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SENATE
S. No. 1894

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 2, Section 16 provides: "The State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature."

Republic Act No. 9729, or the "Climate Change Act of 2009," Section 3, paragraph 3 states:

Recognizing the vulnerability of the Philippine archipelago and its local communities, particularly the poor, women, and children, to potential dangerous consequences of climate change such as rising seas, changing landscapes, increasing frequency and/or severity of droughts, fires, floods and storms, climate-related illnesses and diseases, damage to ecosystems, biodiversity loss that affect the country's environment, culture, and economy, the State shall cooperate with the global community in the resolution of climate change issues, including disaster risk reduction. It shall be the policy of the State to enjoin the participation of national and local governments, businesses, nongovernment organizations, local communities and the public to prevent and reduce the adverse impacts of climate change and, at the same time, maximize the benefits of climate change. . .

Climate change was described as perhaps "the biggest global health threat of the 21st century."¹

The American Public Health Association has dubbed climate change an "urgent threat" to health, and has emphasized that "local public health professionals around the country increasingly will be dealing with the impacts of climate change on the ground, every day." These threats to health from climate change require robust, comprehensive action that engages all levels of government.²

¹ Managing the Health Effects of Climate Change, a collaboration between *The Lancet* and University College London, UK, 13 May 2009.

² <http://www.phi.org/news-events/476/phi-supports-climate-change-health-protection-and-promotion-act>.

Thus, this bill directs the Secretary of Health to develop a national strategic action plan to assist health professionals in preparing for and responding to the public health effects of climate change.³

Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO
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³ <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-113hr2023ih/pdf/BILLS-113hr2023ih.pdf>.

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1 AN ACT
2 DIRECTING THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH TO DEVELOP A NATIONAL STRATEGIC
3 ACTION PLAN TO ASSIST HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN PREPARING FOR AND
4 RESPONDING TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

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

5 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Climate Change Health
6 Protection and Promotion Act.”

7 SECTION 2. *Sense of Congress on Public Health and Climate Change.* – It is the sense
8 of the Congress that the national government, in cooperation with local government units,
9 concerned public and private organizations, and citizens, should use all practicable means and
10 measures –

11 (1) to assist the efforts of public health and health care professionals, first responders,
12 provinces, cities, municipalities, and local communities to incorporate measures to prepare health
13 systems to respond to the impacts of climate change;

14 (2) to ensure –

15 (A) that the nation’s health professionals have sufficient information to
16 prepare for and respond to the adverse health impacts of climate change;

17 (B) the utility and value of scientific research in advancing understanding of:

18 (i) the health impacts of climate change; and

19 (ii) strategies to prepare for and respond to the health impacts of
20 climate change;

- 1 (C) the identification of communities vulnerable to the health effects of
2 climate change and the development of strategic response plans to be
3 carried out by health professionals for those communities;
- 4 (D) the improvement of health status and health equity through efforts to
5 prepare for and respond to climate change; and
- 6 (E) the inclusion of health policy in the development of climate change
7 responses;
- 8 (3) to encourage further research, interdisciplinary partnership, and collaboration
9 among stakeholders in order to:
- 10 (A) understand and monitor the health impacts of climate change; and
11 (B) improve public health knowledge and response strategies to climate
12 change;
- 13 (4) to enhance preparedness activities, and public health infrastructure, relating to
14 climate change and health; and
- 15 (5) to encourage each and every Filipino to learn about the impacts of climate change
16 on health.

17 SECTION 3. *Relationship to Other Laws.* – Nothing in this Act, in any manner, limits the
18 authority provided to or responsibility conferred on any department or agency by any provision
19 of any law (including regulations) or authorizes any violation of any provision of any law
20 (including regulations), including any health, energy, environmental, transportation, or any other
21 law or regulation.

22 SECTION 4. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act, the term:

23 (1) “Health Impact Assessment” means a combination of procedures, methods, and
24 tools by which a policy, program, or project may be judged as to its potential effects on the
25 health of a population, and the distribution of those effects within the population.

26 (2) “National Strategic Action Plan” means the plan issued and revised under Section
27 5.

1 (3) "Secretary" means the Secretary of Health.

2 SECTION 5. *National Strategic Action Plan.* –

3 (1) *Requirement.* –

4 (A) *In General.* – The Secretary of Health, within two (2) years after the date
5 of the effectivity of this Act, on the basis of the best available science,
6 and in consultation pursuant to paragraph (B), shall publish a strategic
7 action plan to assist health professionals in preparing for and responding
8 to the impacts of climate change on public health in the Philippines and
9 other nations, particularly developing nations.

10 (B) *Consultation.* – In developing or making any revision to the national
11 strategic action plan, the Secretary shall:

12 (i) consult with the Climate Change Commission (created under R.A.
13 No. 9729, or the "Climate Change Act of 2009"), the Secretary of
14 Environment and Natural Resources, the Director of the National
15 Institutes of Health, the Secretary of Energy, other appropriate
16 government agencies, and local government units, public health
17 organizations, scientists, and other interested stakeholders; and

18 (ii) provide opportunity for public input.

