

SENATE

S. No. 963

Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This measure seeks the establishment of a National Fire Science Academy (NFSA) which is envisioned to provide the highest quality training in the field of fire protection, fire crisis management, fire rescue operations, hazardous materials and fire prevention skills training to its various clients. The NFSA is envisioned to be a training institution committed to the pursuit of excellence through the provision of education, training, technology transfer and research and development (R&D).

This measure also seeks the establishment of a National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) which is envisioned to be a national fire incident database. The NFIRS is envisioned to track residential fire fatalities and injuries, the nature and causes of such fatalities and injuries, and other factors regarding fires. This is a mandatory data collection system to be administered by the Bureau of Fire Protection and all fire departments in the country are mandated to report all fire-related incidents and disasters to the National Fire Incident Reporting System in order to determine the causes and nature of fire occurrence in our country.

It is a common incident in our country that lives are lost when firefighters arrive too late to address the complex problem of fire disaster. As such, with the installation of a National Fire Incidents Reporting System (NFIRS), local government units and various fire departments in the country will be evaluated as to their response time and effectiveness in responding to fire incidents. Through this monitoring scheme, our fire fighters will be aware of their ineffectiveness and hopefully improve their performance in performing their task.

Finally, this measure is dedicated to the team of individuals who overcome the odds in their quest to protect lives and property in their respective community. In most instance, many of these fire fighters suffer burns and injuries in the performance of their duties. It is for these countless heroes that we dedicate this bill.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly requested.


MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID
Senator

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S. No. 963

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM ON FIREFIGHTING,
ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL FIRE SCIENCE ACADEMY,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. -- This Act shall be known as the "***National Fire Science Academy Act of 2010***".

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote, enhance and improve the effectiveness of the country's fire fighting machinery in order to protect and preserve the life and welfare of its citizens and protect their properties.

Towards this end, the State shall institutionalize and establish a world class fire-fighting training academy in order to effectively save lives and protect the property of its citizens during fire-related disasters. By providing for a specialized and state of the art training facility for fire fighting, the state performs its role as the protector of the lives and property of its constituents.

Furthermore, the State shall provide the mechanisms to maintain, upgrade and improve the scientific knowledge, technical skills and competence of every fire fighter in the country with the purpose of helping them become more effective in addressing fire related disasters.

SEC. 3. Establishment of a National Fire Science Academy (NFSA). -- There is hereby established and created a National Fire Science Academy (NFSA), hereinafter referred to as the Academy, under the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), which is envisioned to provide the highest quality training in the

field of fire protection, fire crisis management, fire rescue operations, hazardous materials and fire prevention skills training to its various clients.

The National Fire Science Academy (NFSA) shall be a training institution committed to the pursuit of excellence through the provision of education, training, technology transfer and research and development (R&D). The Academy shall maintain a proactive environment wherein the latest methods and technologies in fire-fighting and fire science are applied to provide state-of-the-art and hands-on training to develop the individual competencies of our fire-fighters. The Academy is envisioned to provide technical and practical training that is unmatched in the industry by using real extinguishing agents to put out real fires that burn real fuels.

SEC. 4. Purpose and Objectives. - The National Fire Science Academy (NFSA) shall be established to serve the following objectives and purposes, namely:

a) To train individuals, communities, organizations, local government units and volunteer fire brigades in the latest techniques, technologies and methods in the field of fire fighting and fire rescue operations;

b) To assist and help the various units of the government in the event of major fire-related incidents and disasters;

c) To train the national government's pool of fire fighters and provide them with the latest fire science technologies and methods in order to address the fire incident problems in the country;

d) To train, accredit and monitor the various volunteer fire brigades in the country in order to empower them to perform their jobs effectively;

e) To serve as a Fire Emergency Response Training Center for fire-related incidents and disasters in the country;

f) To serve as a research arm of the government in the field of fire science and fire related topics and subject matters;

g) To advocate for the elevation of the standards of public service in the field of fire fighting in the country;

h) To foster and maintain highest ideals of integrity and professional competence in the practice of the fire fighting profession;

i) To provide an avenue where the various fire fighters and fire brigade volunteers can discuss and learn the latest methods and techniques in effectively addressing fire related disasters; and

j) To serve as an authoritative source of information on issues concerning fire science and fire fighting.

