Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 1211

Submitted by the Committee on Legislative Franchises on September 13, 2021

Re: House Bill No. 10193

Recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 9071

Sponsors: Representatives Franz E. Alvarez and Enrico A. Pineda

Mr. Speaker:

The Committee on Legislative Franchises to which was referred House Bill No. 9071, authored by Rep. Enrico A. Pineda entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING LINKSERVE TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORK, INC. A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, MAINTAIN, LEASE AND OPERATE WIRE AND/OR WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS THROUGHOUT THE PHILIPPINES”

has considered the same and recommends that the attached House Bill No. 10193 entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING LINKSERVE TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORK, INC. A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE, AND MAINTAIN TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS THROUGHOUT THE PHILIPPINES”

M. Quano-Dizon, Micaela S. Violago, Anthony Peter “Onyx” D. Crisologo, and Esmael G. Mangudadatu as author thereof.
Respectfully submitted:

FRANZ E. ALVAREZ
Chairperson
Committee on Legislative Franchises

THE HONORABLE SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
QUEZON CITY
Republic of the Philippines
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EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10193
(In substitution of House Bill No. 9071)

Introduced by REPRESENTATIVES ENRICO A. PINEDA and FRANZ E. ALVAREZ

AN ACT
GRANTING LINKSERVE TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORK, INC. A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE, AND MAINTAIN TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS THROUGHOUT THE PHILIPPINES

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

SECTION 1. Nature and Scope of Franchise. - Subject to the provisions of the Constitution and applicable laws, rules and regulations, there is hereby granted to Linkserve Telecommunications Network, Inc., hereunder referred as the Grantee, its successors or assignees, a franchise to construct, install, establish, operate, and maintain, for commercial purposes and in the public interest, throughout the Philippines, wired and wireless telecommunications systems, including internet access, through copper, fiber optics, satellite systems, switches and all other telecommunication system or information and communications technologies as are at present available or will be made available through technological advances or innovations in the future, and offer telecommunications services, value-added services, including internet access service, or other electronic communication services, such as the transmission and reception of voice, data, facsimile, control signs, audio and video information services; or to construct, acquire, lease, and operate, or manage transmitting and receiving stations, lines, cables, or systems as are convenient or essential to efficiently carry out the purpose of this franchise.

SEC. 2. Manner of Operation of Stations or Facilities. – The stations or facilities of the Grantee shall be constructed and operated in a manner as will, at most,
result only in the minimum interference on the wavelengths or frequencies of existing
stations or other stations which may be established by law, without in any way
diminishing its own privilege to use its assigned wavelengths or frequencies and the
quality of transmission or reception thereon as should maximize rendition of the
Grantee’s services or the availability thereof.

SEC. 3. Authority of the National Telecommunications Commission. – The
Grantee shall secure from the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) a
Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity or the appropriate permits and
licenses for the construction, installation, and operation of its telecommunications
systems or facilities. In issuing the certificate, the NTC shall have the power to regulate
and impose such conditions relative to the construction, operation, maintenance, or
service level of the telecommunications systems or facilities. Such certificate shall
state the areas covered and the date the Grantee shall commence the service. The
Grantee shall not use any frequency in the radio spectrum without authorization from
the NTC. The NTC, however, shall not unreasonably withhold or delay the grant of
such authority, permit, or license.

In case of any violation of the provisions of this franchise, the NTC shall have
the authority to revoke or suspend, after due process, the permits or licenses it issued
pursuant to the franchise. The NTC may recommend to Congress the revocation of
the franchise for any violation of the provisions of this franchise.