19 (2) *Contents.* –

20 (A) *In General.* – The Secretary shall assist health professionals in preparing
21 for and responding effectively and efficiently to the health effects of
22 climate change through measures including:

23 (i) developing, improving, integrating, and maintaining domestic and
24 international disease surveillance systems and monitoring capacity
25 to respond to health-related effects of climate change, including on
26 topics addressing:

27 (a) water, food, and vector borne infectious diseases and
28 climate change;

- 1 (b) pulmonary effects, including responses to aeroallergens;
- 2 (c) cardiovascular effects, including impacts of temperature
- 3 extremes;
- 4 (d) air pollution health effects, including heightened sensitivity
- 5 to air pollution;
- 6 (e) hazardous algal blooms;
- 7 (f) mental and behavioral health impacts of climate change;
- 8 (g) the health of refugees, displaced persons, and vulnerable
- 9 communities;
- 10 (h) the implications for communities vulnerable to health
- 11 effects of climate change, as well as strategies for
- 12 responding to climate change within these communities;
- 13 and
- 14 (i) local and community-based health interventions for
- 15 climate-related health impacts;
- 16 (ii) creating tools for predicting and monitoring the public health
- 17 effects of climate change on the international, national, regional,
- 18 and local levels, and providing technical support to assist in their
- 19 implementation;
- 20 (iii) developing public health communications strategies and
- 21 interventions for extreme weather events and disaster response
- 22 situations;
- 23 (iv) identifying and prioritizing communities and populations
- 24 vulnerable to the health effects of climate change, and determining
- 25 actions and communication strategies that should be taken to
- 26 inform and protect these communities and populations from the
- 27 health effects of climate change;
- 28 (v) developing health communication, public education, and outreach
- 29 programs aimed at public health and health care professionals, as

1 well as the general public, to promote preparedness and response
2 strategies relating to climate change and public health, including
3 the identification of greenhouse gas reduction behaviors that are
4 health-promoting;

5 (vi) developing academic and regional centers of excellence devoted
6 to:

7 (d) researching relationships between climate change and
8 health;

9 (b) expanding and training the public health workforce to
10 strengthen the capacity of such workforce to respond to and
11 prepare for the health effects of climate change;

12 (c) creating and supporting academic fellowships focusing on
13 the health effects of climate change; and

14 (d) training senior health ministry officials from developing
15 nations to strengthen the capacity of such nations to:

16 (I) prepare for and respond to the health effects of
17 climate change; and

18 (II) build an international network of public health
19 professionals with the necessary climate change
20 knowledge base;

21 (vii) using techniques, including health impact assessments, to assess
22 various climate change public health preparedness and response
23 strategies on international, national, regional, and local levels, and
24 make recommendations as to those strategies that best protect the
25 public health;

26 (viii) assisting in the development, implementation, and support of
27 regional, and local preparedness, communication, and response
28 plans (including with respect to the health departments of such
29 entities) to anticipate and reduce the health threats of climate

1 change; and pursuing collaborative efforts to develop, integrate,
2 and implement such plans;

3 (ix) creating a program to advance research as it relates to the effects of
4 climate change on public health across government agencies,
5 including research to:

6 (a) identify and assess climate change health effects
7 preparedness and response strategies;

8 (b) prioritize critical public health infrastructure projects
9 related to potential climate change impacts that affect
10 public health; and

11 (c) coordinate preparedness for climate change health impacts,
12 including the development of modeling and forecasting
13 tools;

14 (x) providing technical assistance for the development,
15 implementation, and support of preparedness and response plans to
16 anticipate and reduce the health threats of climate change in
17 developing nations; and

18 (xi) carrying out other activities determined appropriate by the
19 Secretary to plan for and respond to the impacts of climate change
20 on public health.

21 (3) *Revision.* – The Secretary shall revise the national strategic action plan not later
22 than 1 July 2017, and every four (4) years thereafter, to reflect new information collected
23 pursuant to implementation of the national strategic action plan and otherwise, including
24 information on:

25 (A) the status of critical environmental health parameters and related human
26 health impacts;

27 (B) the impacts of climate change on public health; and

28 (C) advances in the development of strategies for preparing for and responding
29 to the impacts of climate change on public health.

1 (4) *Implementation.* –

2 (A) *Implementation.* – The Secretary shall exercise his or her authority under
3 this Act and other laws to achieve the goals and measures of the national
4 strategic action plan.

5 (B) *Other Public Health Programs and Initiatives.* – The Secretary and
6 officials of other relevant government agencies shall administer public
7 health programs and initiatives authorized by statutes other than this Act,
8 subject to the requirements of such statutes, in a manner designed to
9 achieve the goals of the national strategic action plan.

10 (C) In furtherance of the national strategic action plan, the Secretary shall:

11 (i) conduct scientific research to assist health professionals in
12 preparing for and responding to the impacts of climate change on
13 public health;

14 (ii) provide funding for:

15 (a) research on the health effects of climate change; and

16 (b) preparedness planning on the international, national,
17 regional, and local levels to respond to or reduce the burden
18 of health effects of climate change; and

19 (iii) carry out other activities determined appropriate by the Secretary
20 to prepare for and respond to the impacts of climate change on
21 public health.

22 SECTION 6. *Report.* – The Secretary shall submit an annual implementation report to the
23 Congress, the first of which must be made publicly available not later than one (1) year after the
24 effectivity of this Act.

25 SECTION 7. *Authorization of Appropriations.* – To carry out the provisions of this Act,
26 there are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary for each fiscal year.

1 SECTION 8. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part thereof is held invalid or
2 unconstitutional, the remainder of the Act or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain
3 valid and subsisting.

4 SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive
5 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to or inconsistent
6 with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

7 SECTION 10. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
8 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

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