

Designing an Implementable National Land Use Act for the Philippines: An Expert Legal, Planning, and Institutional Analysis of the Proposed National Land Use Act Bills

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ABSTRACT

Philippine land-use governance remains fragmented due to overlapping laws, sectoral policies, local planning systems, and regulatory frameworks. This study evaluates the proposed National Land Use Act (NLUA) measures in the Twentieth Congress by examining their alignment with Republic Act No. 12145, Republic Act No. 10587, existing sectoral laws, and interdisciplinary evidence. Using a qualitative multi-method documentary design, the study employed doctrinal legal analysis, comparative review of legislative proposals, thematic analysis of committee records, literature review, and SWOT-TOWS analysis. A Legislative Fitness Framework was used to assess legal coherence, spatial integration, institutional coordination, rights protection, professional accountability, and implementation capacity. Findings show that while the proposed bills share a common goal of integrated land-use governance, significant amendments are needed before enactment. Major gaps include unclear institutional arrangements, uncertain legal hierarchy of plans, weak integration of environmental risk considerations, incomplete protection of critical land systems and vulnerable sectors, limited operationalization of professional accountability, and inadequate mechanisms for funding, monitoring, and enforcement. The study concludes that a comprehensive NLUA should strengthen national coordination while respecting existing sectoral authorities, local governance, environmental regulations, and professional standards. It recommends a risk-informed, rights-based, and adaptive land-use framework that links planning decisions with investments, permits, and monitoring systems. House Bill No. 8466 may serve as a legislative foundation if supported by amendments that establish a coherent and implementable national land-use governance system.

Keywords: *National Land Use Act; environmental planning; Land-use governance; Legislative fitness; Decision-chain integrity*

INTRODUCTION

Philippine land-use governance rests on an extensive body of constitutional provisions and sectoral statutes covering public lands, agrarian reform, agriculture, Indigenous Peoples, protected areas, forests, water, fisheries, minerals, environmental assessment, climate and disaster risk, housing, infrastructure, and professional environmental planning. The central problem is not the absence of regulation but the absence of an integrated, enforceable framework connecting these mandates: sectoral laws create extensive authority without a unified plan hierarchy,

consistent categories, interoperable data, or effective conflict-resolution mechanisms among agencies, LGUs, landowners, developers, farmers, and Indigenous communities.

The reviewed measures are Senate Bill Nos. 144, 152, 287, 400, 569, 774, 987, 1137, 1144, and 2293, together with House Bill No. 8466 — the only measure approved by either chamber as of the 26 August 2026 cutoff, passed by the House on 5 May 2026 and received by the Senate the next day. On 14 August 2026, the Senate Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change, jointly with the Committee on Finance, held a public hearing on the nine pending Senate bills, taking HB 8466 into

consideration; the hearing established broad support in principle without approving a substitute bill.

Prior Philippine scholarship already establishes that the country lacks an integrated, enforceable national land-use framework and that agricultural conversion, ecological degradation, hazard exposure, and uneven local implementation interact spatially. The unresolved gap is the present legislative design problem: earlier analyses predate the Twentieth Congress measures or do not compare all eleven bills at section level, and must now be evaluated against RA 12145, which established the National Land Use Committee, against RA 10587, the controlling professional-regulation law for environmental planning, and against the 14 August 2026 committee record. The study's original contribution is a section-specific comparison of the eleven bills, a post-RA 12145 legal baseline, integration of RA 10587 into public-planning institutional design, and a resulting amendment matrix, model clauses, and implementation architecture organized around decision-chain integrity and regulatory non-substitution.

How should the proposed National Land Use Act be designed to establish an integrated, rights-based, risk-informed, professionally accountable, and enforceable system of land-use governance reconciling national priorities, local autonomy, sectoral mandates, environmental protection, food security, social justice, and sustainable development? Ten specific research questions operationalize this inquiry: the controlling legal framework; the governance gaps justifying enactment; section-level convergence and conflict among the eleven bills across institutions, plan hierarchy, classification, conversion, ancestral domains, settlements and hazards, climate adaptation, spatial data, participation, enforcement, funding, and RA 10587 accountability; the committee deliberations; supporting research; comparative lessons; the legislation's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; and the amendments PIEP should recommend.

The general objective is to develop evidence-based, legally sound, institutionally workable recommendations for the proposed Act, determining which provisions should be retained, harmonized, clarified, strengthened, or rejected rather than assuming any bill should be adopted as filed — treating the Act as a problem of legal design, spatial governance, and institutional coordination, not merely legislative advocacy. It is significant to Congress, whose committee report or substitute bill

can draw on the section-specific comparison; to national agencies whose mandates would interact with the framework; to LGUs, whose planning authority and fiscal capacity the statute would affect; to PIEP, which requires a research-based legislative position; and to the agricultural, Indigenous, coastal, and hazard-exposed communities whose statutory protections the bills would modify.

The research is a qualitative, multi-method documentary design — doctrinal legal analysis, structured comparison of the pending bills, thematic analysis of the Senate committee record, a critical integrative literature review, and SWOT/TOWS analyses — integrated through the six-dimension Legislative Fitness Framework. It conducts no interviews, surveys, or original geospatial analysis, evaluating whether the proposed provisions are legally coherent, institutionally compatible, rights-sensitive, professionally accountable, and implementable rather than estimating measured effects of an unenacted statute. Chapter 2 sets out the methodology; Chapter 3 the legal baseline; Chapter 4 the literature review; Chapter 5 the comparative legislative results; Chapter 6 the committee-record analysis; Chapter 7 the integrated findings; Chapter 8 the SWOT/TOWS analysis; Chapter 9 the PIEP position and model provisions; and Chapter 10 the conclusions and limitations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nature and Method of the Review

The review asks what legal, institutional, ecological, economic, and planning arrangements are necessary for an equitable, sustainable, climate-resilient, implementable land-use governance system, disaggregated into ecological-tenure-market interactions, causes of fragmentation, the implementation baseline, evidence on conversion and hazard exposure, and standards for evaluating the bills. It uses a critical integrative review combined with doctrinal and comparative policy analysis (Snyder, 2019; Whittemore & Knafl, 2005), covering over one hundred sources through 26 August 2026, strongest on institutional fragmentation, conversion risk, and hazard-sensitive planning.

Land as a Social-Ecological System

Land-use governance rests on land as a coupled social-ecological system, not discrete parcels; transformations result from interacting resource, economic, policy, and institutional conditions, with ecological consequences feeding back into later

decisions (Lambin et al., 2003). Ostrom's (2009) framework rejects any presumption that central government or local self-organization alone guarantees sustainability. Cash et al. (2006) and Young (2002) show governance fails through cross-scale mismatch, favoring structured subsidiarity over unmanaged polycentricity (Ostrom, 2010). The FAO's Voluntary Guidelines link secure tenure to food security (Committee on World Food Security, 2012); UN-Habitat requires functional, spatial, and institutional integration (2015).

