

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. **1763**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES	
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Introduced by **BAYAN MUNA**
Rep. CARLOS ISAGANI ZARATE

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING IN EVERY TWO TO THREE CONTIGUOUS BARANGAYS A
PERMANENT EVACUATION CENTER (PEC) THAT IS BIG ENOUGH TO
ACCOMMODATE THE TARGET POPULATION, STRONG ENOUGH TO
WITHSTAND NATURAL CALAMITIES AND SITUATED AWAY FROM WATERS
AND LANDSLIDE-PRONE AREAS, WHICH SHALL LIKEWISE SERVE AS THE
CENTRAL DISASTER RISK REDUCTION MANAGEMENT INSTITUTION PER
RESPECTIVE COMMUNITIES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

What had been abnormal weather patterns before have now become the new normal ones. Thus, it is now a fact we have to accept and live by—climate change has transformed natural calamities into more disastrous and more deadly types. People now have to start adjusting to this reality and take positive steps to mitigate, to the least possible, effects of disasters that might be even worse than we could imagine.

Indeed, nobody ever thought that the strong winds and fury released by typhoon Yolanda in 2013 would reach sustained winds of up to a record-breaking 315 kph. Before Yolanda, the world strongest recorded by far was Hurricane Camille in 1969 with 305 kph of sustained winds (Wikipedia).

Coupled by the unexpected storm surge that brought waters rising up to almost 20 feet high, nobody among the Typhoon Yolanda victims ever imagined that it would be like the more familiar tsunami that inundated everything and literally flattened their communities the moment it subsided.

Some school buildings used as evacuation centers during the pre-emptive evacuation in some areas in Visayas for typhoon Yolanda were also not spared because of the misinformation of a storm surge. Numerous evacuees actually died in the said school buildings.

Schools have always been commonly used as evacuation centers in many calamity-stricken localities. The problem is that schools are not made to accommodate families in distress because these are not usually equipped with enough facilities such as comfort rooms, kitchens, or sleeping areas to lessen the discomfort of families having to leave their homes to save their lives.

In fact, schools should not and are not supposed to be used as evacuation centers because the children's education are the most affected especially in situations when things should have started to get normal after each calamity, natural or even man-made. Yet, families cannot yet vacate the school premises because their houses have not yet been repaired nor constructed. This practice of using schools as evacuation centers has to stop to cushion the impact of calamities and disasters, especially on the children.

In the absence still of a comprehensive disaster reduction and risk plan, it is imperative that evacuation centers be constructed in a location, that serves as center to two or three contiguous barangays, strong enough to withstand typhoons like Yolanda and are climate change-adaptive. This bill seeks not only to establish a permanent evacuation center to every communities in this country, it likewise seeks to have such permanent evacuation serve as the central disaster risk reduction management (DRRM) institutional infrastructure in every communities. This means that these permanent evacuation centers shall not only be for the purpose of sheltering evacuees, but shall also serve as the infrastructure which the national and local government could effectively implement and deliver their DRRM policies. In turn, these shall serve as the primary institute for communities in preparing for disasters and calamities, information campaign on DRRM, among others.

As lesson learned from Yolanda and even from previous typhoons that had wrought almost the same damage to affected areas, evacuation centers should be constructed in areas at a distance safe from waters and landslide-prone areas.

Lives have been wasted because of the negligence on the part of the government to ensure that a program for the disaster preparedness and risk reduction would really lessen the impact of calamities on the lives of the people.

Meantime, the fact that the Philippines is a country often visited by typhoons yearly, the government has to undertake measures while waiting for the completion of a comprehensive program and its eventual implementation. We can save lives by ensuring that sturdy and typhoon-resilient, climate change-adaptive evacuation centers are located at a distance safe from waters and landslide-prone areas in every two to three contiguous barangays.

Based on the foregoing, the approval of this Bill is earnestly sought.

Approved,


Rep. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
Bayan Muna Party-list

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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 Policy.*— It is the policy of the State to uphold the people's constitutional rights to life and property by strengthening both the institutional capacity of the country's disaster risk reduction and management policy and the resilience of our communities against disasters through the creation of social infrastructures such as permanent evacuation centers.

SECTION 2. *Establishment of Community-based Permanent Evacuation Centers.*— There shall be created a permanent evacuation center located in the center of every two to three contiguous barangays nationwide to accommodate the population of the contiguous communities.

These evacuation centers shall be designed to withstand wind speed of at least 300 kilometers per hour and moderate seismic activity of at least 8.0-magnitude. Evacuation centers should have the following essential facilities and equipment:

- a) Cubicles which could house at least five (5) families;
- b) Restrooms;
- c) Centralized kitchen and laundry areas;
- d) A generator;
- e) Sufficient water supply;
- f) DRRM training facilities;
- g) Rainwater catchment system;

- h) A clinic which will house sufficient and necessary medical equipment, as well as a counseling area;
- i) Offices for Social welfare and Local Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (LDDRMC) personnel;
- j) Appropriate natural ventilations;
- k) Stockroom for relief goods; and
- l) Such other physical provisions guaranteeing humane conditions for evacuees

SECTION 3. *Site Location.*—In the selection of sites of the evacuation centers, the agencies herein mentioned should consider site stability and susceptibility to landslide or flooding based on the latest vulnerability and risk assessment and geohazard maps of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. They shall also put prime consideration on public accessibility and the community-based present within the targeted area for construction.

SECTION 4. *PECs as Central DRRM Institutions of Communities.*—To further realize DRRM in its community-based orientation, permanent evacuation centers shall serve as the central DRRM institution of communities, as an institute to train and ready communities for disasters. The LDRRMC shall regularly hold DRRM training activities and information campaign at their respective PECs. The permanent evacuation center shall likewise house the LDRRMC operation center, to further integrate the national and local DRRM agencies and policies to the communities;

SECTION 5. *Operations and Maintenance of Evacuation Centers.*—Upon completion of the permanent evacuation center, the NDRRMC shall turn over the same to the respective Local Government Units (LGUs) which shall then have the responsibility over the management, operations and maintenance of their respective permanent evacuation centers. The NDRRMC and the LGUs shall enter a memorandum of agreement (MOA) to maintain the national-local coordination in ensuring that the standards and qualifications in the establishment and maintenance of the permanent evacuation centers are regularly met.

SECTION 6. *Implementing Agencies.*—The NDRRMC shall be the lead agency in ensuring that the requirements for such an evacuation center are met in accordance with the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Plan. The lead agency shall coordinate with the Department of Science and Technology and the Department of Public Works and Highways in the planning and construction of such facilities.

SECTION 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*—The NDRRMC 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;

SECTION 8. *Appropriations.* — The amount of Ten Billion Pesos (P10,000,000,000) is hereby appropriated to the NDRRMC for the initial implementation of this Act. The lead agency shall first prioritize areas that are identified as disaster prone. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for the establishment of permanent evacuation centers throughout the whole country shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive and administrative orders or parts thereof, inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,