

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

3046
HOUSE BILL NO. _____



Introduced by: Hon. Angelina "Helen" D.L. Tan, M.D.

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING EVACUATION CENTERS IN EVERY CITY AND MUNICIPALITY AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Global Climate Risk Index 2014: Who Suffers Most from Extreme Weather Events? Weather-Related Loss Events in 2012 and 1993 to 2012 published by Berlin-based environmental organization Germanwatch places the Philippines in the top 3 countries most affected by climate-related weather catastrophes in 2012. According to the ninth annual Global Climate Risk Index, the Philippines came in second only to Haiti in terms of "relative and absolute number of human victims, and relative and absolute economic damage" caused by natural disasters.

The country is prone to disasters and hazards due to its geography and geology. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (NDRRMP) provides the following facts, which are instructive regarding the occurrence of disasters and hazards in the country:

- Tropical cyclones and its sequential effects of rain and windstorms, as well as floods are the most prevalent types of hydro-meteorological hazards in the country. Between 1997 and 2007, eighty-four (84) tropical cyclones entered the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR). These typhoons resulted to a total of 13,155 in human casualty and more than 51 million families have been affected.

- Environmental factors such as denuded forests aggravate flood risks. Even now, the effects of loose soil and reduced forest cover from past forestry activities are felt in frequent landslides and floods. Recent events show that the annual monsoon season in the country has brought severe flooding in most areas.

- In 2011, most of the disasters that claimed the lives of people and affected properties and livelihoods of the most vulnerable were brought about by increased rainfall which caused massive flash flooding in areas which don't normally experience such.

- ... the Philippines is situated along a highly seismic area lying along the Pacific Ring of Fire and is highly-prone to earthquakes. According to the Philippine Institute on Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVLOCS), the country experiences an average of five (5) earthquakes a day. Earthquake disasters are not as frequent as the typhoons and flooding that take place in the Philippines. Nevertheless, the impact generated on affected communities is usually massive and devastating.

- The Philippines is ... prone to volcanic eruptions being situated along the Pacific Ring of Fire where two major tectonic plates (Philippine Sea and Eurasian) meet. This explains the occurrence of earthquakes and tsunamis and the existence of around 300 volcanoes of which 22 are active.

- In an analysis of natural disaster hotspots by the Hazard Management Unit of the World Bank in 2005, the Philippines is among the countries where large percentages of population reside in disaster prone areas. In the 2011 World Risk Report published by United Nations University and the Institute of

Environment and Human Security, looking into the four components of risk (exposure, susceptibility, coping and adapt capacities), the Philippines is the third most disaster risk country worldwide.


- Aside from natural causes, the country also experiences human-induced disasters. These are brought about by hazards that are of political and socio-economic origins, among others. Many are forced to evacuate during times of conflict. Violence continues to plague the country, with most of the fighting in the South. Intense fighting between government forces and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) during the first half of year 2009 resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians. The government and the MILF decided to lay down their arms and work toward peace accord that had failed in 2009 in Malaysia. On the other hand, the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), labelled a terrorist organization, continued to carry out bombings and rebels were killed during clashes with the military in the latter part of 2009. These human-induced disasters caused by armed fightings in the South continue to threaten the security of civilian communities which result into the displacement of thousands of civilians. So long as there is no peace settlement mechanism in Mindanao, internally displaced civilians will remain a given collateral damage of every armed conflict. Such disasters consequently cause public anxiety, lost of lives, destruction of properties and sometimes socio-political stability.

In view of the foregoing, this measure aims to establish standard-based relief shelters and sites throughout the country with the end in view of decongesting temporary evacuation centers in public schools and private facilities. The bill addresses the need to prioritize the needs of vulnerable individuals and groups. Congestion in most evacuation centers usually puts at risk senior citizens, the disabled, children and pregnant women who are more vulnerable to diseases. Moreover, this proposal can minimize the loss of lives by bringing the evacuation centers nearer to the populace and at the most accessible and safe areas.

Due to the country's vulnerability to natural disasters, it is imperative to device long-term response to this unpleasant situation by establishing permanent evacuation centers throughout the country consistent with the identified outcomes of the NDRRMP, particularly in providing adequate temporary shelters.

The NDRRMP specifically states that, "Disasters leave many people homeless. Temporary shelters in some ways provide a measure of comfort safety for victims. The provision of adequate temporary shelters is of invaluable importance during cataclysmic times. It is about a temporary "home" where people, their sources of livelihoods and important valuables find refuge in times of disasters. Temporary shelters are not just about structures – a lot of things need to be considered both before, during and after a disaster happens."