Fragmentation and the Implementation Gap

Institutional plurality is not itself dysfunctional; fragmentation arises when relationships among horizontal, vertical, and temporal authorities remain undefined. The 2017 Philippines Urbanization Review found only about one-third of Philippine urban areas exceeding 100,000 population contained within one jurisdiction, versus roughly 60 percent elsewhere in East Asia (World Bank, 2017). Navarro (2023) linked misgovernance to the absence of a harmonizing framework; DHSUD data as of July 2023 showed 41 percent of CLUPs updated, 55 percent outdated, and 4 percent absent, BARMM excluded. Matland's (1995) ambiguity-conflict model and Wu et al.'s (2015) capacity framework explain uneven implementation; RA 12145 now establishes DEPDev and a statutory National Land Use Committee as the revised baseline.

Agricultural Conversion and Food Security

Food security under the FAO framework requires availability, access, utilization, and stability, not domestic self-sufficiency alone (FAO, 2003; FAO, 2024). Araza et al. (2026) detected 10,397 hectares of cropland converted to built-up use between 2003 and 2019, 3,228 hectares (31 percent) inside NPAAAD-mapped areas, concentrated in Central Luzon and Mindanao. Ministerio et al. (2026) modeled rice self-sufficiency through 2050 under annual conversion scenarios of 1, 2, and 4 percent. Section 20 of the Local Government Code sets reclassification ceilings of 15, 10, and 5 percent; RA 9700 bars conversion of irrigated and irrigable land. DA Circular No. 32 lifted the 2026 moratorium on June 30, 2026.

Ecosystem Connectivity and Protection

The IPBES (2019) Global Assessment identifies land- and sea-use change as the driver with the largest impact on terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems; the Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2024–2040 names habitat fragmentation and climate change as major threats (Biodiversity Management Bureau, 2025). RA 11038 authorizes NIPAS buffer

zones, yet Correa Ayram et al. (2016), reviewing 162 connectivity studies, show protection requires corridors beyond park boundaries. Quiros et al. (2017) found terrestrial land use more strongly associated with seagrass condition than marine-protected-area status; Long et al. (2014) estimated Philippine mangrove area decreased 10.5 percent between 1990 and 2010, and Galerio and Pardillo (2026) recorded only seven taxa across three Davao del Sur sites.

Hazard-Sensitive Land-Use Planning

The IPCC (2022) frames disaster risk as arising from interactions among hazards, exposure, and vulnerability; UNDRR (2022) treats land-use policy as a primary risk-prevention instrument, while GeoRiskPH cautions that some HazardHunterPH layers remain unvalidated. Asis and Pardillo (2026) surveyed 300 of 1,350 households across six coastal barangays in Lebak, finding coastal flooding the most likely hazard; Requillas and Abante (2026) assessed 95 MSMEs in Albay's Quinali "A" Watershed. Burby (2006) described the "safe development paradox," Hino et al. (2017) reviewed 27 managed-retreat cases affecting about 1.3 million people, Geneletti et al. (2017) found smaller Italian projects excluded from full EIA accounted for forty percent of aggregate land take, and Abante (2021) found fourteen of twenty-five Albay resettlement sites in adverse conditions.

Settlements, Housing, and Infrastructure

RA 7279 requires affordable housing tied to services, employment access, and infrastructure, not mere dwelling production. The Philippine Statistics Authority (2022) reported 58.93 million people (54.0 percent) living in urban barangays in 2020, 7.20 million more than in 2015. The World Bank's (2017) Urbanization Review framed urban challenges as density, distance, and division. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1991) identifies seven elements of housing adequacy; RA 10884 requires socialized housing equal to at least 15 percent of subdivision area or 5 percent of condominium area. Duranton and Turner (2011) found added road capacity induces roughly proportional additional travel, and Felizarta and Pardillo (2026) could not establish that road width caused congestion.

Production Land and Extractive Industries

Article XII, section 2 of the Constitution places natural resources under State ownership, upheld in *La Bugal-B'laan Tribal Association, Inc. v. Ramos* (2004) without declaring mining superior to competing uses. RA 7942 closes specified

ecologically critical areas to mining and requires Indigenous consent before ancestral land is opened. Villar v. Alltech Contractors, Inc. (2021) confirmed an ECC is not an implementation permit. Ang et al. (2021) traced land-cover change in a mining landscape from 1994 to 2018; Daipan et al. (2023) found only 25 of 100 identified papers met biodiversity-review criteria. The IMF's (2026) assessment identifies fragmented land governance as an obstacle to renewable-energy development, and Pojadas and Abundo (2022) demonstrated siting trade-offs in Bohol.

Ancestral Domains and Indigenous Rights

RA 8371 (IPRA) defines ancestral domains broadly under section 3(a) and distinguishes native title, held since time immemorial, from government-granted title under section 3(l); section 55 presumes undelineated domains communally held. In Cruz v. Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources (2000), a seven-to-seven split left IPRA's constitutionality unresolved but the statute in force. McMurry (2022) found communal land titling increased Indigenous self-identification; Robles (2018) found Bauko's ADSDPP was not fully integrated into its CLUP due to limited representation. Schuster et al. (2019) found Indigenous-managed lands in Australia, Brazil, and Canada supported biodiversity comparable to protected areas, and Apostol et al. (2024) documented conflicting mapping systems in Itogon.

Land Administration & Institutional Architecture

Philippine land administration remains fragmented across DENR, LRA, DAR, and NCIP; the Land Administration and Management Projects showed digitized cadastral records could not overcome persistent institutional fragmentation (World Bank, 2015, 2017). NAMRIA (2022) traces the Philippine Geoportal, or "One Nation One Map," to 2011. RA 12145 (2025) reorganized NEDA into DEPDev and created a statutory National Land Use Committee with a 30-year National Framework for Physical Planning, reviewable every ten years. Pimentel, Jr. v. Aguirre (2000) distinguished supervision from control, while Magtajas v. Pryce Properties Corp. (1994) held local ordinances cannot contravene national statutes. RA 10587 requires plans to bear the seal of a licensed environmental planner exercising actual responsible charge.

Participation and Integrative Synthesis

Article II, section 28 and Article III, section 7 of the Constitution establish disclosure and information-access rights that Rio Principle 10 and UNEP's Bali

Guidelines link to participation and remedies (2015). Existing CLUP guidance requires a seven-day public exhibition before hearing, though RA 8371, section 59 confirms consultation cannot substitute for free, prior, and informed consent. RA 8749, section 41 authorizes citizen suits, reinforced by the Rules of Procedure for Environmental Cases and Oposa v. Factoran (1993). Synthesizing sixteen findings across six Legislative Fitness dimensions, the review concludes that persistent land-use conflict stems from fragmented mandates and regulatory substitution, requiring an auditable decision chain.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The research employed a qualitative, multi-method documentary design suited to a prospective legal and institutional evaluation of proposed legislation, permitting systematic examination of legal texts, legislative materials, official records, and published studies while preserving their different evidentiary functions (Bowen, 2009). Five methods were applied and integrated only after their respective findings had been established: doctrinal legal analysis; structured bill comparison; thematic analysis of the committee record; a critical integrative literature review; and SWOT/TOWS analyses. The design was evaluative rather than predictive, assessing legal coherence, institutional compatibility, rights-sensitivity, professional accountability, and implementability without estimating the causal effect of an unenacted statute.

