

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Eighteenth Congress
First Regular Session



5977

HOUSE BILL NO. _____

Introduced by **Representative JOEY SARTE SALCEDA**

AN ACT
CREATING THE TAAL COMMISSION AS PRIMARY AGENCY OF THE
NATIONAL GOVERNMENT FOR RELIEF, RESETTLEMENT, REHABILITATION
AND LIVELIHOOD SERVICES, FOR STRATEGIC ADVANCED
COMPREHENSIVE INTEGRATED RECONSTRUCTION OF TAAL ERUPTION-
VULNERABLE AREAS, ADOPTING THE TAAL ERUPTION RECOVERY,
REHABILITATION, AND ADAPTATION (TERRA) PLAN,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

Section 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Taal Eruption Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Adaptation (TERRA) Act of 2020.”

Section 2. Declaration of Policy. – It shall be the policy of the State to address the immediate need for assistance and disaster relief among communities adversely affected by severe volcanic activity of Mt. Taal and the after-effects of such activity, so that economic and social life may return to a state of normalcy at the earliest possible time. Furthermore, it shall be the policy of the State to develop a long-term socioeconomic reconstruction program for communities most directly impacted by Taal’s activity, embedding adaptation in infrastructure and social investments.

Towards this end, the State shall mobilize significant public resources and encourage private investment into both short-term relief and long-term reconstruction into safer, more resilient economic development in the Eastern Batangas – Southern Cavite – Western Laguna

area. The State shall expedite the construction of strategic infrastructure, develop a critical mass of skilled and highly-employable workers, expand access to recovery capital and credit, and map safe areas for industrial, commercial, and residential development to promote safe, sustainable, long-term development of what shall hereinafter be referred to as the South of Manila Growth Corridor (SMGC).

Section 3. Creation of Taal Commission. – For purposes of this Act, there is hereby created the Taal Commission, hereinafter referred to as the Commission. It shall be organized within thirty (30) days after the approval of this Act. It shall have a term of seven (7) years from its organization: provided, that the President by proclamation or Executive Order may, within six (6) months prior to the expiration of the term, extend the period of its existence once for not more than three (3) years. Such amount as may be necessary for the initial organization and/or operational expenses of the Commission shall be set aside from the amount herein appropriated. For administrative purposes, the Commission shall be attached to the Office of the President.

Section 4. Powers of the Commission. – To carry out its objectives under this Act, the Commission shall have the following powers:

- a) To formulate policies, plans, programs and projects for the relief, rehabilitation, re-settlement and livelihood services as well as infrastructure development in coordination with local government units and in harmony with the other plans and policies of the National Government and other agencies;
- b) To prioritize the programs and projects for the reconstruction effort and coordinate the implementation of the various programs and projects of the Commission;
- c) To tap the resources of the private sector and to enhance and facilitate the cooperation and coordination between the Philippine Government and the private sector in formulating and implementing the Philippine Government's reconstruction strategy;
- d) To raise funds, especially grants and deeply concessional loans, to fund reconstruction;
- e) To apply for, receive and accept grants and donation of funds, equipment, materials and services needed for the development of the area, within and outside the Philippines;
- f) To serve as clearing house for the international assistance implemented by the donors them-selves using the cluster approach;

- g) To request the United Nations and the World Bank to coordinate an International Pledging Session.
- h) To monitor the progress of the relief, rehabilitation, resettlement and livelihood as well as infrastructure support programs and projects;
- i) To coordinate and consult with concerned national and local officials, both elective and appointive, as well as accredited non-government organizations (NGOs) in the prioritization and prosecution of the programs and projects;
- j) To call upon any department, office, instrumentality, agency, or any political subdivision of the Government for such assistance as may be necessary for the attainment of the objectives of the Commission;
- k) To encourage equitable Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) where government liabilities will not be onerous; and
- l) To raise funds for its programs and projects, Provided that the Commission shall seek prior and explicit approval of the Department of Finance, through applicable processes for the grant of sovereign guarantees, before the Commission may contract any obligations;
- m) To seek and mobilize grants and take advantage of deeply concessional loans, in due compliance with applicable rules and regulations for government owned and controlled corporations doing the same;
- n) To assume a corporate status and thus operate as a Government Owned and Controlled Corporation subject to all the rules, regulations, and laws governing the same; and
- o) In general, to perform such other powers as may be necessary and proper to carry out the purposes of this Act.

Section 5. Composition of the Commission. – The Commission shall be composed of eight (8) members to be appointed by the President: four (4) coming from the Cabinet, three (3) from the private sector and the Executive Director. The members of the Commission shall serve for six (7) years unless sooner removed for cause. The President shall designate from among the members of the Commission the Chairman thereof.

