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SENATE
S.B. No. **920**

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Loren Legarda

EXPLANATORY NOTE

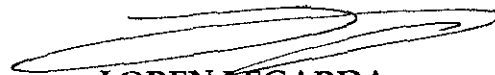
This bill seeks to reorganize the Department of Transportation and Communication by creating a separate Department of Information and Communications to address the distinct needs of the communications and transportation sector.

Section 24, Article II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution declares that the State recognizes the vital role of communications and information in nation-building. To implement this State policy, a Department of Transportation and Communications was created under the Administrative Code of 1987 to maintain and expand a viable, efficient, safe and dependable transportation and communications systems as effective instruments for national recovery and economic progress.

Due to the divergent issues on transportation and communications, a single department should focus on each one to intensify government initiatives and cope up with the demands of globalization.

Under this proposed measure, the Department of Information and Communications shall be the primary policy, planning, coordinating, implementing, regulating and administrative entity of the executive branch of the Government that will promote, develop, and regulate integrated and strategic ICT systems and reliable and cost-efficient communication facilities and service. This will ensure that the communications and information technology sector of the country be given appropriate focus and be included as one of the priorities of the government.

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



LOREN LEGARDA
Senator

- h. To promote the development of ICT expertise in the country's human capital to enable Filipinos to compete in a fast-evolving information and communication age;
- i. To ensure the growth of the ICT industries;
- j. To preserve the rights of individuals to privacy and confidentiality of their personal information;
- k. To encourage the use of ICT in support of efforts for the development and promotion of the country's arts and culture, history, education, public health and safety, and other socio-civic purpose;
- l. To sustain the development of the nationwide system as an integral component of overall development of ICT in the country.

SEC. 3. Creation of the Department of Information and Communications Technology – There is hereby created the Department of Information and Communications Technology, hereinafter referred to as the Department, which shall carry out the above-declared policy and assume the communications-related powers and functions of the Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC).

SEC. 4. Mandate – The Department shall be the primary policy, planning, coordinating, implementing, regulating and administrative entity of the executive branch of the Government that will promote, develop, and regulate integrated and strategic ICT systems and reliable and cost-efficient communication facilities and service.

SEC. 5. Powers and Functions –The Department shall perform the following functions:

- a. Formulate and recommend national policies and guidelines that will promote ICT and the wider use of the internet and other cyberspace infrastructure and exchange of universal application, in consultation with the private business sector, relevant civil society institutions, and other private and public entities, such as educational and training sector;
- b. Establish and administer comprehensive and integrated programs for ICT at the national, regional, and local levels with due consideration to advancement in convergence and other emerging technologies; and for this purpose, may call on any agency, corporation or organization, whether public or private, whose development programs in ICT are an integral part thereof, to participate and assist in the preparation and implementation of such programs;
- c. Design, implement, and ensure the protection of an integrated government information and communications infrastructure development program that will coordinate all existing government entities, taking into account all their existing plans, programs, proposals, software and hardware inventory, installed system, and programs;
- d. Develop and implement, in coordination with concerned government agencies, a comprehensive ICT application capability in the national government and determine the personnel qualification and other standards essential to the integrated and effective development and operation of government information and communications infrastructure;
- e. Encourage and establish guidelines for private sector funding of ICT projects for government agencies in order to fast-track said projects which provide reasonable cost-recovery mechanisms for the private sector, including but not limited to Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) mechanisms;

- f. Assess, review and provide direction to ICT research and development programs of the government in coordination with other institution concerned;
- g. Establish and prescribe rules and regulations for the establishment, operation and maintenance of ICT facilities in areas not adequately served by the private sector in consultation with the private business sector, civil society, and other private and public entities, such as educational and training sectors;
- h. Formulate such rules and regulations and exercise such other powers as may be necessary to implement the objectives of this act; and
- i. Perform such other tasks as may be provided by law assigned by the President from time.

SEC. 6. Composition - The Department of Communication Technology shall be headed by a Secretary. The Department proper shall be composed of the Office of the Secretary, the offices of the Undersecretaries and the Assistant Secretaries.

SEC. 7. The Secretary of the DCT - The Secretary shall be appointed by the President, subject to the confirmation by the Commission on Appointments.

The Secretary shall have the following functions:

- a. Provide executive direction and supervision over the entire operations of the Department of Communication Technology (DCT) and its attached agencies;
- b. Establish policies and standards for the effective, efficient and economical operation of DCT, in accordance with the programs of the Government;
- c. Rationalize delivery systems necessary for the effective attainment of the objectives of DCT, in accordance with the programs of the Government;
- d. Review and approve request for financial and manpower resources of all operating office of DCT;
- e. Designate and appoint all officers and employees of DTC, excluding the Undersecretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Regional and Assistant Regional Directors, in accordance with Civil Service laws, rules and regulations;
- f. Coordinate with local government units, other agencies and public and private interest groups, including NGOs and Pos on Department policies and initiatives;
- g. Advise the President on the promulgation of executive and administrative orders regulatory and legislative proposals on matters pertaining to ICT development;
- h. Formulate such rules and regulations and exercise such other powers as may be necessary to implement the objectives of this Act; and
- i. Perform such other tasks as may be provided by law or assigned by the President from time to time.