Materials and temporal scope

The legal analysis covered the Constitution, statutes, executive issuances, administrative regulations, professional rules, and jurisprudence governing land classification, property, agrarian reform, local government, ancestral domains, protected areas, forests, fisheries, water, minerals, environmental assessment, housing, infrastructure, climate and disaster risk, and environmental planning. The comparative analysis covered the ten Senate bills and HB 8466, the latter already approved by the House on 5 May 2026 and received by the Senate on 6 May while the Senate measures remained pending. Legislative status and wording were fixed to 26 August 2026; later developments require a separately dated assessment. The committee analysis covered the 207-page stenographic record of the 14 August 2026 hearing.

Doctrinal legal analysis

For each issue, the analysis identified the character and hierarchy of the rule, the object regulated, the factual or legal trigger, the competent decision-maker, the prescribed procedure, the evidentiary standard, the legal effect, and available remedies. Constitutional provisions and statutes controlled over inconsistent administrative guidance; jurisprudence was used for the propositions actually decided within each case's factual limits; and later, more specific rules were harmonized with earlier, general rules whenever their texts permitted. The analysis distinguished planning from classification, reclassification, conversion, consent, environmental assessment, licensing, and adjudication, and did not infer repeal from broad language when provisions could reasonably operate cumulatively.

Comparative legislative analysis

The eleven bills were aligned by regulatory function rather than section number alone, covering policy, plan hierarchy, institutions, land-use categories, sectoral rules, participation, information systems, professional responsibility, implementation, financing, and enforcement. Provisions were classified as textually identical, substantially similar, functionally equivalent, complementary, divergent, conflicting, or obsolete; similarity was not equated with desirability, and a provision repeated across bills remained defective if it conflicted with controlling law or omitted an indispensable safeguard. HB 8466 was treated as the procedurally advanced vehicle, but provisions from any measure were selected according to legal coherence, substantive adequacy, and institutional fit.

Committee-record analysis

The hearing record was analyzed thematically following qualitative thematic-analysis principles (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Initial themes derived from the research questions; additional themes emerged from recurrent issues. Statements were classified by speaker capacity and by whether they expressed an official position, factual assertion, legal assertion, or apparent convergence; a statement did not establish an institution's position unless the transcript showed authorized capacity. Project-specific allegations in the Pax Silica and Chuangxing discussions identified governance risks such as fragmented permitting and weak enforcement, without adjudicating the truth or legal consequences of the contested facts.

Review of related literature and studies

A critical integrative review was used because the legislative problem spans legal scholarship, institutional theory, quantitative and qualitative

research, geospatial studies, and technical standards that cannot be combined into a single statistical estimate (Snyder, 2019; Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). Sources were selected when they explained a relevant mechanism, reported empirical findings, established a recognized standard, or supplied evidence bearing on institutional design, and excluded when their connection was incidental or their methods indeterminate. Quantitative findings were not generalized beyond their samples; geospatial studies were interpreted within their resolution limits; and scenario studies were treated as conditional projections rather than forecasts.

Analytical framework and determination rule

The Legislative Fitness Framework organized the evaluation under six dimensions — constitutional and legal coherence; substantive spatial integration; institutional fit and multilevel coordination; rights and procedural legitimacy; information and professional integrity; and implementation and adaptive capacity — applying two cross-cutting principles: decision-chain integrity, requiring each material decision to retain its lawful trigger, competent authority, evidence, procedure, and legal effect; and regulatory non-substitution, preventing a plan, map, or certification from performing a legal function assigned to another authority. Each provision received one of four determinations — satisfied; substantially satisfied; partially satisfied requiring amendment; or not satisfied because of a critical defect — rather than a weighted score, since a composite could conceal a decisive defect behind stronger performance elsewhere. Where evidence was incomplete, the study used a bounded determination rather than false precision (Levitt et al., 2018; O'Brien et al., 2014; Tracy, 2010).

SWOT, TOWS, and ethics

The unit of analysis for SWOT and TOWS was the proposed National Land Use Act as a legislative and administrative system: strengths and weaknesses are attributes of the bills' statutory design, while opportunities and threats are external political, institutional, and economic conditions affecting enactment, implementation, and long-term effectiveness. TOWS converted diagnostic factors into strategic alternatives by matching strengths and weaknesses with opportunities and threats (Wehrich, 1982), and each resulting strategy was legally constrained: excluded if it depended on an unconstitutional allocation of power, diminution of protected rights, regulatory substitution, scientifically indefensible classification, or unlicensed environmental-planning work contrary to

RA 10587. Five legislative and institutional alternatives were evaluated against legal validity, rights protection, institutional fit, feasibility, fiscal requirements, equity, and evidentiary strength; the preferred alternative was distinguished across pre-enactment, transition, operational-consolidation, and long-term review horizons, tested for consistency with the Legislative Fitness Framework, and paired with contingency responses for material political, fiscal, and legal uncertainties. No numerical weights were assigned, since the record supplied no common cardinal scale; factors were instead prioritized qualitatively by constitutional significance, effects on life, health, food security, and ecosystems, and likelihood and reversibility of harm. The research relied on public legal and scholarly materials, involving no interviews, surveys, or personal data; its conclusions remain conditional and bounded to the evidence available as of the research cutoff.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Doctrinal and Institutional Baseline

Constitutional framework and police power

The 1987 Constitution does not expressly mandate a National Land Use Act, but Article XII, section 9 authorizes continuing, integrated national-development programs after consultation with agencies, the private sector, and local governments, and Article II, section 16's right to a balanced ecology was recognized in *Oposa v. Factoran*, G.R. No. 101083, July 30, 1993. Article XII, sections 2-4 confine alienation to agricultural public lands and preserve forestland, mineral-land, and national-park as distinct constitutional classes; section 6 recognizes property's social function, and Article III, sections 1 and 9 require due process and just compensation. Land-use regulation is principally police power, valid only where the regulated subject bears a real relationship to public welfare and the method is not oppressive; a restriction that appropriates ownership or leaves no viable use functions as a regulatory taking, as in *City Government of Quezon City v. Judge Erieta*, G.R. No. L-34915, June 24, 1983, which invalidated a compelled cemetery-land donation.