SEC. 4. Excavation and Restoration Works. – For the purpose of erecting
and maintaining poles or other supports for wires or other conductors, and for laying
and maintaining of underground wires, cables, or other conductors, it shall be lawful
for the Grantee, its successors or assignees, with the prior approval of the Department
of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) or the local government unit (LGU) concerned,
as may be appropriate, to make excavations or lay conduits in any of the public places,
roads, highways, streets, lanes, alleys, avenues, sidewalks, or bridges of the province,
cities, or municipalities: Provided, however, That a public place, road, highway, street,
lane, alley, avenue, sidewalk, or bridge disturbed, altered, or changed by reason of
errection of poles or other supports or the underground laying of wires, other
conductors or conduits, shall be repaired and replaced in workmanlike manner by the
Grantee, its successors or assignees, in accordance with the standards set by the
DPWH or the LGU concerned. Should the Grantee, its successors or assignees, after
the ten (10)-day notice from the said authority, fail, refuse, or neglect to repair or
replace any part of public place, road, highway, street, lane, alley, avenue, sidewalk,
or bridge disturbed, altered, or changed by the Grantee, its successors or assignees,
then the DPWH or the LGU concerned shall have the right to have the same repaired
and placed in good order and condition, and charge the Grantee, its successors or
assignees, at double the amount of the costs and expenses for such repair or
replacement.

SEC. 5. Responsibility to the Public. - The Grantee shall conform to the ethics
of honest enterprise and not use its stations or facilities for obscene or indecent
transmission, or for dissemination of deliberately false information, or willful
misrepresentation, or assist in subversive or treasonable acts.

The Grantee shall operate and maintain all its stations, lines, cables, systems,
and equipment for the transmission and reception of messages, signals, and pulses in
a satisfactory manner at all times, and as far as economical and practicable, modify,
improve, or change such stations, lines, cables, systems, and equipment to keep
abreast with the advances in science and technology.

The Grantee shall improve and extend its services in areas not yet served, and
in hazard- and typhoon-prone areas that shall be determined by the National Disaster
Risk Reduction and Management Council, or its legal successor, in coordination with
the NTC.

The Grantee shall also improve and upgrade its equipment, facilities and
services, in order to ensure effective compliance with the objectives of Republic Act
No. 10639 or “The Free Mobile Disaster Alerts Act”.

SEC. 6. Rates for Services. – The charges and rates for telecommunications
services of the Grantee, except the rates and charges on those that may hereafter be
declared or considered as nonregulated services, whether flat rates or measured rates
or variations thereof, shall be subject to the approval of the NTC or its legal successor.
The rates to be charged by the Grantee shall be unbundled, separable, and distinct
among the services offered and shall be determined in such a manner that regulated
services do not subsidize the unregulated services.

SEC. 7. **Right of the Government.** – The radio spectrum is a finite resource
that is part of the national patrimony and the use thereof is a privilege conferred upon
the Grantee by the State and may be withdrawn any time after due process.

A special right is hereby reserved to the President of the Philippines, in times
of war, rebellion, public peril, calamity, emergency, disaster, or disturbance of peace
and order: to temporarily take over and operate the stations, transmitters, facilities, or
equipment of the Grantee; to temporarily suspend the operation of any station,
transmitter, facility, or equipment in the interest of public safety, security, and public
welfare; or to authorize the temporary use and operation thereof by any agency of the
government, upon due compensation to the Grantee for the use of the stations,
transmitters, facilities, or equipment during the period when these shall be so operated.

SEC. 8. **Term of Franchise.** – This franchise shall be in effect for a period of
twenty-five (25) years from the date of the effectivity of this Act, unless sooner
cancelled. This franchise shall be deemed *ipso facto* revoked in the event that the
Grantee fails to comply with any of the following conditions:

(a) commencement of operations within three (3) years from the approval of
its operating permit by the NTC;
(b) commencement of operations within five (5) years from the effectivity of
this Act; and
(c) continuous operation for two (2) years.

SEC. 9. **Bond.** – The Grantee shall file a bond with the NTC, in the amount
that the NTC shall determine, to guarantee compliance with and fulfillment of the
conditions under which this franchise is granted. If, after three (3) years from the date
of approval of its permit by the NTC, the Grantee shall have fulfilled the same, the
bond shall be released by the NTC. Otherwise, the bond shall be forfeited in favor of
the government and the franchise *ipso facto* revoked.

SEC. 10. **Right of Interconnection.** – The Grantee is hereby authorized to
connect or demand connection of its telecommunications systems to other
telecommunications systems installed, operated, and maintained by any other duly authorized person or entity in the Philippines for the purpose of providing extended and improved telecommunications services to the public, under the terms and conditions mutually agreed upon by the parties concerned. This right shall be subject to the review and modification of the NTC.