SEC. 5. Powers and Functions. - The National Fire Science Academy (NFSA) shall have all legal powers appertaining to a juridical person, particularly the following power:

- a) to sue and be sued;
- b) to contract and be contracted with;
- c) to hold real and personal property as may be necessary for its mandated purposes;
- d) to mortgage, lease, sell, transfer, convey and otherwise dispose of the same;
- e) to solicit and receive public and private donations and contributions related to fire science and fire fighting;
- f) to accept and receive real and personal property by gift, devise or bequest;
- g) to levy and collect minimal dues and fees from its students and trainees for its services;
- h) to adopt a seal and to alter the same;
- i) to have offices and conduct its affairs in the Metro Manila area and elsewhere;
- j) to make and adopt by-laws, rules and regulations not inconsistent with the laws of the Philippines; and
- k) to do all such acts and things as may be necessary or proper to carry into effect and promote the purposes for which it was organized.

The seal and emblem of the National Fire Science Academy (NFSA) shall be kept in its national office.

SEC. 6. Courses and Training Instructions. - The Academy shall provide safe, effective and responsive training and consulting services. It shall provide training courses in the following fields, namely: *Industrial Fire Fighting, Crisis and Emergency Management, Incident Command and Response, Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting, Industrial Rescue, Hazardous Materials, Instructor and Train - the - Trainors Programs and Specialty Training and Customized Training Programs.*

a) Industrial Fire Fighting - The NFSA shall train firefighters from all over the country based on globally accepted best practices and applying hands-on approach to training instructions. The NFSA training methods will focus on live fires, tactical drills and advanced techniques in fire fighting. This field of specialization will cover, among others, topics in industrial firefighting, industrial fire brigade leadership, strategy and tactics, mine fire brigade, shipboard and offshore fire rescue.

b) Crisis & Emergency Management - This field of specialization will focus on effective command, control and communications at any fire related emergency in order to ensure the safety of the rescuers, victims and the public. The Academy shall train industries, organizations and governments in the preparation, management and recovery from fire crisis and emergencies. The training will focus on incident simulations, command systems, strategies and management tactics for fire crisis ranging from natural disasters to man-made fire-related emergencies. The areas that will be covered shall include, among others, incident command and emergency response; hazardous materials emergency management, crisis and emergency plans and programs; and developing and implementing crisis management drills and exercises.

c) Aircraft Rescue & Fire Fighting (ARFF) - The Academy is envisioned to be the leading institution in the country that provides for aircraft fire fighting training. The Academy shall utilize intense live-fire rescue simulations that will create real-world training scenarios that will enable rescuers to achieve superior levels of fire fighting skills. The Academy's training will be designed to meet all current international aviation regulations and requirements for airport firefighters in responding to aircraft fire emergencies.

d) Hazardous Materials - The Academy shall provide state-of-the-art training for the disposal, containment, confinement and decontamination of hazardous and toxic waste materials, consistent with the standards set forth by our existing environmental laws. The National Fire Science Academy shall adhere strictly to all pertinent environmental laws, which govern live-fire training operations and reclamation of firewater. The NFSA shall value the environment and shall make every effort to operate an environmentally sound training facility.

e) Rescue Training - The Academy shall provide instructions and field practice in a safe, realistic and highly challenging environments in order to instill in their trainees the proper knowledge and skills to perform rescue operations in a safe and effective level that complies with international standards. Areas that will be covered in this training shall include, among others, structural high-angle and structural confined-space rescue; mine, trench and excavation rescue; and advanced rescue techniques.

f) Instructor and Trainor's Training Courses - The techniques for delivering effective instruction and training to others are emphasized in these courses.

