable laws, specific programs, activities and projects
3 within Eastern Visayas, including Official Development Assistance (ODA)
4 projects, subject to such limitations prescribed by existing laws, rules, and
5 regulations;
- 6 d) Recommend to and, whenever necessary, call upon the appropriate
7 agencies of the National Government or any of its instrumentalities, to lend
8 the necessary technical support for assistance and prioritization in the
9 implementation of agricultural, industrial, commercial, infrastructure,
10 environmental, tourism and technological programs and projects;
- 11 e) Advocate to the constituents of Eastern Visayas, their elected
12 representatives in Congress, and the National Government, policies that will
13 foster the integrated and balanced development of Eastern Visayas;
- 14 f) Promote and facilitate investments in any field that would enhance the
15 socioeconomic development of Eastern Visayas and uplift the living
16 standards of the people, in close coordination with agencies primarily
17 mandated to undertake such functions;
- 18 g) Explore sources for financing priority programs, projects, and activities that
19 are critical to the development of Eastern Visayas;
- 20 h) Coordinate and facilitate the extension of necessary planning, management,
21 and technical assistance to prospective and existing investors, to
22 complement the efforts of agencies primarily mandated to execute such
23 functions;
- 24 i) Establish a comprehensive and integrated database on Eastern Visayas to
25 support planning and decision making;
- 26 j) Perform prior screening functions, as a condition precedent to the approval
27 by any national, provincial or municipal government agency, of any permit,
28 license, franchise, or concession for the operation of any business or the
29 exploitation, development or utilization of natural resources within Eastern
30 Visayas;
- 31 k) Negotiate and enter into management or consulting contracts with local or
32 foreign management consulting firms for the management of the Authority

1 or the planning and implementation of agricultural, tourism, and industrial
2 development projects in Eastern Visayas;

- 3 l) Avail of the expertise of any particular employee, technician, or group of
4 persons in any bureau, office, or department of the National Government
5 whose services are deemed urgently needed for the attainment of the goals
6 of the Authority, with the consent and approval of the department head
7 concerned;
- 8 m) Conduct specific experiments, investigation, and research to discover
9 economical and practical methods of increasing agricultural and industrial
10 production and other related endeavors;
- 11 n) Encourage and organize cooperative ventures in agriculture, agri-business,
12 industry, tourism and commerce, and assist them by arranging appropriate
13 financing schemes, for their plans and projects;
- 14 o) Monitor, evaluate, and formulate recommendations in the implementation
15 of Eastern Visayas-wide development programs, activities and projects;
- 16 p) Establish appropriate mechanisms to ensure the timely implementation of
17 Eastern Visayas-wide projects, whenever necessary, including public-private
18 partnership;
- 19 q) Review and recommend for approval by the National Economic and
20 Development Authority (NEDA) Board programs, projects, and plans by the
21 National Government and donor agencies for implementation in Eastern
22 Visayas, subject to existing laws, rules and regulations;
- 23 r) Recommend the creation and supervise the development and operation of
24 special economic zones according to the principles and provisions set forth
25 in this Act and Republic Act 7916, or the "*Special Economic Zone Act of*
26 *1995*", as amended;
- 27 s) Interface with foreign assistance agencies and international aid
28 organizations, in coordination with the NEDA and other relevant National
29 Government agencies, for the purpose of obtaining financing support,
30 grants and donations for its programs and projects;
- 31 t) Receive and administer donations, contributions, grants, bequests or gifts,
32 in cash or in kind, from foreign governments, international agencies, private

1 entities and other sources, including ODA, to be used in the development
2 of Eastern Visayas, subject to existing laws, rules and regulations;

3 u) To sue and be sued, enter into contracts, acquire, purchase, hold, lease,
4 transfer, and dispose of property of any kind or nature to carry out the
5 purposes of this Act; and

6 v) Discharge other functions that may be deemed necessary or as may be
7 provided by law.