Public domain, forestlands, and protected areas

Article XII, section 2 vests ownership of public-domain lands in the State and permits alienation only of agricultural public land. Commonwealth Act No. 141 vests classification of public lands in the President upon departmental recommendation (section 6); in *Secretary of DENR v. Yap*, G.R. No. 167707, October 8, 2008, the Court held unclassified

public land does not become alienable merely through occupation. PD No. 705 defines alienable land as public land declared not needed for forest purposes (section 3); *Heirs of Amunategui v. Director of Forestry*, G.R. Nos. L-27873 and L-30035, November 29, 1983, held forestland does not lose its classification despite loss of forest cover. RA 7586 established NIPAS, later expanded by RA 11038, under which protected-area boundaries may be modified only by Congress and mineral extraction is prohibited within protected areas.

Agricultural land, reclassification, and conversion

RA 6657 defines agricultural land as land devoted to agricultural activity and not classified as mineral, forest, residential, commercial, or industrial, and RA 8435 delineates Strategic Agriculture and Fisheries Development Zones. LGC section 20 (RA 7160) permits reclassification by ordinance where the DA finds land no longer economically feasible for agriculture, subject to ceilings of fifteen, ten, or five percent, extendable only by the President. Reclassification is not conversion: in *Ros v. Department of Agrarian Reform*, G.R. No. 132477, August 31, 2005, the Court held local reclassification after June 15, 1988 does not remove land from DAR's conversion jurisdiction under EO No. 129-A and RA 6657 section 65, as amended by RA 9700 section 22, which bars conversion of irrigated land and causes automatic CARP coverage where an approved conversion plan is not implemented within five years.

Decentralization and the reconstituted planning system

Article X, sections 2-4 limit the President to general supervision, not control, over local governments, as applied in *Pimentel v. Aguirre*, G.R. No. 132988, July 19, 2000. RA 7160 empowers the sanggunian, under sections 447 and 458, to adopt a comprehensive land use plan, reclassify land under section 20, and enact zoning ordinances as delegated police power, confirmed in *Social Justice Society v. Atienza*, G.R. No. 156052, February 13, 2008, while RA 11201 transferred HLURB's planning functions to DHSUD. RA 12145, enacted 2025, reorganized NEDA into DEPDev and, under section 33, statutorily established the National Land Use Committee — composed of the heads of DA, DAR, DEPDev, DENR, DHSUD, DILG, and DPWH, the Executive Secretary, and a Union of Local Authorities representative — requiring a thirty-year National Framework for Physical Planning reviewed every ten years.

Ancestral domains and free, prior, informed consent

Article XII, section 5 directs the State to protect Indigenous Cultural Communities' rights to ancestral lands, while RA 8371 (IPRA) defines ancestral domains broadly to include lands, waters, and resources traditionally occupied (section 3[a]), and defines native title as pre-conquest ownership held since time immemorial, confirmed but not created by a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (sections 3[I] and 11), as in *Cariño v. Insular Government of the Philippine Islands*, 212 U.S. 449 (1909). Section 59 bars agencies from issuing concessions, licenses, or leases without prior NCIP certification of no ancestral-domain overlap, requiring free, prior, and informed written consent where overlap exists; RA 7942, sections 16-17, bars opening ancestral lands to mining without Indigenous consent and requires royalties held in trust. RA 12145's section 33 National Land Use Committee does not include the NCIP among its statutory members.

RA 10587 and professional accountability

RA 10587, the Environmental Planning Act of 2013, defines environmental planning under section 4(a) as the multidisciplinary analysis, harmonization, and regulation of land and water resources, with section 5 extending that scope across the planning cycle. Section 14 requires a Certificate of Registration and Professional Identification Card; section 31 makes unlicensed practice unlawful; section 26 requires a professional seal on plans prepared or directly supervised by the registered planner. Section 34 directs the CSC to set qualification standards and voids contrary appointments; CSC Memorandum Circular No. 10, series of 2017, required RA 1080 planner eligibility for the RA 7160 section 476 planning-coordinator position. Section 35 permits civil liability for grossly negligent planning within ten years of implementation; section 36 imposes penal liability; and section 32 designates PIEP the accredited professional organization.

EIA, climate, and disaster-risk mainstreaming

PD No. 1586 establishes the Philippine EIS System, prohibiting environmentally critical projects from proceeding without an ECC. DENR-EMB Memorandum Circular No. 2014-005 classifies an ordinary family dwelling and a stand-alone housing project of one hectare or less as Category D, with larger projects requiring an IEE Checklist or EIS. In *Villar v. Alltech Contractors, Inc.*, G.R. No. 208702, May 11, 2021, the Court held an ECC is not a permit to implement a project and cannot cure inconsistency with a land-use plan or absence of tenure. RA 9729 requires climate mainstreaming, with LGUs as frontline agencies; RA 10121 requires disaster-risk-reduction mainstreaming into land-use planning; and

RA 11038 requires CLUPs to harmonize with protected-area plans, examined in *Resident Marine Mammals of the Protected Seascape Tañon Strait v. Reyes*, G.R. Nos. 180771 and 181527, April 21, 2015.

Settlements, housing, and water-coastal governance

Article XIII, sections 9-10 mandate a continuing urban land-reform program and prohibit eviction of poor dwellers except in accordance with law. RA 7279 requires triennial land inventories and, under section 28, eviction safeguards including at least 30 days' notice and adequate relocation. RA 12216, section 15, requires the National Housing Authority to preserve IPRA- and agrarian-protected lands during calamity. PD No. 1067's Water Code imposes public-use easements of three meters in urban, twenty in agricultural, and forty in forest areas along riverbanks. RA 8550 reserves municipal waters extending fifteen kilometers from the coastline for municipal fisherfolk. EO No. 74 governs reclamation approval, and in *Chavez v. Public Estates Authority*, G.R. No. 133250, July 9, 2002, the Court held reclaimed submerged land remains inalienable absent official classification.

Infrastructure, energy, and institutional enforcement

RA 12145, sections 5, 15, and 29, directs DEPDev to consolidate sectoral infrastructure master plans through the Infrastructure Development Committee, while sections 25 and 33 give NLUC monitoring and DOJ-escalation functions. RA 12289 amended the Right-of-Way Act. RA 7942, section 16, prohibits opening ancestral land to mining without Indigenous consent, sustained in *La Bugal-B'laan Tribal Association, Inc. v. Ramos*, G.R. No. 127882, December 1, 2004. RA 7916 requires PEZA zones to coordinate with local land-use bodies, and in *Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas v. Aurora Pacific Economic Zone and Freeport Authority*, G.R. Nos. 198688 and 208282, November 24, 2020, the Court reiterated DAR retains conversion authority despite reclassification. RA 11201, section 15, gives HSAC exclusive appellate jurisdiction over local planning decisions; Local Government Code section 287 requires LGUs to appropriate at least twenty percent of their tax allotment for development.

