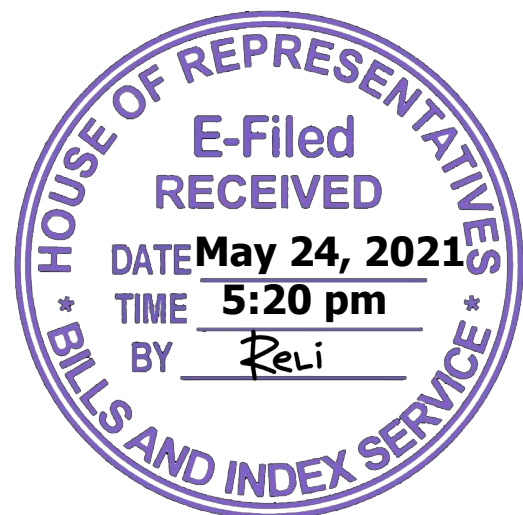


REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City



EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 9431

Introduced by **MAGDALO Party-List Representative**

HON. MANUEL DG. CABOCHAN III

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In 2012, the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) has approved the Philippines' territorial claim to Benham Rise as part of the country's continental shelf and territory. It is in accordance to Article 76, paragraph 8 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and Annex II of the Convention.¹ Moreover, Executive Order No. 25 series of 2017 further recognizes the region by mandating the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA) to include the Benham Rise in official maps and charts of the Philippines.

With the growing aggression of China over the West Philippine Sea, it has also recently sought interest in its adjacent maritime regions. In 2017, China has shown interest in the Benham Rise Region where a Chinese survey ship supposedly carrying out marine scientific research was monitored by the Department of National Defense roaming around the maritime territory for as long as three months.² It has been reported since

¹ United Nations. Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. Submission by the Republic of the Philippines. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_phl_22_2009.htm. Dated July 19, 2012

² Rappler. Lorenzana: China showed interest in PH's Benham Rise. Information retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/lorenzana-china-survey-ship-philippines-benham-rise>. Dated March 9, 2017

early on that there may be large deposits of oil and natural gas under the Benham Rise.

The approximate 24-million-hectare underwater plateau is considered part of the Philippines' exclusive economic zone and continental shelf under the 1982 United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).³ Therefore, the Benham Rise Region is strongly subjective to the sovereign rights and jurisdiction of the Philippines.

This bill seeks to establish the Eastern Seaboard Strategic Defense Plan to ensure the protection and strategic maritime interests in the country's Eastern Seaboard, more specifically the Benham Rise Region. The Department of National Defense, along with security agencies of the government shall develop it to uphold our sovereignty and national territory against foreign oppressors.

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



MANUEL DG. CABOCHAN III

Representative

Magdalo Para Sa Pilipino Party-List

³ Official Gazette. Executive Order No. 25, series of 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2017/05may/20170516-EO-25-RRD.pdf>

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. **9431**

Introduced by **MAGDALO Party-List Representative**
HON. MANUEL DG. CABOCHAN III

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE EASTERN SEABOARD STRATEGIC DEFENSE PLAN

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

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.*— This Act shall be known as the "Eastern Seaboard
2 Strategic Defense Plan Act".

3
4 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*— It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
5 take decisive measures to protect and defend our Eastern Seaboard from any foreign
6 incursions that might pose a threat to our sovereignty and national territory. Towards
7 this end, the Department of National Defense in close coordination with concerned
8 security agencies of the government, shall come up with a strategic plan to develop
9 our defense capabilities to better protect our Eastern Seaboard and all the resources
10 contained therein.

11
12 Sec. 3. *Eastern Seaboard Strategic Defense Plan.*— The government shall
13 ensure that the country has the appropriate resources and capabilities to protect

1 strategic maritime interests in the Philippine eastern seaboard. An Eastern Seaboard
2 Strategic Defense Plan, hereinafter referred to as the Plan, shall be formulated in
3 this respect that shall have the following components:

4
5 (a) Appropriate strategic response forces for the conduct of defense operations
6 under joint warfare concept and to respond to disastrous events through a:

7 (1) Three-tiered Philippine Navy fleet with sub-surface and air warfare
8 capabilities added to a more improved surface capabilities not only for sea
9 denial and patrol, but also to ensure the sovereignty of the country and its
10 Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ);

11 (2) Strategic Air Strike Force through air assets in order to gain and maintain
12 air superiority over friendly and contested territories;

13 (3) Credible expeditionary capability which necessitates the formation of an
14 adaptive expeditionary rapid-deployable battle group (Brigade Battle
15 Group), organized in conjunction with the Army and Marines combat
16 organizations;

17 (4) Strategic sea and air lift capability primarily to support rapid deployment
18 and expeditionary capabilities since these require a proportionate capability
19 to move committed forces by air or by sea;

20 (5) Special operations forces that are organized, trained, and equipped to
21 conduct special operations activities (e.g., direct action, reconnaissance,
22 humanitarian assistance, disaster emergency assistance, relief and rescue,
23 evacuation, unconventional warfare and/or mass base operations) or to
24 provide direct support to other special operations forces and/or
25 conventional forces;

26 (6) Missile-based capability from air, land and sea platforms to increase the
27 firepower and effectiveness of strategic response forces; and

28 (7) Mine warfare capability to support other capabilities.
29

1 (b) Enhanced capabilities to provide coast watch system support functions and to
2 support the conduct of joint defense operations. Among others, these
3 capabilities shall specifically support the following:

4 (1) Joint command and control for strategic response forces which requires
5 communications and information systems that are inter-operable with
6 other agencies and local governments;

7 (2) An increased air and maritime domain awareness to achieve improved
8 situational awareness through faster collection and analysis of shared
9 information;

10 (3) Intelligence-based and focused counter-measures to secure vital
11 installations and energy facilities against threats or terrorist attacks and
12 protect international sea lanes within Philippine territory and the
13 surrounding Exclusive Economic Zone;

14 (4) Interoperability with allied forces requiring the strengthening of
15 international defense and security engagements while protecting our rights
16 to our eastern seaboard including our Exclusive Economic Zone; and

17 (5) A guerrilla warfare plan to support conventional forces.
18

19 *Sec. 4. Formulation and Development of the Plan.*— The Department of
20 National Defense in coordination with the Department of Foreign Affairs, Department
21 of Interior and Local Government and Department of Transportation shall, within six
22 months after the effectivity of this Act, formulate and develop the Plan, including its
23 funding requirements, for the approval of Congress.
24

25 *Sec. 5. Interim Measures.*— The Department of National Defense and other
26 concerned departments and agencies shall come up with interim measures such as
27 the conduct of constant maritime patrols, the putting up of Philippine-marked buoys
28 or such other similar devices in Benham Rise, and such other related measures in
29 order to secure and protect our interests in the area while the Plan is still being
30 formulated and developed.
31

1 Sec. 6. *Separability Clause.*— If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or
2 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall
3 remain valid and subsisting.

4
5 Sec. 7. *Repealing Clause.*— Any law, presidential decree, executive order,
6 letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to, or is
7 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, is hereby repealed or amended
8 accordingly.

9
10 Sec. 8. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
11 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,