8 In the discharge of its functions, the Authority shall ensure appropriate
9 consultation and coordination with the Regional Development Council Eastern Visayas
10 (RDC-EV) and other local development councils as well as with National Government
11 agencies, local government units (LGUs), accredited people's organizations, non-
12 government organizations and the private sector operating in Eastern Visayas.

13 The Authority, through the EVDA Chairperson, shall submit to the President of
14 the Philippines and both Houses of Congress annual reports on its accomplishments
15 and activities.

16 *Sec. 8. Board of Directors.* – The Authority's overall direction and thrusts shall
17 be provided and approved, unless provided otherwise in this Act, by the EVDA Board
18 of Directors, hereinafter referred to as the Board. It shall be composed of the following
19 members:

20 a) The EVDA Chairperson as head;

21 b) The Chairperson of the Regional Development Council of Eastern Visayas
22 (RDC-EV) as *ex officio* member;

23 c) A member of the Senate, upon designation by the Senate President, who
24 shall be an *ex officio* member;

25 d) A member of the House of Representatives, chosen by the District
26 Representatives of the legislative districts comprising Eastern Visayas, who
27 shall be an *ex officio* member;

28 e) The Regional President of the League of Municipalities-Eastern Visayas
29 Chapter;

30 f) Three (3) private sector representatives to be appointed by the President,
31 upon the recommendation of the Board, comprising of one (1)
32 representative each from the:

- 1 a. Eastern Visayas business sector;
- 2 b. Eastern Visayas academic sector; and
- 3 c. Eastern Visayas non-government sector.

4 The term of office of the three (3) representatives from the private sector shall
5 be six (6) years: *Provided*, That at the initial appointment of such members, the
6 second member to be appointed shall only serve a term of four (4) years and the third
7 member to be appointed shall only serve a term of two (2) years: *Provided, further*,
8 That they shall continue to hold office until their successors shall have been appointed.
9 All vacancies, prior to the expiration of the term, shall be filled for the unexpired term
10 only.

11 The members of the Board shall be entitled to reimbursements for actual and
12 necessary expenses incurred, either for their attendance in the meetings of the Board
13 or in connection with other official business authorized by resolution of the Board,
14 subject to existing laws and regulations.

15 The term of the *ex officio* members including the Senator and the Member of
16 the House of Representatives shall correspond to their term as elected officials.

17 *Sec. 9. Functions of the Board of Directors.* – The Board shall have the following
18 functions:

- 19 a) Provide direction and guidance for the Authority's work and thrust for
20 Eastern Visayas;
- 21 b) Ensure that the goals and policies of the Authority are consistent with the
22 overall national development goals and objectives;
- 23 c) Ensure that the programs of the Authority are consistent with regional and
24 local development plans, programs and projects, and vice versa;
- 25 d) Explore sources for financing of priority Eastern Visayas-wide development;
- 26 e) Create committees or task forces as may be deemed necessary for the
27 accomplishment of the plans, programs, projects and activities of the
28 Authority;
- 29 f) Determine schedules, establish voting procedures, criteria for the
30 constitution of a quorum and other rules and regulations in the conduct of
31 Board meetings; and

1 g) Perform such functions as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of
2 this Act.

3 Sec. 10. *Executive Committee.* – The Board shall constitute an Executive
4 Committee from among its membership to act, for and on its behalf when the Board
5 is not in session, on urgent matters as may be deemed necessary by the Chairperson.

6 The following shall comprise the Executive Committee:

- 7 a) The EVDA Chairperson as head;
- 8 b) The Eastern Visayas Regional Development Council (RDC) Chairperson;
- 9 c) The Private Sector Representative from the business sector;
- 10 d) The Private Sector Representative from the academic sector; and
- 11 e) The Private Sector Representative from the non-government sector.