Comparative Legislative Analysis of the Eleven Bills

Comparative posture

The comparative analysis covers eleven measures from the Twentieth Congress: SB Nos. 144, 152, 287, 400, 569, 774, 987, 1137, 1144, and 2293, together with HB 8466. The 14 August 2026 hearing called SB

144, 152, 287, 400, 569, 774, 987, 1137, and 1144 and took HB 8466 into consideration, but SB 2293 was not on the agenda; its provisions are compared in the text but not attributed to the hearing. HB 8466 is the only measure approved by either chamber: it passed third reading in the House on 5 May 2026, was received by the Senate the next day, and was reported under House Committee Report No. 157 — the most procedurally advanced text, though not yet controlling law.

Institutional families

RA 12145, enacted 10 April 2025, reorganized NEDA into DEPDev and reconstituted the NEDA Board as the ED Council; section 25 recognizes the National Land Use Committee as an ED Council committee, with section 33 specifying composition. The eleven measures fall into two families: an autonomous National Land Use Commission under the Office of the President — SB 152 §18, SB 287 §14, SB 400 §14, SB 987 §15, SB 1144 §14, and HB 8466 §18 — and a council-centered mechanism — SB 144 §14, SB 774 §14, SB 1137 §14, and SB 2293 §18 create a Land Use Policy Council, while SB 569 §§55-65 uses a more elaborate multilevel board. SB 2293's long title claims a Commission while section 18 actually creates a Council.

Convergence and textual lineages

Comparison reveals five textual families: a council-based legacy framework shared by SB 144 and 1137; a commission-based core shared by SB 287, 400, 987, and 1144; an expanded commission-and-office framework shared by SB 152 and HB 8466; an ED Council framework shared by SB 774 and 2293; and an integrated land-and-water framework unique to SB 569. SB 287 and 400 follow substantially the same structure from planning through penalties, and SB 144 and 1137 form another corresponding pair. The most consequential opposition is between a Land Use Policy Council embedded in the ED Council and an independent Commission under the Office of the President; a consolidated measure must choose one as the ultimate policy authority.

Operative planning framework

Every bill adopts four functional categories — protection, production, settlements, and infrastructure — in SB 144 §13; SB 152 §17; SB 287 and 400 §13; SB 569 §6; SB 774 §13; SB 987 §14; SB 1137 and 1144 §13; SB 2293 §17; and HB 8466 §17. SB 152, 287, 400, 569, 987, and 1144 and HB 8466 expressly exclude protection areas from multiple-use zoning, while SB 144, 774, 1137, and 2293 do not. The most consequential disagreement is the automatic CARP-exclusion language in SB 287

§23, SB 400 §23, and SB 1144 §22, under which CLUP-zoned residential land ceases to be covered by CARP and requires no DAR conversion order; these provisions should not be carried into the consolidated bill.

Agricultural reclassification clauses

Seven bills share the same reclassification structure: SB 287 §46; SB 400 §46; SB 774 §44; SB 1144 §45; SB 2293 §56; SB 152 §54; and HB 8466 §49. In each, CLUP-designated housing land is declared not subject to further LGU reclassification or DAR conversion, and agricultural land no longer economically feasible may be reclassified or converted to housing use, exempted from any conversion moratorium. SB 287, 400, 774, 1144, and 2293 require neither DA certification nor a watershed qualification. SB 152 §54 adds a watershed qualification but no DA certification. HB 8466 §49 adds both — the only one of the seven restoring DA certification for non-feasibility.

Hazard-exemption clauses

The most serious safety defect concerns settlements in hazardous areas. SB 287 §44; SB 400 §44; SB 774 §42; SB 1144 §43; and SB 2293 §54 declare CLUP-designated residential zones outside geohazard areas, exempting housing projects from ECC and EGGAR requirements and any further DENR certificate. SB 152 §49 and HB 8466 §44 correctly state that residential designation does not place land outside a hazard area and limit their ECC/EGGAR language to projects of one hectare or less, matching current PEISS Category D treatment but with broader exemption language; SB 152 §52 and HB 8466 §47 separately require new developments in geohazard areas to submit an ECC and EGGAR, an internal conflict unresolved. SB 569 §37 adopts the clearest precautionary approach, prohibiting new settlements in geohazard and danger zones while assisting existing communities.

Other sectoral interfaces

Among sectoral interfaces, SB 152 §10; SB 569 §§14-16; SB 987 §§12, 36-38; SB 2293 §10; and HB 8466 §10 expressly recognize ancestral-domain plans; the remaining bills rely on general consultation clauses. SB 569 §§17-23 supplies the most developed forest framework, and §§24-30 the most developed coastal treatment. On minerals, SB 152 §42 closes natural forests, watersheds, mangroves, and mossy forests to mining but allows periodic reclassification; SB 569 §32 closes watershed and ADSDPP-protected areas more strictly; and SB 2293 §50 appears to prohibit mining wherever an OCT, TCT, CADT,

emancipation patent, or CLOA exists, substantially altering RA 7942 section 18 if not expressly intended.

Institutional architecture

Section 33 of RA 12145 already creates the National Land Use Committee within the ED Council, chaired by the DEPDev Secretary and composed of the Executive Secretary, the Secretaries of DA, DAR, DENR, DHSUD, DILG, and DPWH, and a Union of Local Authorities representative. An independent Commission under the Office of the President is nevertheless proposed in SB 152 §18 and HB 8466 §18. On membership, SB 152 §19 and HB 8466 §19 include only the chair, selected secretaries, the NCIP Chairperson, and one league representative, whereas SB 144 §15 adds urban-poor, peasant, fisherfolk, and Indigenous representation, and SB 569 §56 provides eight basic-sector seats. SB 2293 §19 grants two seats to private developers without a seat for the accredited professional organization of environmental planners.

Professional responsibility

RA 10587 governs much of the mandated work: section 5 includes plan preparation within environmental-planning practice; sections 26 and 30 require the professional seal on plans under direct planner supervision; section 31 prohibits unlicensed practice; section 34 requires planning qualifications for relevant positions; and section 35 establishes civil liability for negligent planning. Most bills do not operationalize these requirements. SB 144 §14 is problematic because it assigns the proposed Council powers "vested by law" in HSAC, even though RA 11201 confined HSAC to adjudication and transferred planning functions to DHSUD. The one-year harmonization period in several bills is treated as insufficient, and a phased transition of twelve, eighteen, twenty-four, and thirty-six months is proposed instead.

Comparative synthesis. No single bill is suitable for adoption without amendment. HB 8466 is the most practical vehicle, having passed the House, but requires deletion of its independent-commission structure, its §44 one-hectare exemption, its automatic displacement of DAR conversion, and imprecise amendments to RA 8435 and 7160. Five groups of provisions cannot simply be combined: an independent commission against the statutory NLUC under RA 12145; DAR conversion jurisdiction against clauses exempting CLUP-designated residential land; risk-based settlement policy against the geohazard fictions and one-hectare provisions; NIPAS, IPRA, the Fisheries Code, the Water Code, and the Mining Act against any displacing designation; and RA 10587 against unsupervised

technical planning. The recommended base draws planning hierarchy from HB 8466 and SB 152, and participatory governance and hazard precaution from SB 569.