In view thereof, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



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

SECTION 1. Declaration of State Policy. - It is the policy of the State to uphold the constitutional right of the people for the protection of their life and property and the promotion of the general welfare. Towards this end, the State, in recognition of the vulnerability of the Philippines to climate change, the occurrence of severe floods, typhoons, and other natural or human-induced disasters, illnesses, diseases and other factors that affect the environment, shall institutionalize the government's effort to establish and maintain fully-equipped and fully-operational evacuation centers and make them responsive to environmental or climatic events.

SEC. 2. Establishment of Evacuation Centers. - There shall be established an evacuation center in every city and every municipality in the country which shall provide immediate and temporary accommodation for people who have been evacuated or displaced from their homes due to emergency events such as typhoons, floods, storm surges, drought and other severe climate disturbances, as well as fire, and the outbreak of illnesses and diseases that presents imminent danger to life and property.

Evacuation centers shall have, as far as practicable, the following essential facilities:

- (a) a centralized kitchen and laundry areas;
- (b) a clinic;
- (c) a stockroom;
- (d) a paging system room with security camera;
- (e) an office for social welfare personnel;
- (f) a generator;
- (g) gender-sensitive areas for women, specifically breastfeeding mothers;
- (h) separate comfort rooms for male and female;
- (i) a counseling area;
- (j) a garbage segregation facility;
- (k) a child friendly space and learning area;
- (l) spaces for people's livestock, poultry and pets;
- (m) stockroom for relief goods;
- (n) storm shelters as may be appropriate and necessary; and
- (o) other essential facilities as may be determined by the implementing agency

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) shall be responsible in formulating the appropriate specifications for evacuation centers and to ensure compliance with these specifications during the construction of evacuation centers. It shall consider the weather pattern,

topographical features, climate, flexible or alternative uses of space when it is not being used as an evacuation area, and unique social condition, in the design and construction of evacuation centers in every city and municipality of the country to ensure that they shall withstand all weather conditions and address the need of disaster victims for humane temporary shelters and the public in general. The specifications shall be periodically reviewed and, if necessary, revised by the DPWH every three years.

SEC. 3. Role of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC).

– The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) shall be the lead agency in implementing this Act. It shall give utmost priority to those areas of the country that are (a) identified as disaster prone; (b) financially incapable to establish their own evacuation centers; and (c) do not have existing evacuation centers of their own.

It shall enter into memoranda of agreement (MOA) with the concerned local government units (LGUs) for the maintenance, operation and management of a permanent evacuation center in their respective areas of jurisdiction. It shall provide technical assistance and support services to these LGUs in the management of evacuation centers.

Local chief executives concerned shall evaluate and provide suitable sites for evacuation centers to determine their geographical suitability, geological stability, and public accessibility in times of disasters. They shall provide for the maintenance, operation and management of the evacuation centers taking into consideration the goal of life preservation and meeting the basic subsistence needs of affected population based on acceptable standards during or immediately after a disaster.

SEC. 4. Coordination Among Agencies. – The NDRRMC shall coordinate with the DPWH and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) with regard the design specifications, cost estimates and construction details of evacuation centers that will be constructed pursuant to this Act.

Concerned government agencies and instrumentalities, when necessary, shall provide assistance to the NDRRMC to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of this Act.

SEC. 5. Operation and Maintenance of Evacuation Centers. – The operation and management of evacuation centers shall be under the auspices of the LGUs where the evacuation center is situated while the DPWH shall be charged with the maintenance of evacuation centers that will be constructed under this Act.

The local sanggunian shall promulgate guidelines and procedures for the use and operation of the evacuation centers under their jurisdiction. The guidelines shall include provisions on the use of the evacuation center when it is not being utilized as an evacuation center. *Provided, however, That* the evacuation center, when it is not being utilized as such, may only be used for those activities or for such purposes that shall not impede upon the need for its instantaneous utilization as evacuation area such as a sports complex, bazaar, or other similar facilities with collapsible amenities.

SEC. 6. Implementing Rules and Regulations – The NDRRMC in consultation with the DPWH, DOST, League of Cities of the Philippines, League of Municipalities of the Philippines, and other concerned government and private agencies shall, within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, prepare the implementing rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 7. Appropriations. – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged to the appropriations of the DPWH with respect to the construction and maintenance of evacuation centers. For this purpose, the DPWH shall include in its program and annual budget the

maintenance of evacuation centers established under this Act.

The amount necessary for the operation of the evacuation centers shall be charged to the funds of the LDRRMC.

Thereafter, such sum as may be needed by the concerned agencies for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision or part thereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

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

SEC. 10. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,