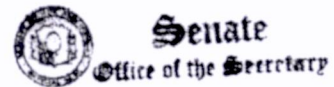


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
First Regular Session



20 JAN 20 P3:11

SENATE
S. No. 1275

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Ralph G. Recto

AN ACT
CREATING THE TAAL VOLCANO REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION, ESTABLISHING THE TAAL VOLCANO REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR THE PURPOSE OF EXTENDING AID, RELIEF, RESETTLEMENT, REHABILITATION, LIVELIHOOD, AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO COMMUNITIES ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY THE TAAL VOLCANO ERUPTION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The eruption of Taal Volcano that began on January 12, 2020 and has persisted until the present has impacted the lives and livelihood of hundreds of thousands of Filipinos, particularly Batangueños, in the country. Based on the most recent situation report of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), the Taal Volcano eruption has affected 50,599 families or 203,763 Filipinos, with 26,767 families or 104,377 individuals taking temporary shelter in 408 evacuation centers in CALABARZON Region, while another 17,391 families or 68,755 persons are being served outside evacuation centers. Enforcement of full and partial lockdowns in the municipalities of Agoncillo, Alitagtag, Balete, Cuenca, Laurel, Lemery, Malvar, San Nicolas, Sta Teresita, Taal, Talisay, Parts of Lipa City, Parts of Mataasnakahoy, and Parts of Tanauan City, however, is estimated to displace roughly half a million population in affected communities. It has caused power interruptions in 20 cities and municipalities, and has forced 264 local government units to declare suspension of classes. The eruption had also paralyzed the operation of Ninoy Aquino International Airport and Diosdado Macapagal International Airport for about three days, forcing airlines to cancel 383 domestic and 260 scheduled international flights. NDRRMC also

reported that the eruption affected thousands of hectares of agricultural lands and fishing areas, primarily in the province of Batangas, which caused an estimated three billion pesos' worth of agricultural damage incurred by farmers, livestock raisers and fishermen. These losses, however, only foreshadow the economic and financial costs of the eruption, particularly in terms of local tourism losses; reconstruction and rehabilitation requirements; and healthcare, evacuation and relief operations costs, which is expected to reach tens of billions of pesos.

This proposed measure seeks to strengthen the mechanisms of government to address the needs of families and communities affected by the eruption of Taal Volcano. It seeks to establish a Taal Volcano Rehabilitation and Development Fund, which allocates fifty billion pesos (P50,000,000,000) to provide immediate relief to affected individuals and families; establish resettlement centers, homesites and townsites for displaced families; provide livelihood and employment opportunities for local residents; construct, repair, rehabilitate, or reconstruct public infrastructure needed in the affected communities; and to adopt and implement other interventions that could expedite the return to normalcy in affected localities. The bill also allows Congress to increase this amount through a supplemental budget or through the annual general appropriations.

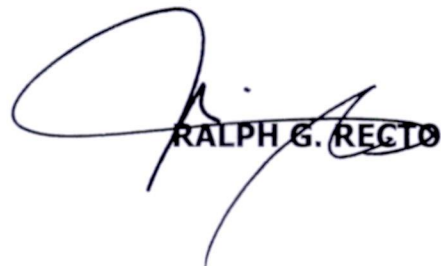
Additionally, the bill seeks to establish a Taal Rehabilitation and Development Commission to provide structure and direction in the utilization of the Taal Volcano Rehabilitation and Development Fund. The Taal Commission shall be comprised of five (5) members from the Cabinet; a Vice Chairperson and Executive Director; two (2) representatives from non-government and civil society organizations; and the Executive Director of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRMMC), and the Governors of the provinces of Batangas and Cavite as *ex-officio* members. The Taal Commission shall be mandated to prescribe the overall strategic framework in using the Taal Volcano Rehabilitation and Development Fund to address the needs of the affected communities; to spearhead the disaster relief and rehabilitation operations; and to identify, prioritize and implement priority programs and projects to provide aid, relief, resettlement, rehabilitation, livelihood and

development services to localities affected by the Taal Volcano eruption, among others.

Ultimately, this proposed measure seeks to hasten the recovery and sustain the economic development of communities affected by the eruption of Taal Volcano, with the hopes that the return to normalcy will aid not only in the economic prosperity of the Southern Tagalog Region, but of the entire country as well.

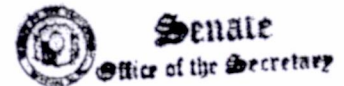
In light of the foregoing, immediate passage of the bill is earnestly sought.