Legislative-fitness results

The comparison yields six framework-level determinations. Constitutional and legal coherence is not satisfied without amendment, given commission-or-council models unreconciled with RA 12145. Substantive spatial integration and rights/participation are each partially satisfied but require material amendment. Institutional fit is not satisfied for unreconciled models, though conditionally satisfiable through consolidation. Information and professional integrity is not satisfied without express RA 10587 and data-governance provisions, and implementation capacity remains partially satisfied pending a comprehensive architecture. No filed bill receives an overall finding of legislative fitness, yet the shared policy core justifies consolidation rather than abandonment. Several defects are noncompensable — unlawful jurisdictional displacement, deprivation of rights, unlicensed regulated practice, and indefensible hazard exemption — and HB 8466 is confirmed as procedurally advanced, not substantively preferred.

Committee Record Findings

Nature of the record

The principal source is the 207-page transcript of the 14 August 2026 joint hearing of the Senate Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change and the Committee on Finance, convened 10:12 a.m. to 3:05 p.m. with a midday suspension. Its agenda combined SB 144, 152, 287, 400, 569, 774, 987, 1137, and 1144, with HB 8466, on the National Land Use Act; Senate Resolution Nos. 547 and 571 on the Pax Silica Initiative; and a privilege speech on alleged violations by Chuangxing Steel Corporation in Magalang, Pampanga.

Executive summary of findings

The hearing showed overwhelming support in principle without consensus on final text: DEPDev, DA, DILG, OCD, NCIP, ULAP, DOTr, NAPC, the Campaign for Land Use Policy Now, the Joint Foreign Chambers, DENR, and LRA all supported enactment or its general objective. DEPDev identified broad convergence among the nine Senate bills and recommended harmonization of remaining differences (Senate Committee Transcript, 2026, pp. 193-195).

Thematic triangulation of evidence

Triangulated against the eleven bills, the legal framework, and the literature, the transcript revealed

agreement on the problems but far less on legal mechanisms. Automatic-conversion clauses in SB 287 §46, SB 400 §46, SB 774 §44, SB 1144 §45, SB 2293 §56, and HB 8466 §49 let CLUP residential designation dispense with DAR conversion despite near-universal support for protecting farmland. OCD's disaster-risk position likewise conflicted with the bills declaring CLUP-designated residential areas outside geohazard areas.

Material silences identified

Despite DEPDev's extensive participation, the transcript contains no detailed discussion of the National Land Use Commission already established by RA 12145 §33, leaving the commission-versus-council question unresolved. RA 10587 was not addressed at all — no participant discussed responsible charge, professional-seal requirements, or disciplinary accountability. The hearing did not clarify the legal effect of plan approval, nor confront the hazard-exemption clauses, the DAR-conversion clauses, fiscal feasibility, remedies and judicial review, or BARMM coordination.

Committee and framework findings

The record supports ten findings: necessity for a National Land Use Act is broadly established, but consensus is normative rather than textual, and no consolidated substitute bill was approved. The Chuangxing discussion demonstrates implementation failure rather than absent planning law; the Pax Silica discussion demonstrates the need for anticipatory, cumulative planning. Stronger national coordination does not justify eliminating local planning authority, and RA 10587 must be affirmatively incorporated.

Concluding assessment

The hearing created substantial political momentum and a persuasive public-interest case for national land-use legislation, supplying concrete examples of fragmented planning, poorly sequenced decisions, and weak enforcement. It did not complete the technical work necessary for enactment: consolidation is supportable only if the substitute bill undergoes section-by-section legal review, fiscal analysis, and stakeholder validation, with urgency accelerating rather than displacing that work.

Determination Under the Six Legislative Fitness Dimensions

Constitutional and legal coherence

The integrated discussion's first finding is that the proposed Act cannot be treated as a legal tabula rasa: the Philippines already regulates public-domain classification, agrarian reform, ancestral domains, protected areas, environmental assessment, and

professional planning, so the legislative problem is the absence of express relationships among authorities affecting the same territory. This confirms that institutional plurality becomes dysfunctional when mandates, hierarchy, and conflict-resolution procedures are undefined. The ECC-CNC-EGGAR and reclassification-conversion provisions illustrate this: a residential designation cannot establish geohazard safety, and local reclassification cannot operate as post-CARP DAR conversion. Because RA 12145 already created the NLUC, an overlapping commission without express reconciliation would contradict the Act's own integration objective.

Substantive spatial integration

The four categories of protection, production, settlements, and infrastructure supply a shared vocabulary, but cannot alone govern a territory with overlapping legal, ecological, and hazard attributes, so the results support overlays and conditional-use rules rather than exclusive categories. Agricultural, protected-area, hazard, and tenure overlays should inform suitability without automatically adjudicating ownership. The hazard provisions illustrate a noncompensable failure: several bills treat residential zoning as proof of safety, substituting a planning label for physical evidence. The one-hectare provisions convert a regulator-administered screening result into an absolute statutory exemption, omitting safeguards against segmentation. The blanket clauses should be deleted and the one-hectare clauses replaced by a saving rule.

Institutional fit and participation

The evidence rejects both unlimited centralization and effectively optional national policy: LGUs possess constitutionally important planning functions, while national institutions possess responsibilities for rights, cross-boundary systems, and uniform standards. The NLUC should perform policy, coordination, and monitoring functions without absorbing the adjudicatory powers of DAR, NCIP, protected-area bodies, the Bangsamoro Government, LGUs, or courts. The bills establish mandatory consultation, and the CLUP framework already operationalizes participation locally; the committee allegations indicate an implementation problem rather than a formal absence of participation. Because FPIC cannot be replaced by a council seat, the NLUA should codify a no-regression minimum while preserving stronger procedures.

Information integrity and implementation

A national spatial-data infrastructure must identify the custodian, date, scale, accuracy, and correction procedure, and planning maps should not be

represented as cadastral adjudications or conclusive proof of rights. Because RA 10587 governs environmental-planning functions, the Act should require every covered plan to be prepared under the responsible charge of a duly licensed environmental planner, without transferring legislative adoption, permit approval, or adjudication to that profession. The record shows planning failure is often a broken implementation chain: the Chuangxing discussion illustrates fragmented permitting and weak enforcement, while Pax Silica illustrates the need to assess cumulative demands before entrenched expectations form. The Act should connect plans to budgets, permits, monitoring, and review.

