

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

04 JUL 29 P4 51

SENATE
S. B. NO. 1505

RECEIVED BY: _____

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Reliable and accessible information on the weather is essential for agricultural producers. It is an important factor in crop planning and management. The type of crop to be planted is mainly dependent on existing weather and climactic conditions. Certain types of crops are suitable only for the wet season and will not thrive during the dry season.

Accurate weather information is also significant in minimizing the losses caused by extreme changes in the weather condition. These weather disturbances usually occur unexpectedly. Every year, agricultural crops worth millions of pesos are lost/damaged by such unforeseen weather disturbances. These losses are caused by the lack or inadequacy of weather information that will enable agricultural producers to take the necessary precaution against natural calamities.

This bill seeks the establishment of an Agricultural Weather Office which shall be responsible for the collection and distribution of weather information that will address the needs of agricultural producers.


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
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SECRET
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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AGRICULTURE WEATHER OFFICE

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "National Agriculture Weather Information Act."

SECTION 2. *Definition of Terms.* - Whenever used in this Act, the term —

- (1) Secretary — means the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture;
- (2) Director — means the Director of the Agriculture Weather Office; and
- (3) Office — means the Agricultural Weather Office

SECTION 3. *Establishment of the Agriculture Weather Office.* -

- (1) Establishment required.

The Secretary of Agriculture shall establish within the Department of Agriculture an Agricultural Weather Office to plan and administer the National Agricultural Weather Information System. The System shall be comprised of the Office established under this section and the activities of the Regional Agricultural Weather Information Systems described in Section 8 of this Act.

- (2) Director.

The Secretary shall appoint a Director to manage the activities of the Agricultural Weather Office and to advise the Secretary on scientific and pragmatic coordination for climate, weather, and remote sensing.

SECTION 4. *Authority.* - The Secretary, acting through the Office, may undertake the following activities to carry out the provisions of this Act:

(1) Enter into cooperative projects with the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) and other related government agencies to —

(a) support operational weather forecasting and observation useful in agriculture;

(b) sponsor joint workshops to train agriculturalists about the optimum utilization of agricultural weather and climate data;

(c) jointly develop improved computer models and computing capacity; and

(d) enhance the quality and availability of weather and climate information needed by agriculturalists;

(2) Obtain standardized weather observation data collected in near real time through regional Agricultural Weather Information Systems;

(3) Make, through the Department of Science and Technology, competitive grants under Section 6 of this Act for research in atmospheric science and climatology;

(4) Make grants to eligible provinces under Section 8 of this Act to plan and administer Regional Agricultural Weather Information Systems;

(5) Coordinate the activities of the Office with the weather and climate research activities of the Department of Science and Technology;

(6) Encourage private sector participation in the National Agricultural Weather Information System through mutually beneficial cooperation with the private sector particularly in the generation of weather and climatic data useful for site-specific agricultural forecasting.

SECTION 5. *Weather Information Collection and Distribution to Agricultural Producers.* —

(1) As one of the cooperative projects authorized by Section 4 (1), the Secretary of Agriculture shall enter into an agreement with the Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) to use PAGASA's regional offices to collect, organize, and distribute information aimed at meeting the short-term and long-term weather and climate information needs of agricultural producers.

(2) Information collection – The Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Science and Technology shall jointly develop a system for the collection by the PAGASA of weather and climate information that is relevant to agricultural producers and available through the Agricultural Weather Office and other related agencies, regional agricultural weather information systems and other State programs, colleges and universities, and the private weather consulting sector.

(3) Methods of distribution – Weather and climate information collected under this section shall be distributed to agricultural producers through the use of –

(A) weekly publications containing weather forecasts and other information regarding anticipated temperatures and precipitation levels;

(B) toll-free and local telephone numbers that agricultural producers can call to obtain immediate information to assist with specific day-to-day production activities; and

(C) such other methods as the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Science and Technology consider to be appropriate to distribute such weather and climate information to agricultural producers in a timely manner.

