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SENATE

Senate Bill No. 572

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INTRODUCED BY SEN. JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA

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EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines has been ravaged by numerous natural disasters ranging from floods and thunderstorms to typhoons, landslides, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. These natural disasters harm the safety and lives of our citizens and cause considerable damage to property. Although we wish to avoid these natural disasters, their recurrence remains highly probable considering the geographical and climatic conditions of our country.

As an agricultural country, we are especially vulnerable to the destructive effects of natural disasters. Agriculture is the major source of livelihood for many of our country's middle and low income populations. By its very nature, agricultural cultivation requires a high degree of dependence on climate and weather conditions for its success and profitability. Our major food staple, rice, is a good example – its cultivation follows a cycle of planting and harvesting within specific seasons. When a typhoon comes and threatens to rip up a rice plantation, the farmer risks incurring huge financial losses. In some cases, it is a question of survival, when the success of this planting season's harvest determines the farmer's capacity to undertake the next.

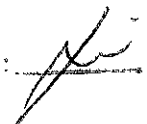
Thus, the importance of the role of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) as the main government agency tasked to monitor research and report weather conditions to the public cannot be overemphasized. However, our country has experienced the occurrence of several natural disasters, some of them deadly, on which PAGASA may have failed to give correct and timely information due to lack of modern and quality equipment. As a result, citizens were not completely warned of dangers to their health and safety and apprised of precautions they could take to alleviate, if not prevent, damage to their person or property.

The capacity of PAGASA to rapidly deliver accurate weather information is critical in determining our ability to properly prepare for and handle natural disasters. Such capacity is sought to be enhanced through the establishment of a modernization program for PAGASA, which this bill proposes. The passage of this bill is therefore earnestly sought.

  
JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA  
Senator

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AN ACT  
PROVIDING FOR THE MODERNIZATION OF THE PHILIPPINE  
ATMOSPHERIC, GEOPHYSICAL AND ASTRONOMICAL SERVICES  
ADMINISTRATION, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER  
PURPOSES

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

**SECTION 1. Title.** - This Act shall be known as the "**PAGASA  
Modernization Act of 2010.**"

**SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** - It is the policy of the State to improve the  
quality of weather forecasting in the country and to ensure its accuracy and  
timely dissemination to the people. Towards this end, the State shall undertake  
the modernization of the national weather service.

**SEC. 3. Purposes of Modernization.** - In the implementation of the  
foregoing policy, the State shall, in accordance with the provisions of this Act:

- a. Undertake measures to improve on the current state of weather  
forecasting and warning system in the country;
- b. Cultivate greater awareness by the public of weather systems through  
educational programs on storm signals, typhoons, climatic changes and  
other related information;
- c. Upgrade, modernize and procure state-of-the-art weather and  
geophysical equipment and facilities, and pursue the application of new  
technologies to improve our capabilities in providing timely and reliable  
weather forecasting and warning services for agriculture, transportation  
and other industries across the country.

**SEC. 4. Duration of the Modernization Program.** - To enhance weather  
forecasting, climate monitoring and prediction, and astronomical and associated  
services, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services  
Administration (PAGASA) shall undertake a six-year modernization program.

**SEC. 5. Components of Modernization.** - The modernization program  
shall adopt a four-pronged approach, as follows:

- a. Establishment of regional weather service centers in strategic areas in the country to broaden the PAGASAs bases for delivery of services to each region;
- b. Modernization of physical resources and operational techniques through acquisition of state-of-the-art equipment and facilities, with emphasis on weather and flood monitoring and warning system and agro-meteorological observational system to strengthen services for agriculture;
- c. Intensification of human resources development to keep pace with rapid international scientific and technological advances;
- d. Upgrade of research and development capability through a more rationalized and integrated approach, with focus on improvement of operations, as well as the development of specialized services for cost recovery.

**SEC. 6. Program Description.** - The modernization program under this Act shall principally be a re-tooling of the PAGASA with modern equipment and facilities, including but not limited to advanced observational and surveillance system for meteorological and hydrological elements, and whenever possible satellite-based communication network, supercomputers for data processing analysis and forecasting, and computer based workstations for generating increased volume of detailed information. It shall also establish an efficient human resources development program emphasizing on professional education, training and research.

**SEC. 7. PAGASA Modernization Oversight Committee.** - There is hereby created a Modernization Oversight Committee composed of the Chairperson and Members of the Congressional Committees on Science and Technology of the Senate and the House of Representatives that shall oversee the implementation of the modernization program provided under this Act. The Committee shall be chaired by the Secretary of the DOST.

**SEC. 8. PAGASA Modernization Fund.** - There is hereby created the PAGASA Modernization Fund which shall be used exclusively to fund its modernization program, The Fund shall include a portion of the net income of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) to be taken from the fifty percent (50%) share of the National Government for a period of six years from the effectivity of this Act.

**SEC. 9. Loans, Grants, Bequests and Donations.** - The PAGASA is hereby granted the authority to enter into loan agreements with, or accept grants, bequests and donations from, local or foreign financial institutions pursuant to this Act.

**SEC. 10. Cost Recovery Measures.** - The PAGASA shall implement a sustainable cost recovery program that will allow it to earn revenue from its issuance of specialized weather information, certifications, and scientific and technical publications from which fees can be charged; Provided, that one hundred percent (100%) of the fees collected shall be retained by PAGASA for the next twenty (20) years from the effectivity of this Act, for the operation and maintenance of the equipment acquired during the modernization program; Provided further, that no fees shall be charged on the issuance of regular and special reports to the general public that affect national safety, the weather and the economy, and such other relevant data.

**SEC. 11. *Progress Report.*** - The Secretary of the DOST and the Director of the PAGASA shall submit to the Office of the President and the Congressional Committees on Science and Technology a quarterly report on the progress of the modernization program for the duration of its implementation.

**SEC. 12. *Separability Clause.*** - If any provision of this Act or any part hereof be declared unconstitutional or invalid the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

**SEC. 13. *Repealing Clause.*** - All laws, orders, proclamations, rules and regulations, or part thereof, which are inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

**SEC. 14. *Effectivity.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two newspapers of general circulation.

*Approved,*