Adjudication of the propositions

The six evaluative propositions were adjudicated as supported, qualified, contradicted, or unresolved by the record rather than statistically tested; all six received support, though Propositions 2, 4, 5, and 6 contain empirical questions for subsequent field and geospatial study. Ostrom's frameworks explain why the Act must govern action situations rather than stop at plan production; Young's theory explains that the central post-RA 12145 issue is institutional fit amid interplay among existing laws; and Matland's model explains why vague provisions are especially risky given high distributive conflict in land-use decisions. Together the theories support regulatory non-substitution as a study-specific principle, and the record supports urgent legislation while rejecting enactment without a coherent amendment package.

SWOT and TOWS Strategic Analysis

Analytical framework

As described in the methodology (Chapter 2), the SWOT unit of analysis was the proposed Act as a legislative and administrative system, with TOWS converting diagnostic factors into strategic alternatives under the same legal constraints and qualitative, unweighted prioritization. Strategic actions span four horizons: H0, legislative consolidation; H1, transition through thirty-six months; H2, operational consolidation in years four-five; and H3, adaptive review in years six-ten.

Principal strengths

The bills share a mature common policy architecture — national-to-local planning objectives, a four-category structure distinguishing protection, production, settlements, and infrastructure, and institutional mechanisms capable of consolidation without restarting policy design. Substantial provisions on agricultural lands, forests, watersheds, and geohazards supply an environmental and food-security foundation, while mapping, monitoring, and

plan-investment mechanisms distinguish the proposals from aspirational declarations. Most critical defects are concentrated in identifiable institutional, saving, exemption, conversion, professional, and enforcement provisions correctable without abandoning that common framework.

Principal weaknesses

W1, institutional duplication, arises because an independent commission would overlap the statutory NLUC under RA 12145 unless Congress expressly restructures it. W2, uncertain legal effect, arises because the bills move from plan designation to consequences for classification, conversion, or rights without defining the transition. W3 contains two hazard defects: blanket clauses treat residential designation as proof of safety and remove ECC/EGGAR safeguards, while one-hectare clauses convert a regulator screening result into a fixed exemption. W4 would let residential designation eliminate LGU reclassification or DAR conversion safeguards, W6 leaves professional responsibility for plans unidentified, and W10's weak fiscal and transition design, including a one-year harmonization period, would reward superficial document production over capacity-building.

Opportunities and threats

Legislative momentum (O1) exists because the House has approved HB 8466, multiple Senate bills are pending, and government and stakeholder groups support enactment in principle, while existing platforms under RA 11201, RA 12145, DHSUD, DEPDev, the ED Council, and the RDC structure (O2) can be strengthened rather than recreated. Corresponding threats include regulatory capture and land speculation (T1), unequal LGU capacity (T3), litigation against overbroad provisions (T5), compliance reduced to checklist participation (T9), and corruption or selective enforcement (T11).

Strategic conclusion

Five alternatives were evaluated against legal validity, institutional fit, feasibility, fiscal requirements, equity, and evidentiary strength: enacting an existing bill unchanged, a comprehensively amended consolidated substitute, a framework-first measure deferring safeguards, administrative strengthening pending legislation, and indefinite deferral. Only the comprehensively amended substitute passes the legal threshold, retained as preferred subject to a consistency test confirming it can satisfy all six Legislative Fitness dimensions, paired with contingency responses for delayed enactment, inadequate appropriations, major disasters, litigation, and credible allegations of

capture across the H0-H3 horizons. Six strategic priorities follow: correcting the bill by resolving W1-W6; building upon RA 12145; protection-first, rights-aware planning; making plans operational and adaptive; professionalizing implementation; and funding and measuring outcomes rather than counting plans. The Act's weaknesses remain threshold legal defects — institutional duplication, unsafe hazard provisions, and conversion bypasses — that the preferred strategy is conditioned on correcting, supporting qualified urgent enactment rather than unconditional endorsement or indefinite deferral.

Legislative Recommendations and Model Statutory Provisions

Recommended PIEP position

The study recommends that PIEP support the immediate enactment of a National Land Use Act as an essential framework for equitable, resilient, professionally accountable spatial development, subject to amendments ensuring consistency with RA 12145, full implementation of RA 10587, protection of agricultural and environmentally critical lands, recognition of Indigenous and Bangsamoro rights, deletion of the hazard fiction and blanket exemptions, replacement of one-hectare clauses with a saving rule, meaningful participation, spatial-data governance, adequate funding, and effective enforcement. PIEP should adopt qualified support with nonnegotiable amendments, offering technical assistance without displacing the functions of Congress, government agencies, or PRC.

Prioritized amendment matrix

The study organizes recommended amendments into three priority tiers. Priority 1, required before committee approval, includes reconciling the institution with RA 12145 section 33 (R1); inserting a legal-effect and saving clause (R2); deleting the hazard legal fiction (R3); preserving regulator-determined ECC/CNC/EGGAR coverage by deleting blanket exemptions and replacing one-hectare clauses with a saving rule (R4); and preserving the agricultural conversion framework (R5), among six further amendments (R6-R10) covering RA 10587, repealing clauses, and mining reversion. Priority 2 addresses NLUC membership balance, BARMM coordination, and phased transition (R11-R24). Priority 3 covers sector-specific matters — agriculture, ADSDPPs, NIPAS, coastal zones, mining, hazards, and housing (R25-R36).

Consolidated institutional architecture

The study recommends a consolidated architecture assigning distinct functions to institutions suited to

perform them. The President and ED Council provide whole-of-government direction; a strengthened NLUC under RA 12145 sets national spatial policy and resolves conflicts; a permanent NLUC Secretariat within DEPDev provides technical and professional support through duly licensed environmental planners; specialized RDC committees handle regional integration; a national spatial-data infrastructure maintains authoritative datasets; the Local Development Council performs participatory policy formulation; the local planning office performs environmental-planning functions under responsible charge; the sanggunian democratically adopts the CLUP; and implementing offices handle permitting and enforcement. The architecture avoids transferring all authority to either a national commission or an LGU.

Recommended legislative sequence

The study recommends a thirteen-step sequence: circulate a comparative issue matrix to resource persons; obtain written positions from DAR, DEPDev, DHSUD, DILG, DENR, DA, NCIP, OCD, NAMRIA, BARMM, and PRC; convene a technical working group with balanced representation; resolve the institutional structure before revising sectoral chapters; delete the hazard and automatic-conversion provisions; harmonize sectoral provisions with controlling laws; prepare a fiscal implementation assessment; draft the substitute bill; publish for stakeholder comment; prepare a response-to-comments report; conduct a legal review; report the bill for committee approval; and retain the amendment matrix as part of the legislative history.

Recommended PIEP engagement

The study recommends that PIEP submit proposed statutory language implementing RA 10587, identify minimum technical standards for plan preparation, recommend qualification standards for planning personnel, provide planners for technical working groups and consultations, propose professional-development modules, assist in designing outcome indicators, and document professional concerns regarding unsafe or legally inconsistent clauses. PIEP should not seek exclusive control over multidisciplinary planning; its position should recognize the roles of engineers, architects, geologists, lawyers, economists, Indigenous knowledge holders, and affected communities, while ensuring environmental-planning work remains professionally accountable and consistent with RA 10587.

