Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Eighteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 1038

Introduced by Rep. Edgar Mary Sarmiento

A RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, THROUGH THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND THE DEFEAT COVID-19 AD HOC COMMITTEE, TO REQUIRE THE WEARING OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT SUCH AS FACE MASKS, FACE SHIELDS, GLOVES, AND THE LIKE IN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION TO HELP SLOW AND PREVENT FURTHER TRANSMISSION OF COVID-19 AMONG COMMUTERS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION WORKERS

WHEREAS, since the lifting of the Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine and the imposition of the General Community Quarantine in Metro Manila and several other areas all over the country since 1 June 2020, public transportation such as taxis, buses, LRTs, and MRTs have resumed operation;

WHEREAS, with the resumption of their operation, passengers are required to maintain strict social distancing and to wear face masks upon entry into public transportation\(^1\); this requirement for social distancing has reduced ridership capacity by at least 50%;

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\(^1\) IATF Omnibus Guidelines for Community Quarantine.
WHEREAS, despite concerted efforts of all government agencies and the private sector, the number of cases in the Philippines is still steadily rising, with the number of active cases rising by more or less 2,000 every day in the past 2 days²;

WHEREAS, among those heavily susceptible to the virus are commuters and the workers of public transportation; as of 7 July 2020, 198 MRT-3 employees have already tested positive for COVID-19, 15 of which are ticket sellers, 3 are train drivers, 2 are control personnel, and 1 is a station nurse³;

WHEREAS, emerging evidence from clinical and laboratory studies and various briefs from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention show that wearing personal protective equipment, whether medical grade or improvised, will substantially decrease the chance of spreading COVID-19 and many other viruses and diseases⁴;

WHEREAS, a study from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health shows that wearing a face shield reduces inhalation exposure by 96% and reduces surface contamination by 97%; in addition to an increased distance between the participants of the study, the wearing of protective gear has significantly reduced over-all exposure to droplets by 92%⁵;

WHEREAS, a Position Paper by the ASSTRA Studies and Research Office,⁶ a national association of local public transport companies in Europe, provides that while social distancing is an effective measure in reducing transmission, it is but a short term solution that cannot be sustained if public transport capacity will not be increased or augmented; the study they conducted also shows that wearing personal

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² Data from Department of Health as of 6 July 2020.
⁶ COVID-19 Phase 2 and 3 – Measures for Local Transport; April 2020.
protective equipment will significantly reduce transmission of the virus and allow increase in the vehicular capacity of public transportation;

WHEREAS, economic losses in Philippine revenue may result in billions, if not trillions, of pesos if the public transportation industry will not be augmented, specifically by implementing measures to increase vehicular capacity and ridership, and to insure the safety of riders and employees alike;

WHEREAS, requiring public transport commuters in the Philippines to wear personal protective equipment such as face shields, gloves, and coat-type PPEs, whether medical grade or improvised, will significantly reduce transmission of the virus and allow more people to use public transportation;

WHEREAS, while further studies are still being conducted to determine whether or not any of these PPEs can be effective even for Motorcycle Taxis, requiring PPEs for other public transportation should be immediately implemented so as to contribute in flattening the curve, to protect both riding public and public transport employees, and to provide substantial data about the effectivity of PPEs in public transport;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the House of Representatives, through the Committee on Transportation, and the Defeat COVID-19 Ad Hoc Committee, to urge the Department of Transportation to require the wearing of personal protective equipment such as face masks, face shields, gloves, and the like in public transportation to help slow and prevent further transmission of COVID-19 among commuters and public transportation workers.

Adopted,

REP. EDGAR MARY S. SARMIENTO
First District of Samar