



SENATE

20 SEP 22 P 3 :29

S. B. No. 1844

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Introduced by Senators VICENTE C. SOTTO III, RALPH G. RECTO, JUAN MIGUEL F. ZUBIRI, FRANKLIN M. DRILON, and PANFILO M. LACSON

**AN ACT
AUTHORIZING THE PRESIDENT TO EXPEDITE THE PROCESSING AND
ISSUANCE OF NATIONAL AND LOCAL PERMITS AND LICENSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In the World Bank's 2020 Doing Business Report, Philippines jumped 29 notches, ranking 95th from 124th last year. The Philippines got an Ease of Doing Business score of 62.8 in the 2020 report, an improvement over its grade in the previous year of 57.68. Based on the report, the Philippines improved on three areas: starting a business, dealing with construction permits, and protecting minority investors.¹ Although it was a big leap from the previous year's, the Philippines is still last in the ranking among the founding members of Southeast Asian Nations.

According to some reports in 2019², the Philippines is a top foreign investment destination largely attributable to its continuing digital transformation and combined information and communications technology (ICT) and infrastructure efforts. Furthermore, based on an article published by the Philippine News Agency on December 30, 2019, Philippine economy is still among Asia's fastest amid easing inflation. The Philippine gross domestic product (GDP) accelerated by 6.2 percent in

¹ <https://www.dof.gov.ph/dof-confident-of-even-better-doing-business-ranking-for-phl-next-year-amid-msme-reform/>

² <https://markets.businessinsider.com/news/stocks/philippines-a-top-foreign-investment-destination-with-613-surge-in-approved-investments-1028710393#>

the third quarter, making it the second fastest-growing major economy after Vietnam, and ahead of China, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand.

Moreover, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the Department of Finance, the Philippines entered 2020 with strong growth prospects due to the conservative and responsible fiscal management and tax reform measures, just to name a few factors. The Philippines is even said to be among the fastest growing economies, with a revenue of 16.1% of gross domestic product (GDP), which is the country's highest since 1997.

However, the economic landscape of the Philippines has drastically changed by reason of the pandemic. The impact of COVID-19 to the different sectors of our society are all unprecedented. The Philippine economy is forecast to contract by 7.3% in 2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the Asian Development Bank³. While this has been the case, the Department of Finance⁴ remained optimistic in saying that the peso has emerged as among Asia's strongest currencies owing to the country's mild inflation rate.

Uncertainties surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, although have been lessened, still exist. Measures to cushion its effect to our people and our economy have already been made. However, there are still a lot to be accomplished in order to rebuild the economy and defeat COVID-19 altogether.

Thus, this bill seeks to authorize the President, during the time of national emergency, to suspend the requirements for national and local permits, licenses and certifications, and to streamline and expedite the process for the issuance of the same. While this may be a small step, it surely can create a significant impact on all enterprises. Likewise, this move could ease the already heavy burden of the businesses that were heavily hit and continuously being beaten by the gargantuan effects of the pandemic. This Act could be one of the needed breathers of the

³ <https://www.adb.org/news/philippine-economy-decline-further-2020-amid-covid-19-recovery-2021>

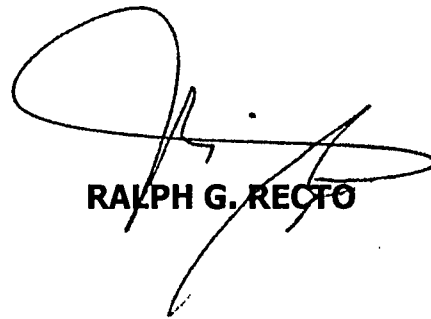
⁴ <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/01/strong-peso-shows-confidence-in-ph-dof/>

crumbling enterprises. And ultimately, this will redound to the benefit of our economy and encourage investors to capitalize in the country.

The COVID-19 virus is spreading fast, so our action must likewise be swift. Therefore, the immediate passage of this measure is earnestly sought.



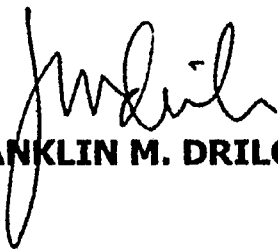
VICENTE C. SOTTO III



RALPH G. RECTO



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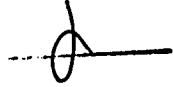


PANFILO M. LACSON

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Senate Bill No. 1844

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AN ACT

**AUTHORIZING THE PRESIDENT TO EXPEDITE THE PROCESSING AND
ISSUANCE OF NATIONAL AND LOCAL PERMITS, LICENSES AND
CERTIFICATIONS**

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

1 **SECTION 1. Coverage.** – This Act shall cover all agencies of the Executive
2 branch, including departments, bureaus, offices, commissions, boards, councils;
3 government instrumentalities, government owned and controlled corporations such as
4 but not limited to the following: Department of Finance (DOF), Bureau of Internal
5 Revenue (BIR), Bureau of Customs (BOC); Department of Environment and Natural
6 Resources (DENR), National Water Resources Board (NWRB), Environmental
7 Management Bureau (EMB), Land Management Bureau; Department of Justice (DOJ),
8 Land Registration Authority (LRA), Bureau of Immigration (BI); Department of
9 Transportation (DOTr), Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board
10 (LTFRB), Land Transportation Office (LTO), Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines
11 (CAAP), Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA);
12 Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), National Commission on
13 Indigenous Peoples (NCIP); Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG),
14 Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP); Department of Health (DOH), Food and Drug
15 Administration (FDA); Department of Information and Communications Technology
16 (DICT), National Telecommunications Commission (NTC); Department of Agriculture
17 (DA), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR); Department of Energy

1 (DOE); Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC); Department of Labor and Employment
2 (DOLE); Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD), Home
3 Mutual Development Fund (HDMF/PAGIBIG), Human Settlements Adjudication
4 Commission (HSAC); Social Security System (SSS); Government Service Insurance
5 System (GSIS); and local government units.

6 **SEC. 2. Authority of the President to Suspend the Requirements for**
7 **National and Local Permits, Licenses and Certifications, and to Streamline**
8 **and Expedite the Process for the Issuance thereof.** – Notwithstanding any law,
9 decree, order or ordinance to the contrary, the President, in times of national
10 emergency shall have the authority to:

11 (a) accelerate and streamline regulatory processes and procedures for new and
12 pending applications for permits, licenses, clearances, certifications or
13 authorizations, including fixing or shortening the periods provided for under
14 existing laws, regulations, issuances, and ordinances;

15 (b) suspend or waive the requirements in securing such permits, licenses,
16 clearances, certifications or authorizations.

17 **SEC. 3. Power to Suspend or Remove** – Consistent with Article VII Sections
18 1 and 17 of the Constitution, the Revised Administrative Code, other existing laws,
19 and jurisprudence, the President shall have the authority to suspend or remove, upon
20 the determination of a competent body, any government official or employee
21 performing acts contrary to the preceding section.

22 **SEC. 4. Separability Clause.** – If any provision of this Act is declared
23 unconstitutional or invalid, the provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in
24 full force and effect.

25 **SEC. 5. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, orders, ordinances, rules and
26 regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified
27 accordingly.

28 **SEC. 6. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect upon its publication in the
29 Official Gazette and in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,