/mdg



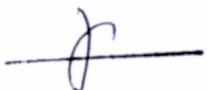
RALPH G. RECTO

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

1 Section 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "Taal Volcano Rehabilitation
2 and Development Act."

3 Section 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State
4 to extend assistance to individuals, families and communities in difficult circumstances
5 brought about by catastrophic meteorological, hydrological, and geological events.
6 Towards this end, the State shall provide programs and services to individuals and
7 communities affected by the Taal Volcano Eruption in 2020 and its aftermath to ensure
8 that the lives of individuals and communities in affected provinces, cities and
9 municipalities may return to normalcy at the earliest possible time and that the
10 economic gains and development in the affected localities are sustained and
11 accelerated.

12 Sec. 3. *Statement of Objectives.* – This Act is intended to provide assistance to
13 victims, and individuals and communities affected by the eruption of Taal Volcano and
14 its aftermath through the provision of funds for the immediate relief; establishment of
15 resettlement centers, homesites and townsites, particularly for those living within the

1 volcano's permanent danger zone; provision of livelihood and employment
2 opportunities; construction, repair, rehabilitation, or reconstruction of public
3 infrastructure; and the adoption and implementation of other interventions to expedite
4 the return to normalcy in affected localities.

5 The Taal Volcano Rehabilitation and Development Commission, created in
6 Section 6 of this Act, shall prioritize victims of the Taal Volcano eruption and its
7 aftermath in the provision of programs and services under this Act. The term "victims"
8 shall refer to the following:

9 (a) Individuals who perished or disappeared as a result of the Taal Volcano
10 eruption or its aftermath;

11 (b) Individuals who suffered death in the family as a result of the Taal
12 Volcano eruption or its aftermath;

13 (c) Individuals who were displaced or injured as a result of the Taal Volcano
14 and its aftermath;

15 (d) Individuals whose dwellings have been damaged, rendered
16 uninhabitable, or destroyed as a result of the Taal Volcano and its aftermath; and

17 (e) Individuals whose sources of livelihood have been permanently lost as a
18 result of the Taal Volcano and its aftermath.

19 Sec. 4. *Taal Volcano Rehabilitation and Development Fund.* – The Taal Volcano
20 Rehabilitation and Development Fund, hereinafter referred to as the Taal Fund, is
21 hereby created with a funding of Fifty Billion Pesos (P50,000,000,000) to carry out the
22 purposes of this Act. Donations and grants from foreign and domestic sources made
23 for the purpose of providing aid, relief and rehabilitation services in areas affected by
24 the eruption of Taal Volcano shall form part of the Taal Fund. The amount may be
25 augmented by appropriations from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and
26 Management Fund as provided in Republic Act No. 11260 and Republic Act No. 11465,
27 otherwise known as the General Appropriations Act for Fiscal Years 2019 and 2020,
28 respectively. In the subsequent years, Congress may increase the amount allocated
29 to the Taal Fund through a supplemental budget or through the annual general
30 appropriations.

31 Sec. 5. *Guidelines in Allocation and Utilization of the Taal Fund.* – The following
32 guidelines shall be observed in the utilization of the Taal Fund:

1 (a) The Taal Fund can be used to augment aid, relief, resettlement,
2 rehabilitation and livelihood programs and projects implemented by government
3 agencies concerned for the victims of the Taal Volcano eruption and its aftermath in
4 the affected communities: *Provided*, That any program or project charged against the
5 Taal Fund shall only be deemed complementary and supplementary to and shall not
6 be a replacement of any existing program, project or activity on disaster relief, risk
7 reduction and management already implemented by the government agencies
8 concerned, including local government units;

9 (b) The Taal Fund shall be used for infrastructure projects, including but not
10 limited to the construction, repair, rehabilitation, or reconstruction of resettlement
11 centers, homesites and townsites; roads and bridges; flood control, drainage, water
12 and irrigation systems; communication systems and power lines; hospitals; school
13 buildings; government offices; tourism facilities; public markets; and other similar
14 infrastructure and facilities;

15 (c) Aid, relief, resettlement, rehabilitation and livelihood services shall be
16 equitably extended to all victims of the Taal Volcano eruption and its aftermath,
17 irrespective of political or party affiliation, sex, creed, religious belief, or ethnic origin;

18 (d) Labor-intensive technology shall be used in the identification, selection
19 and implementation of programs and projects; and

20 (e) No money from the Taal Fund shall be released without prior identification
21 of programs and projects to be funded, nor shall it be used to settle obligations
22 incurred before the approval of this Act.