SEC. 8. The Undersecretaries - The Secretary shall be assisted by three (3) Undersecretaries, who shall be appointed by the President upon the recommendation of the secretary: Provided, that, one (1) of the Undersecretaries shall be a career office coming from ranks of existing government information and communications agencies and offices or qualified IT and ICT professionals in the private sector.

SEC. 9. Assistant Secretaries - The Secretary shall be assisted by three (3) Assistant Secretaries who shall be career officers appointed by the President upon the recommendation of the secretary.

SEC. 10. Qualifications - No person shall be appointed Secretary, Undersecretaries or Assistant Secretary of the Department unless he is a citizen and resident of the Philippines of good moral character, and of proven integrity.

SEC. 11. Regional Offices - The Department shall have a Regional Office in each of the administrative regions in the country. The Regional Offices shall essentially be line in character and shall be responsible for the delivery of all front line services of the Department assisted by Assistant Regional Director. The Regional Offices shall have, within their respective administrative regions, the following functions:

- a. Implement laws, policies, plans, programs, projects, rules and regulations of the Department;
- b. Provide efficient and effective service to the people;
- c. Coordinate with regional offices of other department, offices, and agencies;
- d. Coordinate with LGUs; and
- e. Perform such other functions as may be provided by law or assigned by the Secretary.

SEC. 12. Transfer of Agencies and Personal.

- a. The following agencies and institutions are hereby absorbed by the Department;

1. the National Computer Center under the Department of Science and Technology and
2. all offices, services, division units, and personnel of the DOTC with functions and responsibilities dealing with communication.

All offices, services, divisions, units and personnel not otherwise covered by this Act for transfer or absorption into the new Department shall continue to perform their transportation-related functions and therefore, shall be retained under the Department of Transportation and Communications which is hereby renamed the Department of Transportation.

The foregoing transfer of powers and functions shall include all applicable funds and appropriations, records, equipment, property, and personnel as may be necessary.

- b. The following agencies are hereby attached to the Department for policy and program coordination and, and shall continue to operate and function in accordance with Charters, laws or orders creating them, and with such other functions and responsibilities as it shall be mandated to regulated ICT in accordance with law insofar as they are inconsistent with this Act:

1. The National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), and
2. Philippines Postal Corporation

The Department shall not exercise any power which will tend to influence or effect a review or a modification of the quasi-judicial functions of the NTC.

- c. The law and rules on government reorganization as provided for in Republic Act No. 6656, otherwise known as the Reorganization process as the Department is created.

SEC. 13. Transfer of agencies and Personnel.

- a. All offices, services, divisions, units and personal of the DOTC with functions and responsibilities dealing with communication shall be absorbed by or attached to the Department of communication Technology, as the case may be.
- b. The National Computer center under the Department of Science and Technology is hereby absorbed by the by the Department of Information and Communication Technology.
- c. The following agencies are hereby attached to the Department of Communications Technology for supervision and policy and program coordination and integration, and shall continue to operate and function in accordance with their characters, laws or orders creating them, insofar as they are not inconsistent with this Act:
 - 1. National Telecommunications Commission;
 - 2. Philippine Postal Corporation;
 - 3. Telecommunications Office (TelOf);
 - 4. Municipal Telephone Project Office.
- d. The law and rules on government reorganizations as provided for in Republic Act No. 6656, otherwise known as the Reorganization process of the Department of Communication Technology.

SEC. 14. Implement of the RPWeb - In consonance with the objectives of administrative Order No. 332 and Republic Act No. 8792, the primary responsibility over the implementation of the RPWeb or the electronic online network of the government which shall serve as initial platform of the government information infrastructure (GII), is hereby transferred to the Department. For this purpose, the Department shall continue utilization of all funds, monies, interests, and properties outstanding and accruing from the RPWeb.

SEC. 15. Sectoral and Industry Task Forces - The Department may create sectoral and industry task forces, technical working groups, advisory bodies or committees for the furtherance of its objectives. Additional private sector representatives, such as from academe and federation of private industries directly involved in ICT, as well as other National Government Agencies (NGAs), LGUs, and GOCCs, may be appointed to these working groups. Government IT professionals shall also be tapped to particular in the work of the Department through these working groups.

SEC. 16. Structure and Staffing Pattern - The Department shall determine its organization structure and create new division or units as it may deem necessary, shall appoint officers and employees of the Department in accordance with the civil Service law, rules, and regulations.

SEC. 17. Separation from Service - Employees separated form the service as a result of this organization shall, within ninety (90) days therefore receive the retirement benefits to which they may be entitled under existing laws, and regulations.

SEC. 18. Appropriation - The amount needed for the initial implementation of this Act shall be taken from the current year's appropriation of the DOTC and all government agencies herein absorbed by or attached to the Department. Thereafter, the amount needed for the operations and maintenance of the Department shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 19. Repealing clause - All laws, decrees, executives orders, rules and regulations and other issuances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 20. Separability Clause - If any provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not otherwise affected shall remain in full and effect.

SEC. 21. Effectivity Clause - This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days from its publication in at least two (2) papers of general circulation.

Approved,