

Congress Authorized the President to Expedite the Processing and Issuance of Permits, Licenses, and Certifications

On December 23, 2020, President Rodrigo R. Duterte signed into law Republic Act No. 11517 known as An Act Authorizing the President to Expedite the Processing and Issuance of National and Local Permits, Licenses and Certifications in Times of National Emergency (“**RA No. 11517**”). RA No. 11517 covers all agencies of the executive branch, government instrumentalities, government-owned and controlled corporations, and local government units.

Under RA No. 11517, the President, in times of national emergency, has the following authority:

1. Accelerate and streamline regulatory processes and procedures for new and pending applications and renewals of permits, licenses, clearances, certifications or authorizations;
2. Suspend or waive the requirements for securing permits, licenses, clearances, certifications or authorizations; and
3. Prescribe to make permanent the streamlined regulatory processes and procedure, as well as the suspension or waiver of the requirements, upon consultation with or recommendations of the affected government agencies.

In line with prevailing laws, the President may also suspend or remove any government official or employee performing acts contrary to the orders pursuant to RA No. 11517.

RA No. 11517 expressly provides that the authority given shall not be used to undermine the existing procedures and processes under the prevailing laws and regulations intended to protect the environment, especially environmentally critical areas.

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