Section 6. Executive Director; Powers and Responsibilities. – The President shall appoint a professional manager as the Executive Director of the Commission, who shall serve as the chief executive officer. He shall serve until such time as the Commission is dissolved or

unless sooner removed from office by the President. He shall have the following powers and functions:

- a) Execute and administer the policies and decisions of the Commission;
- b) Directly coordinate the activities of all agencies and instrumentalities of the Government in the planning and implementation of projects on site;
- c) Monitor the programs and projects and evaluate the effects of execution by these agencies and instrumentalities and submit to the Commission periodic reports relating to the development of the areas; and
- d) Perform such other functions as are inherently necessary in the operational management of the areas developed in accordance with the policies and guidelines formulated by the Commission.

Section 7. Preference for Local Residents. – Residents in the affected areas, especially the victims, shall be given preference in hiring or employment in the construction or repair and reconstruction of damaged or destroyed government infrastructure and facilities and other labor requirements in all other projects.

Section 8. Infrastructure and capital outlays insurance. – All projects, activities, and programs undertaken by the Commission shall be covered by the procurement procedure adopted during the State of Calamity. This shall include major infrastructure flagship projects, including PNR South Long Haul, Cavite-Tagaytay-Batangas Expressway Project, SLEX-TR4 (Southern Luzon Expressway Toll Road) and Expansion of Batangas Port.

The Commission shall enroll all infrastructure projects undertaken under this Act in a calamity insurance plan as recommended by the National Treasurer and the Insurance Commission. As far as practicable, equipment and other tangible properties acquired by the Commission or procured through this Act shall be also be insured.

Section 9. Regional tourism and investment promotion strategies – Whenever applicable, the Commission shall endeavor to promote the SMGC and its environs as one investment and tourist destination. Towards this end, the Commission shall establish an inter-provincial tourism development plan and a medium-term SMGC growth and investment strategy which employs the comparative advantages of SMGC and its surrounding provinces.

Section 10. Adaptive Social and Landscape Planning – The Commission shall engage dedicated research institutions to map out the safe areas for the south growth corridor based on geo-logical sciences and past volcanic eruptions of Taal Volcano in order to better understand the probabilities of small, medium and large-scale eruption that may happen in the future. It shall also endeavor to establish linkages with the academe and with credible research institutions and planning firms to create a SMGC Socio-environmental Plan which shall incorporate the following elements:

- a) Urban-rural infrastructure linkages;
- b) Land-value capture strategies to ensure that the public is able to recover some of its investments in infrastructure and planning from the resulting rise in property values;
- c) Sustainable, accessible, and affordable transport modalities to link workers and workplaces;
- d) Infrastructure systems that can function as evacuation routes;
- e) Centers for learning and areas for investment in research and development;
- f) Tourist and convention-friendly development; and
- g) Adequate green space in urban and semi-urban communities.

Section 11. Report to Congress. – The Commission shall submit to the President and to Congress a detailed quarterly report on the funds allocated indicating the amount released, obligated and disbursed for: (a) Aid, relief, resettlement, rehabilitation and livelihood services, including the list of names of approved individual beneficiaries and contractors and the evaluation of the effectiveness of the delivery systems of such services; (b) Construction or repair and reconstruction of infrastructure projects, including the list of contractors and projects being financed, and the accomplishments for the expended appropriations, including the percentage of completion (c) programs in pursuit of long term strategic redevelopment of Taal Eruption-vulnerable areas particularly under the South of Manila Growth Corridor (SMGC) (d) a list of local and foreign donors and the nature of their donations.

Section 12. Joint Congressional Oversight Committee. – There is hereby created the Joint Congressional Oversight Committee to monitor the implementation of this Act. The Committee shall be composed of five (5) senators and five (5) representatives to be appointed by the Senate President and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, respectively. The Over-sight Committee shall be co-chaired by a senator and a representative designated by the Sen-ate President and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, respectively. The mandate

given to the Joint Congressional Oversight Committee under this Act shall be without prejudice to the performance of the duties and functions by the respective existing oversight committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Section 13. Rules and Regulations. – The President shall, within ten (10) days after the organization of the Commission, issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

Section 14. Appropriations Clause. – To carry out the purposes of this Act, the sum of ONE HUNDRED billion pesos (P100,000,000,000) is hereby appropriated out of any available funds in the National Treasury not otherwise appropriated.

Section 15. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 16. Repealing Clause. – Any law, decree, or rules and regulations which are inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby amended or repealed.

Section 17. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect upon its publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,