12 Sec. 11. *Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer.* – The EVDA Chairperson shall
13 be appointed by the President of the Philippines with the rank of Undersecretary and
14 shall act as Chief Executive Officer of the Authority. The Chairperson and Chief
15 Executive Officer shall serve a term of six (6) years from the date of appointment,
16 unless removed for cause: *Provided,* That the person who shall be appointed as
17 Chairperson must be a Filipino citizen, of good moral character, of proven probity and
18 integrity and a holder of a degree in economics, business, public administration, law,
19 management or related fields, and with at least five (5) years relevant experience,
20 preferably in the field of management or public administration: *Provided, further,* That
21 the appointee for Chairperson shall have been a resident of Eastern Visayas for at
22 least five (5) years before the appointment.

23 The Chairperson shall have the following duties and functions:

- 24 a) Call and preside over meetings of the Board and see to it that the policies,
25 programs and rules and regulations are implemented properly;
- 26 b) Call on technical experts in the formulation and implementation of a
27 comprehensive and integrated development plan for Eastern Visayas,
28 investment programs and the preparation of investment programming
29 priorities, annual reports, and other pertinent documents approved by the
30 Authority;

- 1 c) Identify solutions to key issues and concerns, taking into account related
2 risks, relative impact, and affected parties, in coordination with the Board
3 and key stakeholders;
- 4 d) Advocate the Authority's work among the various concerned sectors and
5 stakeholders;
- 6 e) Call on any agency, group, individual member of the Board, LGU, and host
7 community to address issues and concerns relating to implementation of
8 major programs, projects and activities;
- 9 f) Supervise the monitoring and timely implementation of Eastern Visayas-
10 wide programs, projects and activities;
- 11 g) Endorse to the Board all policy recommendations, plans and programs for
12 approval;
- 13 h) Accept, on behalf of the Authority, donations, contributions, grants and
14 bequests or gifts, in cash or in kind, from members, foreign governments,
15 international agencies, private entities or any individual for purpose that will
16 realize the functions of the Authority;
- 17 i) Supervise administrative operations including disbursement of any fund of
18 the Authority, subject to the usual accounting and auditing procedures, and
19 submit reports thereon;
- 20 j) Execute and administer the policies and measures approved by the Board;
- 21 k) Appoint, remove, dismiss or otherwise discipline for cause, all employees of
22 the Authority, in accordance with the standard guidelines for recruitment,
23 employment, and discipline provided for by the Civil Service laws, rules and
24 regulations;
- 25 l) Represent the Authority in all dealings with other offices, agencies and
26 instrumentalities of the government and with all persons and entities, public
27 or private;
- 28 m) Sign agreements and/or contracts on behalf of the Authority, including
29 those for expert and consultancy services and other reports of
30 accountabilities emanating from the Authority;
- 31 n) Serve as *ex officio* member of the Board of Directors of the NEDA and the
32 TIEZA; and

1 o) Perform such other functions that the Board may direct to carry out the
2 provisions of this Act.

3 Sec. 11. *Executive Director.* – An Executive Director shall be appointed by the
4 President of the Philippines, upon the recommendation by the Chairperson: *Provided,*
5 That no person shall be appointed as Executive Director unless one is a Filipino citizen,
6 of good moral character, of proven probity and integrity and a holder of a degree in
7 economics, business, public administration, law, management or other related fields,
8 and has at least five (5) years relevant experience in said fields: *Provided, further,*
9 That the appointee to the position of Executive Director shall have been a resident of
10 Eastern Visayas for at least five (5) years prior to appointment and has the requisite
11 eligibilities for third level career service position, pursuant to the career executive rank
12 system: *Provided, finally,* That the appointee shall reside in Eastern Visayas while
13 serving in such office.

14 The Executive Director shall assist the Chairperson in carrying out the functions
15 of the Authority and shall, likewise, serve as the Secretary of the Board.

