

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



'22 JUL 25 P 2 :09

SENATE

S. No. 859

RECEIVED BY _____

Introduced by SENATOR RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

**AN ACT
REQUIRING DISASTER-RELATED INFORMATION TO BE STATED IN
ACCESSIBLE LANGUAGE TO ENSURE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING THEREOF
AND TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

More tropical cyclones are entering the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) than anywhere else in the world. An average of 20 tropical cyclones enter this region per year, with about 8 or 9 of them crossing the Philippines¹.

Typhoon Odette (international name: Rai) which ravaged the country in December 2021 left around 400 people dead and P24 billion damage in infrastructure and agriculture². It affected 3.2 million families, displaced 12,000 people and destroyed 400,000 houses³.

Countless lives and properties from disasters could have been saved if proper information is communicated and well understood. The general public could have prepared and evacuated if they were given adequate and useful information, in clear and vivid terms, as to the scale and impact of the upcoming calamity. In the same vein, peace and order could be maintained and social panic will be prevented which is usually caused by wrong and ambiguous information.

This proposed legislation seeks to protect public health and safety by making mandatory for all government agencies and local government units (LGUs) to

¹ <https://www.pagasa.dost.gov.ph/climate/tropical-cyclone-information>

² <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1535184/odette-leaves-p-24-5-b-damage-death-toll-hits-407>

³ https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/220427_OCHA%20PHL%20Typhoon%20Rai%20Situation%20Report%208.pdf

convert in an easily understandable form and translate to Filipino and any other appropriate regional languages or dialects all announcements and advisories relevant to disasters, including typhoons, floods and storm surges, volcanic activities, earthquakes, landslides, human-induced hazards and public health emergencies.

This bill has already been approved on Third and Final Reading by the House of Representatives during the Eighteenth Congress.

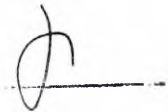
In this light, passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as "*Language Accessibility of*
2 *Public information on Disasters Act*"

3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The right of the people to information on matters
4 of public concern is recognized in our Constitution. Indeed, communication and
5 information occupy a vital role in nation-building. In times of disaster and other
6 emergencies, and to render meaningful and effective the right of the people to
7 information, it shall be ensured that announcements, advisories and similar public
8 communications are accessible in terms of the language or dialect used.

9 Sec. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

10 a) *Disaster* is a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a
11 society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental
12 losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or
13 society to cope using its own resources.

14 Disasters are often described as a result of the combination of the exposure
15 to a hazard, the conditions of vulnerability that are present, and insufficient
16 capacity or measured to reduce or cope with the potential negative

1 consequences. Disaster impacts may include loss of life, injury, disease and
2 other negative effects on human, physical, mental and social well-being,
3 together with damage to property, destruction of assets, loss of services,
4 social and economic disruption and environmental degradation.

5 b) *Emergency* is unforeseen or sudden occurrence, especially danger,
6 demanding immediate action;

7 c) *State of Calamity* is a condition involving mass casualty and/or major
8 damages to property and roads, disruption of means of livelihoods and
9 normal way of life in the affected areas as a result of the occurrence of
10 natural or human-induced hazard.

11 *Sec. 4. Scope of Application.* – This Act shall cover disasters and other kinds of
12 emergencies which are (1) national in scope, as declared through a State of Calamity
13 or State of National Emergency by the President of the Philippines and (2) provincial,
14 city or municipal in scope, as declared through a State of Calamity or Emergency by
15 the appropriate local government unit.

16 *Sec. 5. Language Accessibility of Disaster-Related Information.* – In relation to
17 disasters and other emergencies covered by Section 4 of this Act, it shall be mandatory
18 for all government agencies and local government units to convert in an easily
19 understandable form and translate to Filipino and any other appropriate regional
20 language/s or dialect/s all their announcements, advisories, press releases, issuances
21 and any other information relevant to such disaster or emergency, including:

22 a) Tropical Cyclones, signals, flood warning, storm surge, dry spell/drought,
23 and other advisories by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and
24 Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA);

25 b) Volcanic activity and eruption, earthquake, tsunami and landslide advisories
26 and bulletins by the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology
27 (PHIVOLCS);

28 c) Announcements, bulletins and other advisories of the National Disaster Risk
29 Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), Local Disaster Risk
30 Reduction and Management Councils (LDRRMC) and network of Disaster
31 Risk Reduction and Management Councils composed of national, regional,
32 provincial, city, municipal DRRM councils and barangay committees;

- 1 d) Information on epidemics, disease outbreaks, infestation, and other public
2 health emergencies of the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department
3 of Agriculture (DA);
- 4 e) Advisories and warnings released by the Department of Environment and
5 Natural Resources (DENR) – Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) and the
6 Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), human-induced hazards, and human
7 security concerns of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the
8 Philippine National Police (PNP); and
- 9 f) Information on the Social Amelioration Program, emergency assistance and
10 other social protection measures of the Department of Social Welfare and
11 Development (DSWD).

12 As much as practicable, such disaster-related information shall be issued and
13 disseminated using plain language and devoid of scientific jargon or technical
14 terminologies. It shall also contain specific information on the extent and scale of
15 impending impact and damage down to barangay level.

16 *Sec. 6. Translation to Filipino and Other Regional Language or Dialect.* – The
17 translation of the information covered by this Act shall be to Filipino and other regional
18 language/s or dialect/s, as deemed necessary by the government agency and local
19 government unit concerned considering the geographical location of the affected
20 communities and the intended recipients of the information. The translated
21 information shall be disseminated as widely as possible through all available media
22 and communication channels.

23 *Sec. 7. Role of the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino.* – The Komisyon sa Wikang
24 Filipino (KWF) shall render the necessary technical assistance and expertise to the
25 government agencies and local government units including the Bangsamoro
26 Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) and monitor their compliance with
27 the duties mandated by this Act.

28 *Sec. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from the
29 effectivity of this Act, the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF), in consultation with
30 other relevant agencies and stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary rules and
31 regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

1 Sec. 9. *Separability Clause.* — If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or
2 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision or part not otherwise
3 affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

4 Sec. 10. *Repealing Clause.* — Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive
5 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to or
6 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended
7 accordingly.

8 Sec. 11. *Effectivity.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
9 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,