

**Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City, Metro Manila**

Thirteenth Congress  
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 2507



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**Introduced by Honorable Catalino V. Figueroa**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

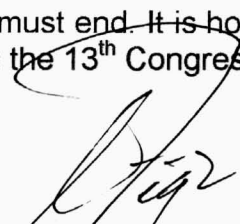
The continuing deterioration of PAGASA makes it exceedingly difficult to fulfill its mandate to the detriment of the people. PAGASA has submitted to the Executive an eight (8) year Modernization Program which has remain un-acknowledge up to the present. Government has funneled the necessary funds to its sister agency, the PHILVOLCS, but the funds for the weather bureau are not forthcoming. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the Congress to initiate the modernization of PAGASA in the face of this glaring indifference by the Executive Branch.

The Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) is the country's official weather bureau. Its weather reports influence the planting of crops by farmers as well as the daily lives of the public particularly those in the business sector, education and those who are reporting for work daily since its typhoon and flood warnings save lives across the country from urban centers to rural communities. The Philippines, which is being a Pacific island, is visited by typhoon more than twenty (20) times in a year and therefore, it becomes imperative that the public be given access to accurate and timely weather report.

Moreover, PAGASA is tasked with a very crucial and sensitive responsibility, that is, providing reliable, accurate and timely weather confirmation to the public. Its mandate does not only cover typhoons or severe weather phenomena but also some events that are indicated or arising from the weather. Aside from the daily weather reports, PAGASA is also tasked with providing flood warnings to low-lying communities as well as meteorological data to the agricultural sector.

It is therefore perplexing that among Southeast Asian countries, the Philippines fails to invest the necessary financial and material support to keep the weather bureau equipped to perform its vital functions. The clamor for the revamp and reform of PAGASA reaches its crescendo during a super typhoon when their deficiencies become pretty obvious. This clamor, however, conveniently disappears in the typhoon wake, that is, until the coming of the next severe weather.

This cycle of criticism and neglect must end. It is hoped that the orphaned PAGASA modernization will find solace in the 13<sup>th</sup> Congress.

  
**CATALINO V. FIGUEROA**

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**AN ACT  
PROVIDING FOR THE MODERNIZATION OF THE PHILIPPINE  
ATMOSPHERIC GEOPHYSICAL AND ASTRONOMICAL SERVICES  
ADMINISTRATION (PAGASA) AND 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".

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is hereby declared that the policy of the State to improve weather forecasting in the country and to ensure its accuracy and timely dissemination to the public. Towards this end, the State shall undertake the modernization of the national weather service to ensure the safety and well-being of the people and to ensure national progress.

In the implementation of the foregoing policy, the State shall, in accordance with the provisions of this Act:

- (a) undertake measure 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 the educational projects and programs in storm signals, the development of typhoons, climactic changes, and other related information;
- (c) upgrade, modernize, and procure late model weather and geophysical equipment, instruments and facilities and application of the new technologies to improve our capabilities in providing timely and reliable forecasting, warning services and information for agriculture, transportation and other industries across the country.

SECTION 3. *Components of Modernization.* To realize improved and enhanced weather and flood forecasting, climate monitoring/prediction, and astronomical and associated services, the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) shall undertake an eight (8) year modernization program. Towards this end, the PAGASA shall adopt the following four-pronged principal approach:

- (a) modernization of physical resources and operational techniques through acquisition of late-model instruments, equipment and facilities, with emphasis on weather and flood monitoring and warning system and agrometeorological observation system to strengthen services for agriculture.

(b) Intensification of human resources development to keep at pace with the rapid scientific and technological advances.

(c) Upgrading of research and development capability through a more rationalized and totally integrated approach and identified activities, with focus on improvement of operations as well as the development of specialized services for cost recovery.

(d) Establishment of social weather service centers in strategic cities in the country to broaden the agency's bases for delivery of service to the countryside.

**SECTION 4. *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, advance observational and surveillance for meteorological and hydrological elements, satellite based communication network, supercomputers for data processing analyses and forecasting, and computer based workstations for generating increased volume for detailed information. It shall also establish an efficient human resources development program that emphasizes on professional education, training and research.

**SECTION 5. *PAGASA Modernization Council.*** There is hereby created a Modernization Council composed of Secretary of Science and Technology, the Director of PAGASA, the Chairmen of the Congressional Committees on Science and Technology, and a representative from the Office of The President who shall administer and direct the implementation of the modernization program provided under this Act. The Council, to be chaired by the Secretary of DOST, shall determine the exact nature of equipment to be procured under the modernization program.

**SECTION 6. *Schedule of Modernization.*** The modernization program shall be undertaken in two (2) stages covering eight (8) years. The **first stage** shall cover the first six(6) years and shall focus on infrastructure upgrading and development, namely:

(a) establishment of regional service centers in five (5) strategically located cities in the country, namely, Tuguerarao City, Legaspi City, Mactan-Cebu, Cagayan De Oro City and Davao City.

(b) telecommunications network development with the introduction of satellite based communications system, and

(c) modernization of observation network and severe weather surveillance systems including but not limited to the procurement of additional doppler radars, data collection platforms, radar rain gauge and integrated computer system.

The **second phase**, which shall cover the remaining two (2) years but may overlap with the first phase, shall entail the investment of resources for the utilization of acquired and adapted technologies by adequately trained staff. The components of second stage of implementation shall include:

(a) operationalization of weather "nowcasting" and mesoscale meteorology at the local communities within the reach of regional centers;

(b) development of computer-based computer technologies for flood forecasting operations;

(c) integrated research and development;

(d) operationalization of the domestic marine weather and expanded farm weather forecasting services, and

(e) Philippine standard time broadcasting and dissemination system development.

**SECTION 7. *PAGASA Modernization Fund.*** There is hereby created the PAGASA Modernization Fund which shall be used exclusively to fund the

modernization program provided under this Act. The national government is hereby mandated to allocate and appropriate Two Billion Five Hundred Million Pesos (P2,500,000,000.000) which shall comprise the said fund, and which thereafter include whatever funds maybe made available from, but not limited, to the following sources:

(a) Two Hundred Fifty Million Pesos (P250 M) per year, for the next eight years following the approval of this Act, from the share of the Office of the President in the annual aggregate gross earnings of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR), also known as the President's Social Fund;

(b) Loans, grants, bequests, and donations whether from local or foreign sources. The Secretary of the DOST with the approval of the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) is hereby granted the authority to enter into loan agreements with foreign financial institutions;

(c) Thirty percent (30%) of the Charity Fund of six (6) lottery draws per annum conducted by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO); and

(d) All interest income of the Fund.

The Modernization Fund shall be administered by the Secretary of the DOST in accordance with government auditing rules and regulations, however, disbursement and allocation of the same shall be subject to a resolution of the Modernization Council created under Section 5 of this Act.

The current approved appropriation for PAGASA upon the enactment of this Act is hereby maintained.

**SECTION 8. *Cost Recovery Measure.*** The PAGASA, with the approval of the DOST's Secretary, 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 for which the necessary fees can be charged, Provided however, that no fees shall be charged on the issuance of regular and special reports to the general public that affect national safety, weather and economy and such other relevant data.

**SECTION 9. *Annual 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.

**SECTION 10. *Repeal of Inconsistent Law.*** 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.

**SECTION 11. *Effectivity.*** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,