This area will cover training in communication, instructional phases, motivation, and behavioral objectives. The NFSA is envisioned to be an institution that will offer one of the finest emergency response programs and training facilities in Southeast Asia. The NFSA will be designed to challenge even the most seasoned personnel, serving private-sector industries including petrochemical, aviation, mining, technology and transportation as well as local government units and government agencies.

g) Specialty and Customized Training Programs - The Academy shall also provide fire fighting trainings to companies and private organizations which require specialized fire-fighting training that is tailored to their particular operations and needs.

SEC. 7. Personal Conduct of Students and Faculty - The National Fire Science Academy (NFSA) is an educational institution that strives to maintain a safe and healthy environment and which promotes learning in a professional and challenging setting. Students are expected to exercise tolerance and to respect and celebrate differences among individuals. At no time will the academy tolerate:

- a) Harassment of any kind
- b) Racial, religious or sexual slurs
- c) Inappropriate language
- d) Indecent or disorderly conduct, rough play
- e) Damage to property
- f) Any action which jeopardizes the comfort, safety or health of others

Such actions or behaviors may result in disciplinary measures or dismissal from the academy with notification made to the sponsoring agency or employer, as will be provided under the implementing rules and regulations of this Act.

SEC. 8. NFSA Academic Board. - The Academic Board of the Academy shall be composed of the Administrator, the Dean of the Corps of Professors, the Head Training Officer and the Heads of the Departments.

The Administrator and the Head Training Officer shall be appointed by the President of the Republic of the Philippines from the current officers of the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

The Dean of the Corps of Professors shall be appointed from the permanent professors who have served as Heads of Departments of instructions at the Academy.

The Academic Board shall have the power to confer certificates and diplomas to all trainees, upon the satisfactory completion of the approved course of studies, under such rules and regulations as the Secretary of Interior and Local Government may prescribe.

Other degrees that may be needed in the future will be conferred, provided that the Academic Board shall determine these degrees in consonance with the needs of the country. The Academy will develop these courses and the necessary expertise as the need arises.

SEC. 9. Sources of Funds. - The funds of the National Fire Science Academy (NFSA) shall be derived from dues and assessments, donations, bequests, contributions of its students and trainees, as well as income from conventions, seminars, corporate trainings and other fund raising activities.

The funds of the NFSA shall be deposited in banks as designated by the board.

SEC. 10. Prohibition Against Hazing. - Subject to the approval of the Secretary of Interior and Local Government, the Administrator of the NFSA shall issue rules and regulations preventing hazing, and prescribe dismissal, suspension and other adequate punishment for violation thereof.

For purposes of this Act, the term "hazing" shall mean any unauthorized assumption of authority by a trainee whereby another trainee suffers or is exposed to any form of injury, indignity, humiliation, hardship or oppression or deprivation or abridgment of the basic rights of the trainee.

A trainee dismissed from the Academy for hazing shall not be readmitted as a trainee and shall be ineligible for appointment as a firefighter officer in the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP).

SEC. 11. Budget. - The initial appropriations necessary for the establishment of the National Fire Science Academy (NFSA) shall be charge to the appropriations of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). Improvements necessary for the operation and maintenance of the Academy shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 12. National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). - There is hereby created a National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) which will be maintained and managed by the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). The NFIRS is envisioned to be a BFP-DILG national fire incident database. It is envisioned to track residential fire fatalities and injuries, the nature and causes of such fatalities and injuries, and other factors regarding fires.

All fire departments in the country are hereby mandated to report all fire-related incidents and disasters to the National Fire Incident Reporting System in order to have a national database on the causes and nature of fire occurrence in our country.

The National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) will map and determine the nature and causes of fire related incidents per municipality, city, district, province and region in order to determine the most effective fire prevention methods and techniques that will be used to prevent the occurrence of fire tragedies.