23 *Sec. 6. Taal Volcano Rehabilitation and Development Commission.* – The Taal
24 Volcano Rehabilitation and Development Commission, hereinafter referred to as the
25 Taal Commission, is hereby created to carry out interventions necessary for the
26 realization of the purposes of this Act.

27 The Taal Commission shall be organized within thirty (30) days after the
28 approval of this Act. It shall have a term of six (6) years from its organization:
29 *Provided*, That the President may, through the issuance of a proclamation within six
30 (6) months prior to the expiration of the term, extend the term once for not more than
31 a period of three (3) years. For the purpose of coordination and administration, the
32 Taal Commission shall be attached to the Office of the President.

1 Sec. 7. *Powers and Functions of the Taal Commission.* – To carry out its
2 objectives under this Act, the Taal Commission shall have the following powers and
3 functions:

4 (a) To prescribe the overall strategic framework in the utilization of the Taal
5 Fund as provided in Section 4 of this Act;

6 (b) To formulate policies and plans for the implementation of aid, relief,
7 resettlement, rehabilitation, livelihood, and development programs and services to
8 communities adversely affected by the eruption of Taal Volcano and its aftermath, in
9 harmony with the plans and policies of other agencies and instrumentalities of the
10 National Government;

11 (c) To make a determination of the areas to be prioritized to mitigate potential
12 damage to lives, habitation, infrastructure, agricultural and other resources;

13 (d) To identify, prioritize and coordinate the implementation of the various
14 programs and projects to be funded in accordance with Section 4 of this Act;

15 (e) To sue and be sued in its name, and to adopt, alter and use a seal;

16 (f) To enter into, make, perform and carry out contracts of every class, kind
17 and description which are necessary to the realization of its purposes with any
18 individual, firm or corporation, organization or association, private or public, subject
19 to the usual budgeting, accounting and auditing requirements: *Provided, That*
20 approval of contracts or agreements with foreign government entities shall require
21 prior consultation with and approval of the President;

22 (g) To apply for, receive and accept grants and donation of funds, equipment,
23 materials and services needed for the development of the affected localities from
24 domestic and foreign sources;

25 (h) To monitor the progress of the relief, resettlement, rehabilitation,
26 livelihood, and development efforts of the government in relation to the eruption of
27 Taal Volcano and its aftermath;

28 (i) To coordinate and consult with national government agencies, local
29 government units and non-government organizations concerned in the prioritization
30 of programs and projects;

31 (j) To call upon any department, office, instrumentality, agency, or any
32 political subdivision of the government for assistance, including the detail or

1 secondment of essential personnel, as may be necessary for the attainment of the
2 objectives of the Taal Commission; and

3 (k) To perform such other powers as may be necessary and proper to carry
4 out the purposes of this Act.

5 Sec. 8. *Composition of the Taal Commission.* – The Taal Commission shall be
6 composed of the following members:

7 (a) Secretary of Agriculture as *ex-officio* member;

8 (b) Secretary of Budget and Management as *ex-officio* member

9 (c) Secretary Labor and Employment as *ex-officio* member;

10 (d) Secretary of Housing and Urban Development as *ex-officio* member;

11 (e) Secretary of Public Works and Highways as *ex-officio* member;

12 (f) Vice-Chairperson and Executive Director to be appointed by the President;

13 (g) Two (2) members from non-government and civil society organizations
14 engaged in disaster relief and rehabilitation efforts to be appointed by the President;

15 (h) Executive Director of NDRRMC as *ex-officio* member;

16 (i) Governor of the Province of Batangas as *ex-officio* member; and

17 (j) Governor of the Province of Cavite as *ex-officio* member.

18 The President shall designate from among the *ex-officio* members of the Taal
19 Commission the Chairperson thereof. The Executive Director and members of the Taal
20 Commission shall serve for a term of six (6) years unless sooner terminated for cause
21 or further extended pursuant to Section 6 of this Act.

22 Sec. 9. *Powers and Responsibilities of the Executive Director.* – The Executive
23 Director of the Taal Commission shall have the following powers and functions:

24 (a) To execute and administer the policies and decisions of the Taal
25 Commission;

26 (b) To manage the day-to-day operation of the Taal Commission;

27 (c) To directly coordinate the activities of all agencies and instrumentalities of
28 the Government in the planning and implementation of projects in affected
29 communities;

30 (d) To monitor the programs and projects and evaluate the effects of
31 execution by these agencies and instrumentalities;

1 (e) To submit to the Taal Commission periodic reports relating to the
2 development of the affected communities; and

3 (f) To perform such other powers as may be necessary and proper to carry
4 out the purposes of this Act.

