

QC court stops provincial bus ban

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A Quezon City court has suspended the implementation of the controversial policy of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) banning provincial buses along EDSA.

In a 25-page ruling dated July 31, Presiding Judge Caridad Walse Lutero of the **Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 223** issued a writ of preliminary injunction stopping the provincial bus ban.

Lutero said she found merit in the petitions filed by different transport groups and bus companies.

The court order effectively stopped the MMDA and Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) from implementing the bus ban.

Last week, the LTFRB modified the endpoint of provincial buses and prohibited them from passing through EDSA.

The MMDA has issued a memorandum circular, which revoked the business permits of bus terminals along EDSA.

The court imposed a bond of P1 million on the petitioners, composed of at least 16 provincial bus companies.

The court found that the circulars issued by the government agencies affect the property rights of the transport groups and bus firms.

“The order to close the bus terminals on EDSA has far-reaching effects,” the court said, noting that it would affect businesses, employees and other sectors.

There is no study that would prove that the presence of bus terminals on EDSA is worsening the traffic condition in the metropolis, the court said.

It described as “incorrect” the LTFRB’s conclusion that the provincial buses are the main reason for traffic in Metro Manila based on a report by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The LTFRB presented the JICA report during the hearing.

The court also raised questions whether provincial buses cause traffic jams, considering that a bus transports more passengers for the same space occupied on the road as opposed to three cars.

It also questioned why provincial buses are treated differently from P2P and city buses that are allowed to traverse EDSA.

The court granted the motion of the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) for extension to file a consolidated answer.

The OSG was given until Aug. 14 to file its comment.