Proposed model provisions

The study proposes model language for the Senate substitute bill: amending RA 12145 section 33 to strengthen the NLUC, chaired by the DEPDev Secretary with the DHSUD and DENR Secretaries as Vice Chairpersons and expanded membership; establishing a permanent National Land Use Secretariat within DEPDev headed by a registered planner with at least ten years' experience; requiring regulated environmental-planning work be performed only under actual responsible charge; a legal-effect and saving clause providing that plan approval establishes spatial conformity only, without dispensing with conversion, FPIC, or environmental requirements; minimum participation standards; agricultural protection preserving DAR jurisdiction; hazard classification into prohibited, restricted, and managed areas; ADSDPP-controlling ancestral-domain planning; and a National Land Use Planning Support Facility.

Technical working group resolution

The study recommends that PIEP propose a resolution directing that HB 8466 serve as the working legislative vehicle without presumption that its present provisions will be retained; that the TWG reconcile the measure with RA 12145 before considering a new commission; that DAR submit a position on conversion provisions; that DENR, MGB, PHIVOLCS, OCD, and DHSUD jointly review every hazard, ECC, and EGGAR provision; that PRC and the accredited professional organization submit proposed RA 10587 language; that NCIP review the ancestral-domain and FPIC provisions; and that the draft be published for comment before approval. Retaining the planning hierarchy without the legal-effect clause and professional safeguards would materially weaken the reform.

Implementation roadmap and accountability

The study recommends a phased implementation roadmap with periods proposed as statutory maximums, during which existing lawful plans continue to govern. Pre-enactment consolidation, led by the Senate committee, resolves the institutional interface before approval. Institutional mobilization, to month 6, is led by the President and DEPDev. Rulemaking, to month 12, is led by the NLUC. A national baseline and inventory, months 6-18, is conducted by the NLUC Secretariat. Priority-area harmonization, months 12-24, is led by concerned LGUs. General harmonization, months 18-36, links investment programs to adopted plans. Adaptive implementation, from month 36, involves annual monitoring, a five-year independent evaluation, and a ten-year statutory review.

Results framework and indicators

The study recommends a results framework distinguishing inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impacts, cautioning that staffing, funding, and completed plans do not by themselves prove that conversion has been controlled or hazard exposure reduced. National targets should not be invented before a verified baseline exists; within eighteen months the NLUC should publish baseline values and proposed targets for comment. The framework spans institutional readiness, professional accountability with full compliance where RA 10587 applies, agricultural protection with zero unlawful conversion as the standard, hazard resilience with zero new approvals in prohibited zones, ecosystem condition, housing accessibility, Indigenous rights, and complaint performance under RA 11032 Citizen's Charter standards, protected against gaming.

Statute versus implementing rules

The study recommends that Congress place essential rights, jurisdictional boundaries, prohibitions, remedies, appropriations, and accountability in the Act itself rather than delegating them to implementing rules, which risks administrative dilution; operational details may be assigned to the IRR only within intelligible statutory standards. Matters that must appear in the Act include institutional architecture and the RA 12145 conforming amendment; plan hierarchy and legal effect; RA 10587 professional responsibility; agricultural protection; hazard classification preserving PEISS, CNC, EGGAR, and MGB authority; ADSDPP, FPIC, and Bangsamoro coordination; participation minimums; data-governance duties; and enforcement standards. The IRR should be jointly prepared under NLUC leadership, subject to public consultation and legal review.

Consolidated PIEP recommendation

In sum, PIEP's support for a consolidated National Land Use Act, using HB 8466 as the current vehicle, is conditional on the Priority 1 amendments above — reconciling the NLUC under RA 12145, implementing RA 10587, deleting the hazard fiction and blanket exemptions, and replacing one-hectare clauses with a saving rule. PIEP should oppose enactment of text retaining these deficiencies, without advocating an ECC or EGGAR for every dwelling.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that enactment of a National Land Use Act is necessary, legally supportable, and institutionally feasible, but none of the eleven bills

should be enacted without substantial amendment. The measures share a mature policy core — land and water resources are finite, and LGUs need binding standards — yet contain provisions conflicting with institutional law and controlling special statutes. Six defects prevent unqualified support, chiefly independent-commission provisions unreconciled with the NLUC under RA 12145 §33 and insufficient operationalization of RA 10587. The evidence supports urgent enactment of a consolidated Act, using HB 8466 as the principal vehicle, subject to reconciliation with RA 12145, RA 10587, and controlling sectoral laws.

The central research question is answered as follows: Congress should enact a consolidated Act that strengthens the NLUC under RA 12145, defines the legal effect and hierarchy of plans, integrates authoritative spatial evidence and RA 10587 professional responsibility, links plans to investments and permits, and supplies funded, reviewable implementation; no filed bill contains that complete architecture. The bills contain a consolidatable policy core whose material conflicts concern institutions, plan effects, sectoral safeguards, and implementation; the committee record confirms support without constituting a substitute bill; and the SWOT/TOWS analysis supports conditional urgent enactment rather than unconditional endorsement or indefinite deferral.

The study's principal contribution is a post-RA 12145 legal baseline, a section-specific comparison of eleven bills, an integrated assessment of the committee record and published evidence, and a six-dimension Legislative Fitness Framework linked to noncompensable failures — reconstructing the current CLUP baseline and reconciling public planning authority with RA 10587 professional responsibility. Its applied contribution converts those findings into a consolidated institutional model, amendment priorities, model provisions, an implementation roadmap, and a proposed PIEP position, bridging scholarship, professional practice, and legislative design.

This is a prospective documentary and doctrinal assessment that does not measure the effects of an enacted Act, conduct interviews, or produce original geospatial analysis; its conclusions are limited to the legislative texts, committee transcript, and official records available by 26 August 2026, and committee statements are evidence of deliberation rather than proof of every factual allegation. A post-enactment research program should examine whether plans became legally aligned, whether agricultural conversion and hazard exposure changed relative to

verified baselines, and whether RA 10587 responsibility improved plan quality; the five-year independent evaluation proposed in section 9.6.19 should commission such research independent of the agencies being assessed.

Final statement. The Philippines does not principally lack land-use plans; it lacks an enforceable national chain connecting authoritative evidence, professionally accountable planning, democratic adoption, statutory rights, public investment, permitting, and remedies. A National Land Use Act can supply that chain only if Congress treats integration as a legal design problem and builds upon the existing system rather than creating one more plan or agency. The recommended substitute measure combines national direction with local responsibility, development with protection-first safeguards, and exclusive performance of regulated environmental-planning functions by duly licensed planners with public participation. Enacted without the indispensable amendments, including the professional-practice safeguards required by RA 10587, the proposed law could reproduce the fragmentation and diffusion of accountability it seeks to cure.

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