5 Sec. 10. *Implementation of Programs and Projects.* – The agencies of
6 government involved with the aid, relief, resettlement, rehabilitation and livelihood
7 services as well as infrastructure support shall be the implementing agencies of the
8 Taal Commission in accordance with existing laws, rules and regulations.

9 The survey, construction, repair, rehabilitation or reconstruction of public
10 infrastructure and facilities, and the provision of aid, relief, resettlement, rehabilitation
11 and livelihood services to individual beneficiaries may be undertaken by the
12 implementing government agencies concerned in accordance with the provisions of
13 Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform
14 Act."

15 The Taal Commission may also seek the assistance or engage the services of
16 private sector entities, non-government organizations, civil society organizations, and
17 other volunteer organizations in the implementation of priority programs and projects
18 as provided in Section 11 of this Act and in accordance with existing rules and
19 regulations.

20 Sec. 11 *Partnership with Private Sector Entities, Non-Government*
21 *Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, and Other Volunteer Organizations.* – To
22 tap the resources and expertise of the private sector, the Taal Commission is hereby
23 authorized to enter into cooperative agreements with private sector entities in the
24 implementation of relief, resettlement, rehabilitation, and livelihood programs and
25 projects in accordance with existing laws, rules and regulations.

26 The Taal Commission, in the implementation of relief, resettlement,
27 rehabilitation and livelihood programs and projects, may also seek the assistance of
28 or enter into agreements with non-government, civil society and other volunteer
29 organizations: *Provided, That* these organizations have proven track records in the
30 provision of relief, resettlement, rehabilitation and livelihood services in the country.

31 Sec. 12. *Preference for Locally-Available Manpower.* – Residents in the affected
32 communities, particularly the victims of Taal Volcano eruption, shall be given

1 preference in hiring or employment in the construction, repair, rehabilitation and
2 reconstruction projects as may be identified by the Taal Commission.

3 *Sec. 13. Report to Congress.* – The Taal Commission shall submit to Congress
4 a detailed quarterly report on the implementation of this Act, which includes, but is
5 not limited to the following information:

6 (a) Revenues that accrue to the Taal Fund, including the list of local and
7 foreign donors and the nature of their donation;

8 (b) Aid, relief, resettlement, rehabilitation and livelihood services funded
9 through the Taal Fund, including the amounts released, obligated and disbursed for
10 such services; the list of names of approved individual beneficiaries; the implementing
11 agency, private contractor, or partner organization that has undertaken the project;
12 and the evaluation of the effectiveness of the system used to deliver such services;
13 and

14 (c) Construction, repair, rehabilitation and reconstruction projects financed or
15 being financed by the Taal Fund, including the amounts released, obligated and
16 disbursed for such projects, the mode of procurement for such projects; the roster of
17 contractors; and the accomplishments for the expended appropriations, including the
18 percentage of completion.

19 *Sec. 14. Appropriations for the Taal Fund.* – The amount of Fifty Billion Pesos
20 (P50,000,000,000) is hereby appropriated from any available funds in the National
21 Treasury not otherwise appropriated. Such amount shall remain valid until the
22 dissolution of the Taal Commission.

23 The release and validity of the allotments from the Taal Fund shall be subject
24 to the specific guidelines and procedures as may be issued by the Department of
25 Budget and Management (DBM) upon consultation with the Taal Commission:
26 *Provided*, That the release of the said amount shall be programmed as follows:

27 (a) From the approval of this Act to December 31, 2020, the sum of Thirty
28 Billion Pesos (P30,000,000,000);

29 (b) For fiscal year 2021, the sum of Ten Billion Pesos (P10,000,000,000); and

30 (c) For fiscal year 2022, the sum of Ten Billion Pesos (P10,000,000,000).

31 *Provided*, That undisbursed amounts at the end of any fiscal year shall be carried over
32 to the succeeding fiscal year.

1 Sec. 15. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The President shall issue the
2 necessary implementing rules and regulations within thirty (30) days upon the
3 approval of this Act.

4 Sec. 16. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision, section or part of this Act shall
5 be declared unconstitutional or invalid, such judgment shall not affect, invalidate or
6 impair any other provisions, sections or parts hereof.

7 Sec. 17. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, acts, decrees, executive orders,
8 issuances, and rules and regulations or parts thereof which are contrary to and
9 inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

10 Sec. 18. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its
11 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation or in the *Official*
12 *Gazette*.

 Approved,