SEC. 11. Warranty in Favor of the National and Local Governments. - The Grantee shall hold the national, provincial, city, and municipal governments of the Philippines free from all claims, liabilities, accounts, demands, or actions arising out of accidents causing injury to persons or damage to properties, during the construction or operation of the stations, transmitters, facilities, or equipment of the Grantee.

SEC. 12. Sale, Lease, Transfer, Grant of Usufruct, or Assignment of Franchise. – The Grantee shall not sell, lease, transfer, grant the usufruct of, nor assign this franchise or the rights and privileges acquired thereunder to any person, firm, company, corporation, or other commercial or legal entity, nor merge with any other corporation or entity, nor shall the controlling interest of the Grantee be transferred, simultaneously or contemporaneously, to any person, firm, company, corporation, or entity without the prior approval of Congress. The Grantee shall inform Congress, through the Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Office of the Senate President, of any sale, lease, transfer, grant of usufruct, or assignment of franchise or the rights and privileges acquired thereunder, or of the merger or transfer of the controlling interest of the Grantee, within sixty (60) days after the completion of the said transaction. Failure to report to Congress such change of ownership shall render the franchise ipso facto revoked. Any person or entity to which this franchise is sold, transferred, or assigned shall be subject to the same conditions, terms, restrictions, and limitations of this Act.

SEC. 13. Dispersal of Ownership. - In accordance with the constitutional provision to encourage public participation in public utilities, the Grantee shall offer to Filipino citizens at least thirty percent (30%) of its outstanding capital stock, or a higher percentage that may hereafter be provided by law, in any securities exchange in the Philippines within five (5) years from the effectivity of this Act: Provided, That in cases where public offer of shares is not applicable, other methods of encouraging public
participation by citizens and corporations operating public utilities must be implemented. Noncompliance therewith shall render the franchise *ipso facto* revoked.

**Sec. 14. Commitment to Provide and Promote the Creation of Employment Opportunities.** – The Grantee shall create employment opportunities and accept on-the-job trainees in its franchise operations: *Provided*, That priority shall be accorded to the residents of the place where the principal office of the Grantee is located: *Provided, further*, That the Grantee shall comply with the applicable labor standards and allowance entitlement under existing labor laws, rules and regulations, and similar issuances.

The employment opportunities or jobs created shall be reflected in the General Information Sheet (GIS) to be submitted to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) annually.

**SEC. 15. Reportorial Requirement.** – The Grantee shall submit an annual report on its compliance with the terms and conditions of the franchise and on its operations to the Congress of the Philippines, through the Committee on Legislative Franchises of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Public Services of the Senate, on or before April 30 of every year during the term of its franchise.

The annual report shall include an update on the commencement of activities, development, operation, and expansion of business; audited financial statements; latest GIS officially submitted to the SEC, if applicable; certification of the NTC on the status of its permits and operations; and an update on the dispersal of ownership undertaking, if applicable.

The reportorial compliance certificate issued by Congress shall be required before any application for permit or certificate is accepted by the NTC.

**SEC. 16. Fine.** – Failure of the Grantee to submit the requisite annual report to Congress shall be penalized with a fine in the amount of One million pesos (P1,000,000.00) for each working day of noncompliance, the effectivity of which shall commence upon applicability with other telecommunications franchise grantees: *Provided*, That in the interim, the Grantee shall be liable to pay the fine of Five hundred
pesos (P500.00) per working day of noncompliance to the NTC. The fine shall be
collected separately from the reportorial penalties imposed by the NTC, and it shall be
remitted to the Bureau of the Treasury.

SEC. 17. Equality of Treatment in the Telecommunications Industry. – Any
advantage, favor, privilege, exemption, or immunity granted under existing franchises,
or which may hereafter be granted for telecommunications, upon prior review and
approval of Congress, shall become part of this franchise and shall be accorded
immediately and unconditionally to the herein Grantee: Provided, That the foregoing
shall neither apply to nor affect the provisions of telecommunications franchises
concerning territorial coverage, the term, or the type of service authorized by the
franchise.

SEC. 18. Repealability and Nonexclusivity Clause. – This franchise shall be
subject to amendment, alteration, or repeal by Congress when the public interest so
requires and shall not be interpreted as an exclusive grant of the privilege herein
provided for.

