

(H. B. 178)

(No. 18)

(Approved June 11, 2005)

AN ACT

To direct the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Public Structures and Highways Naming Commission, to name the tunnel network project, which shall connect the Municipality of Maunabo and the Municipality of Yauco, after Vicente Morales-Lebrón.

STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

The concept of constructing a tunnel as an alternative to connect the municipalities of Maunabo and Yauco began in 1956, due to the vision of Mr. Vicente Morales-Lebrón a *maunabeño* and civic leader. This idea arose after Tropical Storm Santa Clara which left the town of Maunabo incommunicated for one month, since the only means of communication existing at that time was Road PR3. Mr. Morales-Lebrón then indicated that a good alternative to solve such problem would be the construction of a tunnel that would communicate the Municipalities of Maunabo and Yabucoa.

Although his fellowmen thought it was a wild idea after sometime the concept was proclaimed by the people of Maunabo and became an idea supported by the community. Forty years later, and after the passing of its precursor, the Maunabo Development Committee was created, that concerned about the geographical and ecological isolation conditions, retook the concept conceived by Mr. Morales-Lebrón and submitted it for public

discussion as another feasible means of communication between these two sister cities.

The vision of this noble gentleman from Maunabo, has become a reality and at this time, it is not one tunnel, but several, which shall conned the Municipality of Maunabo with that of Yabucoa. These tunnels shall serve as buffers for the ecological damage that construction may cause, and at the same time shall avoid the extinction of the *Guajón* “coquí,” which lives in caves and caverns of the East region of Puerto Rico.

Concurrent Resolution No. 54 of March 9, 1998, introduced by the Hon. Ángel García-de Jesús, then Representative of District No. 34 (Yabucoa, Maunabo, Patillas, and Arroyo), expressed the support of the Legislature of Puerto Rico during the four-year term 1997-2000 to the construction of a tunnel between the Municipalities of Maunabo and Yabucoa.

The Legislature considered the construction favorable, since it not only is an innovative and necessary solution, but it will also become an added attraction.

For all of the above, the Legislature of Puerto Rico deems it meritorious to recognize the late Mr. Vicente Morales-Lebrón, for his vision and devotion, which provided the concept of a tunnel as an alternate communication means between the Municipalities of Maunabo and Yabucoa.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF PUERTO RICO:

Section 1.- The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Public Structures and Highways Naming Commission is hereby directed to name the tunnel network project which shall connect the Municipalities of Maunabo and Yabucoa after Vicente Morales-Lebrón.

Section 2.- The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Public Structures and Highways Naming Commission shall take the necessary steps to comply with the provisions of this Act without being subject to the provisions of Act No. 99 of June 22, 1961, as amended.

Section 3.- This Act shall take effect immediately after its approval.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify to the Secretary of State that the following Act No. 18 (H.B. 178) of the 1st Session of the 15th Legislature of Puerto Rico:

AN ACT to direct the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Public Structures and Highways Naming Commission, to name the tunnel network project, which shall connect the Municipality of Maunabo and the Municipality of Yauco, after Vicente Morales-Lebrón,

has been translated from Spanish to English and that the English version is correct.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, today 16th of December of 2005.

Francisco J. Domenech
Director