

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



Senate
Office of the Secretary

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SENATE

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S. B. No. **1937**

Introduced by Senator FRANCIS G. ESCUDERO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines' geographical location and physical environment make it susceptible to natural disasters that create threats to human lives and cause significant damage to properties. An average of 20 tropical storms and typhoons hit the country every year. Recently, the Philippines was razed by Yolanda, one of the strongest typhoons in world history.

To effectively and efficiently fulfill the mandate of Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) in providing protection against natural calamities and utilizing scientific knowledge as an effective instrument to insure the safety, well-being and economic security of all the people, and for promotion of national progress, this bill; seeking for modernization of PAGASA, is being filed.

As the front-liner in determining natural hazards that may hit the country, it is indispensable to provide the agency with up-to-date technology, proper equipment and operational techniques for it to greatly perform its function in giving accurate observation and forecasting of weather and other climatological conditions.

Along with the advancement of tools, this bill also proposes for a comprehensive human resource development plan which includes scholarships and trainings for qualified PAGASA personnel.

The modernization of physical resources of PAGASA as well as making its manpower equipped with trainings and advanced knowledge will help the government employ operative disaster preparedness measures and programs, mitigate the damage these natural hazards may cause to people's lives, properties, environment and economy, and make the Philippines more resilient during times of natural calamities.

FRANCIS G. ESCUDERO

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE MODERNIZATION OF THE PHILIPPINE
ATMOSPHERIC, GEOPHYSICAL AND ASTRONOMICAL SERVICES
ADMINISTRATION (PAGASA) AND PROVIDING FUNDS
THEREFOR

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

Section 1. Title. - This Act shall be known as the "**PAGASA Modernization Act.**"

Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is hereby declared, as a constitutional State policy, to give priority to science and technology, and promote and utilize scientific knowledge and information as an effective instrument against natural calamities. Toward this end, the State recognizes the indispensability to modernize and develop the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), and improve its technological and operational capacity for the efficient and effective performance of its mandate of securing life and property in times of disasters.

Sec. 3. Objectives. - The PAGASA modernization program shall have the following objectives:

- a) To upgrade physical resources and operational techniques through the use and acquisition of state-of-the-art instruments, equipment and facilities;
- b) To improve the capacity of providing timely and reliable forecasting, warning services, and information for agriculture, transportation, and other industries across the country;
- c) To elevate the level of research and development capability and human resource compensation and development, adopting a rationalized and integrated approach, with focus on improvement of operations for specialized services and cost recovery;
- d) To develop mechanisms for integrating disaster management and socio-economic development planning at the national and local levels;

e) To establish regional weather service centers in strategic areas across the country so as to broaden the agency's bases for delivery of services to the countryside; and

f) To provide greater public awareness and education of different weather systems and storm signals, and progress of typhoons, climatic changes and other related information.

Sec. 4. *Implementation Period.* - Recognizing the importance of time for the realization of the provisions of this Act, the Modernization Program under this Act shall be implemented the soonest possible time but not exceeding two (2) years. All contractual obligations incurred or entered into pursuant to this Act shall nonetheless be upheld and respected even beyond the said 2-year period.

Sec. 5. *Formulation and Submission of PAGASA Modernization Program.* - The Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the Administrator of PAGASA, in coordination with the Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and the Director-General of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), shall be responsible for formulating the PAGASA Modernization Program based on the policy objectives provided for in this Act within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act. They shall submit the PAGASA Modernization Program to the Office of the President for approval.

Sec. 6. *Human Resource Development.* - The PAGASA Modernization Program shall include a comprehensive human resource development plan, which shall include, among others, scholarships and trainings for qualified PAGASA personnel as may be determined in the formulation of the said Program.

Sec. 7. *Exemption from the Government Salary Standardization Law* - Officers and employees of PAGASA are hereby exempted from the operation of the Government Salary Standardization Law or Republic Act No. 6758, as amended.

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) in coordination with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and the Civil Service Commission (CSC) shall determine the appropriate compensation, as well as its effectivity, of PAGASA employees, which shall not be lower than 150 percent nor higher than 200 percent of their current salaries.

Sec. 8. *Appropriation, Creation of PAGASA Modernization Fund.* - The amount necessary to implement the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Moreover, there is hereby created the PAGASA Modernization Fund, which shall be used exclusively to finance the implementation of the PAGASA Modernization Program, and it shall come from the following fund sources:

a) Appropriation for the PAGASA Modernization Program of at least Five Billion Pesos (Php5,000,000,000.00);

b) A portion of the net income of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) to be taken from the fifty percent (50%) share of the National Government, which shall not be less than One Billion Pesos (Php1,000,000,000.00);

- c) Grants, bequests, and donations whether from local or foreign sources;
- d) Funds from budgetary surpluses, if any, as may be authorized by Congress; and
- e) All interest income of the trust fund.

The trust fund shall be administered by the Administrator of PAGASA in accordance with existing government auditing rules and regulations.

Sec. 9. *Progress Report.* -The Administrator of PAGASA shall prepare an annual report on the status of the implementation of the PAGASA Modernization Program. The annual report shall be submitted, through the DOST Secretary, to the President and both Houses of Congress.

Sec. 10. *Cost Recovery Measures.* - The PAGASA, with the approval of the DOST Secretary, shall implement a sustainable cost recovery program that will allow it to earn revenue from its issuance of specialized weather information, certifications, and scientific and technical publications for which the necessary fees can be charged. Provided, however, that no fees shall be charged on the issuance of regular and special reports to the general public that affect national safety, weather, and economy, and such other relevant data.

Sec. 11. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

Sec. 12. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, orders, proclamations, rules and regulations, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Sec. 13. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,