16 Sec. 12. *EVDA Advisory Council.* – There is hereby constituted an EVDA
17 Advisory Committee to be composed of the following:

- 18 a) EVDA Chairperson as head;
19 b) The Eastern Visayas RDC Chairperson;
20 c) The District Representatives of the legislative districts comprising Eastern
21 Visayas;
22 d) The Provincial Governors of the provinces comprising Eastern Visayas;
23 e) The City Mayors of the independent cities in Eastern Visayas;
24 f) The Regional Directors of the national line agencies with regional offices in
25 Eastern Visayas;

26 The EVDA Advisory Council shall convene at least once every six (6) months,
27 or as often as necessary, upon the call of the EVDA Chairperson, advise or be consulted
28 by the Authority on important matters related to Eastern Visayas.

29 Sec. 13. *Organizational Structure.* – The Board of Directors, upon the
30 recommendation of the Chairperson, shall determine the organizational structure,
31 staffing pattern and compensation of the Authority subject to Civil Service laws, rules
32 and regulations, and Republic Act No. 11466, otherwise known as “*Salary*

1 *Standardization Law of 2019,"* and the Position Classification and Compensation
2 System. The Chairperson may reorganize the Authority and may create or abolish
3 divisions, units or branches therein as the exigencies of the affairs of the Authority
4 may require.

5 Sec. 14. *Merit System.* – All officials and employees of the EVDA shall be
6 selected and appointed on the basis of merit and fitness in accordance with civil service
7 laws, rules and regulations. The recruitment, transfer, promotion, and dismissal of all
8 its personnel, including temporary workers, shall be governed by a merit system that
9 will be established by the EVDA in compliance with existing laws, rules and regulations.

10 Sec. 15. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the implementation of this
11 Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act: *Provided,* That the
12 operating expenses of the Authority should not exceed fourteen percent (14%) of the
13 annual appropriation: *Provided further,* That at least eighty-six percent (86%) of said
14 annual appropriation shall be disbursed for the programs, projects, and activities of
15 the Authority.

16 Sec. 16. *Transfer of Post-Yolanda Rehabilitation Funds.* – The authority, control
17 and administration of funds, equipment and properties donated by foreign
18 governments, foreign and local non-profit agencies and foundations, and private
19 entities to the National Government for the purpose of the rehabilitation of areas in
20 Eastern Visayas that were affected by Typhoon Yolanda, as well as all other funds
21 received or appropriated by the National Government for the same purpose, are
22 hereby transferred to the Authority. Hereafter, the Authority shall exercise the sole
23 power of disposition and control of the rehabilitation funds, in accordance with the
24 provisions of this Act or until the purposes for which the said funds had been donated
25 are accomplished.

26 Sec. 17. *Formulation of the Eastern Visayas Development Master Plan.* – Upon
27 its organization, the Authority shall formulate and submit its development master plan
28 to NEDA for integration into the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan and public
29 investment program. The Eastern Visayas Development Master Plan shall serve as the
30 framework for the accelerated and balanced development of Eastern Visayas in
31 accordance with the aims and purposes of this Act.

1 Sec. 18. *Administrative Supervision.* – The Authority shall be under the direct
2 supervision of the President of the Philippines.

3 Sec. 19. *Interpretation.* – The powers, authorities, and functions that are vested
4 in the Authority are intended to decentralize government functions and authority and
5 promote an efficient and effective working relationship between the EVDA, the
6 National Government, and the LGUs.

7 Sec. 20. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The EVDA, in coordination with
8 the Regional Development Council VIII (RDC VIII) and National Economic
9 Development Authority Regional Office in Eastern Visayas (NRO VIII) and Provincial
10 Governors shall adopt rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act
11 within ninety (90) days from the date of its approval.

12 Sec. 21. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or
13 unconstitutional, other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall remain
14 in full force and effect.

15 Sec. 22. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive
16 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to or
17 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended
18 accordingly.

19 Sec. 23. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
20 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,