(4) Report – Not later than one (1) year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Science and Technology shall jointly submit a report to Congress analyzing the effectiveness of the cooperative project required by subsection (1) of this Section, in providing relevant weather and climate information to agricultural producers. The report shall include a description of the number of agricultural producers who obtained weather information through the project and an estimate of whether the project improved farm profitability for participating producers.

SECTION 6. *Competitive Grants Program.* -

(1) Grants Authorized. With funds allocated to carry out this Act, the Secretary may make grants to State agricultural experiment stations, public/private colleges and universities other research institutions and organizations, private organizations and corporations, and individuals to carry out research in all aspects of atmosphere sciences and climatology that can be shown to be important in a basic and developmental way to understanding, forecasting and delivering agricultural weather information.

(2) Competitive basis. Grants made under this section shall be made on a competitive basis.

(3) Priority. In selecting among applications for grants under subsection (1) of this section, the Secretary shall give priority to proposals which emphasize —

(a) techniques and processes that relate to weather-induced agricultural losses, and to improving the advisory information on weather extremes such as drought, floods, and storms well in advance of their actual occurrence;

(b) the improvement of site-specific weather data collection and forecasting; or

(c) the impact of weather on economic and environmental costs in agricultural production.

SECTION 7. *National Advisory Board on Agricultural Weather.* —

(1) Establishment required. The Secretary of Agriculture shall establish an Advisory Board on Agricultural Weather (herein after referred to in this section as the "Board") to advise the Director of the Agricultural Weather Office with respect to carrying out the provisions of this Act.

(2) Composition. The Board shall be composed of nine (9) members, to be appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture in consultation with the Secretary of Science and Technology. Four (4) members shall come from the private sector, two (2) of whom shall be agricultural producers, and the other two (2), agricultural or atmospheric scientists.

(3) Chairperson. The Board shall elect a chairperson from among its members.

(4) Term. Each Board member shall be appointed for a three-year term, except that to ensure that members of the Board serve staggered terms, the Secretary shall appoint three (3) of the original members of the Board for a term of one (1) year and another three (3) of the original members for a term of two (2) years.

(5) Meetings. The Board shall meet not less than twice annually.

(6) Compensation. Members of the Board shall serve without compensation, but while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services for the Board, members of the Board shall be allowed travel expenses, including *per diem* allowance in lieu of subsistence, in the same manner as individuals employed in Government service are allowed travel expenses.

SECTION 8. *Regional Agricultural Weather Information Systems.* —

(1) Advisory program grants. (a) Grants required. With funds allocated to carry out this Act, the Secretary shall make grants to eligible provinces, each region (refers to the twelve (12) regions of the Philippines and the autonomous regions created by law) to be represented by one (1) province to plan and administer, in cooperation with persons described in the next paragraph, advisory programs for regional agricultural weather information systems.

(b) Persons described. The persons referred to in paragraph (A) are the Director of the Agricultural Weather Office, the Director of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services, and other persons as appropriate (such as the directors of the appropriate State agricultural experiment stations and State extension programs).

(2) Consultation. For purposes of selecting among applications submitted by provinces for grants under this section, the Secretary shall take into consideration the recommendation of the Advisory Board on Agricultural Weather and consult with the Director.

(3) Eligibility requirements. To be eligible to receive a grant under this Section, the chief executive officer of a province shall submit to the Secretary an application that contains

(a) assurances that the province will expend such grant to plan and administer a Regional Agricultural Weather System that will —

(i) collect observational weather data throughout the region and provide such data to the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration and the Agricultural Weather Office;

(ii) develop methods for packaging information received from the national system for use by agricultural producers with the PAGASA and the private sector to serve as the primary conduit of agricultural weather forecasts and climatic information to producers; and

(iii) develop programs to educate agricultural producers on how to best use weather and climate information to improve crop planning and management decision; and

(b) such other assurances and information as the Secretary may require by rule.

SECTION 9. *Appropriation.* - The amount of Twelve Thousand Pesos (P12, 000.00) is hereby appropriated to carry out the provisions of this Act. Subsequent appropriations for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 10. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision, or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 11. *Repealing Clause.* - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with, the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SECTION 12. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.