SEC. 19. Separability Clause. – If any of the sections or provisions of this Act
is held invalid, all other provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid.

SEC. 20. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, orders, resolutions,
instructions, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof which are
inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified
accordingly.

SEC. 21. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,
FACT SHEET

House Bill No. 10193
In substitution of House Bill No. 9071
(As approved on ______________)

AN ACT
GRANTING LINKSERVE TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORK, INC. A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE, AND MAINTAIN TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS THROUGHOUT THE PHILIPPINES

Introduced by: HON. ENRICO A. PINEDA
Co- Authors: CONRADO M. ESTRELLA III, DEOGRACIAS VICTOR "DV" B. SAVELLANO, JOSEPH STEPHEN S. PADUANO, XAVIER JESUS D. ROMUALDO, JESUS "BONG" C. SUNTAY, FAUSTINO MICHAEL CARLOS T. DY III, LUIS "JON JON" FERRER IV, JERICHO JONAS B. NOGRALES, SHARON S. GARIN, JOHN MARVIN “YUL SERVO” C. NIETO, EMMARIE “LOLYPOP” M. QUANO-DIZON, MICAELA S. VIOLAGO, ANTHONY PETER “ONYX” D. CRISOLOGO, and ESMAEL G. MANGUDADATU

Committee Referral: LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISES
Committee Chairperson: HON. FRANZ E. ALVAREZ

OBJECTIVE:

• To allow LINKSERVE TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORK, INC. to operate efficient and effective telecommunications services nationwide.

KEY PROVISIONS:

• Grants LINKSERVE TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORK, INC. a franchise to construct, install, establish, operate, and maintain telecommunications systems for twenty-five (25) years;

• Prohibits the Grantee to lease, transfer, sell, grant the usufruct or assign the franchise, rights or privileges, or its controlling interest without the prior approval of Congress;

• Mandates the Grantee to secure the appropriate permits and licenses for the construction, installation and operation of its telecommunications systems or facilities from the NTC;

• Allows the Grantee to make excavations or lay conduits for the purpose of erecting and maintaining poles, with the obligation to repair and replace in workmanlike manner any public place, road, highway, street, lane, alley, avenue, sidewalk, or bridge that has been disturbed, altered or changed by reason of erection of poles or other supports or the underground laying of wires;

• Mandates the Grantee to conform to the ethics of honest enterprise, operate its facilities in a satisfactory manner at all times, and to extend its services in
compliance with Republic Act No. 10639 or the “Free Mobile Disaster Alerts Act”;

- Gives the President of the Philippines the right to temporarily take over and operate the stations or facilities of the Grantee, to temporarily suspend the operation of any station or facility in the interest of public safety, security and public welfare, or to authorize the temporary use and operation thereof by any agency of the government in times of war, rebellion, public peril, calamity, emergency, disaster or disturbance of peace and order;

- Provides that the national and local governments shall not be held liable for any damage to properties or injury to persons caused by accidents during construction or operation of the stations;

- Requires the Grantee to offer to Filipino citizens at least thirty per cent (30%) of its outstanding stock in any security exchange in the Philippines or through other methods of encouraging public participation by citizens and corporations operating public utilities as allowed by law;

- Requires the Grantee to create employment opportunities and allow on-the-job trainings in their franchise operation for residents of the place where any of its offices is located subject to applicable labor standards and allowance entitlement under existing labor laws, rules and regulations and similar issuances;

- Requires the Grantee to submit an annual report to Congress on its compliance with the terms and conditions of the franchise and its operation on or before April 30 of every year;

- Imposes a fine in the amount of One million pesos (P1,000,000.00) per working day of noncompliance with the reportorial requirement of Congress, the effectivity of which shall commence upon applicability with other telecommunications franchise grantees, and provided that in the interim, the Grantee shall be liable to pay the fine of Five hundred pesos (P500.00) per working day of noncompliance; and

- Provides an equality clause which aims to grant existing and potential franchise grantees equal privilege/s.

RELATED LAWS:

- Republic Act No. 7925 – “AN ACT TO PROMOTE AND GOVERN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHILIPPINE TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES”

- Republic Act No. 10639 - “Free Mobile Disaster Alerts Act”

- Republic Act 11202 – “Mobile Number Portability Act”