Among the major functions of the NFIRS are the following:

- a) To create a database system that will gather all information concerning fire-related incidents in the country in order to come up with a regional and district mapping on the incidence of fire occurrence in the country;
- b) To conduct fire response time analysis in order to determine the effectiveness and responsiveness of our country's fire fighters;
- c) To analyze and assess the nature of the fire problems in the country; and
- d) To conduct various types of qualitative and quantitative researches needed to effectively combat the fire problem in the country.

The NFIRS shall put up a mechanism to process and analyze information from various sources and organizations and come up with a uniform reporting system for easy understanding of the public.

The NFIRS shall come up with a quarterly report on the state of fire incidents in the country for the information of the public. NFIRS report shall contain information regarding fire incidents and the nature and prevalent causes of fires in the country.

Furthermore, the NFIRS shall put up a system of information validation in order to determine the validity and accuracy of the fire incident reporting that is fed into the system. The BFP shall establish programs to ensure checks for data integrity in the information management of fire related data gathered by the National Fire Incidents Reporting System (NFIRS).

SEC. 13. Appropriation for the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). – For the initial appropriations necessary for establishing the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) database, the initial amount of Twenty Million Pesos (Php 20,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated to the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). Thereafter, the amount necessary to maintain and operate the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) shall be included in the annual general appropriations of the agencies of the government involved in the implementation of the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 14. *Monitoring the State of Fire Incidents in the Country.* – The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), through its National Fire Incidents Reporting System (NFIRS), is hereby mandated to conduct a comprehensive study on the state of fire incidents in the country, taking into account the geographic and regional locations, climactic conditions, demographic characteristics, and socio-economic status of the areas covered under the study, taking into account the fire incidents in other countries.

The comprehensive study on the state of fire incidents in the country shall include the following aspects, namely:

- (1) The socio-economic, demographic and geographic characteristics of the region or area;
- (2) The extent with which our present pool of fire fighters are able to address the fire incidents in a particular location or region;
- (3) The current supply of fire fighting equipment, tools and machinery of our present fire fighters in the country;
- (4) The effectiveness of the services being provided by the volunteer fire brigades in our country; and
- (5) The medium-term and long-term prospects for the modernization of our fire fighting machinery and gears to effectively address the fire incidents in our country.

Furthermore, the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) shall conduct a comprehensive study on the effectiveness and efficiency of the services being given by our volunteer fire brigades in assisting the government in addressing fire incident problems in the country. This study will also analyze the effectiveness in providing incentives and awards systems for these volunteer fire brigades.

Finally, the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) shall also conduct a comprehensive study on the effectiveness of the courses being offered by the National Fire Science Academy (NFSA) and identify other viable and cost-effective modes of training programs in order to improve the effectiveness of the functions of the National Fire Science Academy.

Within two (2) years from the date of effectivity of this Act, the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) shall make a report to both Houses of Congress on the results of the studies conducted by said agency for policy implication, *in aid of legislation*, in order to further proactively address fire incident problems in the country.

SEC. 15. *Annual Conference on Fire Fighting.* - The National Fire Science Academy (NFSA), in coordination with the various stakeholders in the field of fire fighting, is hereby mandated to conduct an Annual Fire Fighting Conference which will be participated by the various players in the fire fighting profession, including volunteer fire brigades, government fire fighters, trainers in the field of fire rescue, government

policy makers, fire fighting facilities suppliers and providers and various ancillary service providers involved in the profession of providing fire rescue operations.

The Annual Fire Fighting Conference is envisioned to be an avenue where various players in the field of fire fighting will share their knowledge on the issues and trends relating to the medium and long term prospects of the fire fighting profession in the country.

The proceedings of the National Fire Fighting Conference will be published and be made available to the public.

SEC. 16. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* - Within six (6) months from the date of effectivity of this Act, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) shall promulgate necessary implementing rules and regulations in the accreditation of volunteer fire brigades, in determining the award system mechanism and in implementing the various provisions of this Act.

SEC. 17. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act or the application of such provision to any person or circumstance is held invalid for any reason, the other provisions or their application to other persons or circumstances not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 18. *Repealing Clause* - All laws, decrees, orders, rules, regulations and issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 19. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,