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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

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SENATE
S. No. 1298

RECEIVED BY: _____

Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE DESIGNATION OF COMMUNITY SHELTERS IN TIMES
OF NATURAL DISASTERS, CALAMITIES AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The eruption of Taal Volcano last January 12, 2020 caught the nation by surprise. In a span of less than a day, the alert level for the volcano rose from alert level 2 to 4. The ensuing phreatic eruption resulted in ash falls that enveloped large swaths of land in the immediate vicinity of Taal, covering the provinces of Batangas and Cavite. Volcanic ash was also reported to have reached even Metro Manila. With only a matter of hours of reaction time, affected families frantically searched for evacuation centers and shelters as refuge from the suffocating ash and dust. Some are left with no choice but to stay behind, clinging to their prized belongings, houses, crops and livestock.

Days have already passed and the volcano remains to be restive and the threat of a more stronger eruption still looms. As a result, many of the displaced communities are in limbo and are forced to stay in schools and other places that serve as evacuation centers. This, in turn, entails the disruption of classes in occupied schools and classrooms.

Unfortunately, the use of classrooms and school buildings as evacuation centers has become a norm in our country. Moreover, some of constituents are caught up in the confusion and lack of information on the areas where they can seek shelter in times of calamities, disasters and other emergencies.

This proposed measure aims to address these gaps in our disaster response system. Under this bill, the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (LDRRMC), in coordination with the Office of the City/Municipal Engineer or the Office of the Building Official, is hereby mandated to designate and establish as community shelters all suitable government buildings and spaces, including but not limited to, gymnasiums, convention centers, multi-purpose halls, covered courts, government warehouses, and other similar spacious structures. This also institutionalizes the policy that classrooms and school buildings shall only be designated as community shelters as a last resort, i.e. when it is conclusively determined by the LDRRMC that no other buildings or structures qualify as community shelters or that there is a lack thereof. Despite their designation as community shelters, classes must not be substantially disrupted. A list of designated community shelters in a city or municipality shall also be drawn up, including a master list for the provincial and the national level. This bill likewise provides for the responsibility of local government units and the national government in the dissemination of information regarding community centers.

In view of this, early passage of this bill is sought.



MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID
Senator



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

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as "Community Shelter Act".

2
3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared as the policy of the
4 government to strengthen and enhance the country's readiness and response
5 mechanisms for disasters and protect the welfare of displaced populations. Pursuant
6 to this, the government shall implement an effective and efficient system for the
7 designation of community shelters which shall serve as evacuation centers in times of
8 natural disasters, calamities and other emergencies.

9
10 Sec. 3. *Designation of Community Shelters.* – In all cities and municipalities,
11 the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (LDRRMC), in coordination
12 with the Office of the City/Municipal Engineer or the Office of the Building Official, is
13 hereby mandated to designate and establish as community shelters all suitable
14 government buildings and spaces, including but not limited to, gymnasiums,
15 convention centers, multi-purpose halls, covered courts, government warehouses, and
16 other similar spacious structures.

17

1 The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), in
2 consultation with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department
3 of Health, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and other relevant
4 government agencies, shall formulate the guidelines on what will be considered as
5 buildings and structures suitable for designation as community shelters.

6
7 *Sec. 4. Use of Classrooms and School Buildings as Community Shelters.* — The
8 designation of classrooms and school buildings shall only be done in the last resort,
9 when it is conclusively determined by the LDRRMC that no other buildings or structures
10 qualify as community shelters or that there is a lack thereof. If so designated, the
11 local government units shall adopt measures to ensure that its utilization as
12 community shelters shall not disrupt, or shall cause the least disruption, to the conduct
13 of classes. Designation of classrooms and school buildings as community shelters shall
14 be done in coordination with the Department of Education Schools Division exercising
15 jurisdiction over the affected schools. Pursuant to this, spaces and structures in school
16 not regularly or constantly used for the conduct of classes, such as school gyms,
17 auditoriums, audio-visual rooms, multi-purpose halls, open spaces in libraries,
18 laboratories and faculty rooms, etc., shall be prioritized for designation and utilization
19 as community shelters.

20
21 *Sec. 5. List of Community Shelters.* — The LDRRMC shall draw up a complete
22 list of designated community shelters within the locality under its jurisdiction. Such list
23 shall be submitted to the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council
24 and to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council. Master lists in
25 the provincial and national level shall then be drawn up. The list for every city or
26 municipality shall be made available to all barangays, neighborhood or homeowners
27 associations, building/condominium administrators, and other people's organizations.

28
29 *Sec. 6. Information Dissemination.* — The dissemination of information through
30 multiple communication channels concerning community shelters shall be the primary
31 responsibility of the city or municipal government where the calamity or emergency
32 occurs. In case of province-wide calamities or emergencies or those involving two or

1 more cities or municipalities within a province, information dissemination shall be the
2 responsibility of both the cities and/or municipalities concerned and the provincial
3 government.

4
5 When the above local governments are rendered incapacitated to adequately fulfill
6 this function, the national government shall intervene and undertake to perform the
7 same.

8
9 Information dissemination shall cover the entire period before, during and after the
10 calamity or emergency.

11
12 *Sec. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from the
13 effectivity of this Act, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council
14 (NDRRMC), in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways
15 (DPWH), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Social Welfare and
16 Development (DSWD) and other relevant government agencies shall issue the
17 necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

18
19 *Sec. 8. Repealing Clause.* — All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders,
20 proclamations, rules and regulations, or any part thereof, which are inconsistent with
21 the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

22
23 *Sec. 9. Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part of this Act, or the
24 application thereof to any person or circumstance, is held unconstitutional or invalid,
25 the remainder of this Act shall not be affected thereby.

26
27 *Sec. 10. Effectivity Clause.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from
28 its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general
29 circulation.

30
31 *Approved,*