

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

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 517

INTRODUCED BY HON. MARCELINO "MARCY" R. TEODORO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is located in the western rim of the Pacific Ocean, an active portion of the earth characterized by an encircling belt of active volcanoes and fault lines. As such, it has always been subjected to constant disasters and calamities like earthquakes and typhoons.

Specifically, an average of twenty (20) typhoons devastate the Philippines annually affecting millions of Filipinos and leaving behind injuries and deaths, as well as damage to properties amounting to billions of pesos.

Said condition prevailing in the Philippines requires a dependable national weather service to ensure utmost public safety and well-being of the country. Further, it must be stressed that ours is an agricultural country. It is extremely necessary that we consider farmers' welfare by giving them precise weather information to protect themselves and their crops.

Lately, however, there have been incidences of apparently imprecise information given to the public by Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration that places in great danger the safety and lives of our citizens and cause considerable damage to property.

While, forecasting may be viewed an inexact science despite advances in technology, still, there is a need to modernize the country's weather forecasting system to, at least, minimize damages caused by typhoons and other weather disturbances.

This measure seeks, among others, to establish a modern weather and flood forecasting, and climate prediction, monitoring and warning system; to upgrade the disaster management and emergency preparedness capability of our country; and to improve physical resources and operational techniques through the acquisition of state-of-the-art instruments, equipment and facilities in providing timely and reliable forecasting and warning service.

Hence, in view of the foregoing, immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



MARCELINO "MARCY" R. TEODORO
Representative, 1st District
Marikina City

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE MODERNIZATION OF THE PHILIPPINE
ATMOSPHERIC GEOPHYSICAL AND ASTRONOMICAL SERVICE
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."

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. It is hereby declared 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, the State shall, in accordance with the provision 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 through the educational project and programs in storm signals, the development of typhoons, climatic changes, and other related information;
- c. Upgrade, modernize and procure state-of-the-art weather and geophysical equipment, instruments and facilities, and the application of 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.

SEC. 3. Components of Modernization. To realize improved and enhanced weather and flood forecasting, climate monitoring/prediction and astronomical and associated service, the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Service Administration (PAGASA) shall undertake a six (6) year modernization program. Towards this end, the PAGASA shall adopt the following four pronged principal approach, in the order of priority:

- a. Establishment of regional weather service centers strategic areas in the country to broaden the agency's bases for delivery of service to the countryside;

b. Modernization of physical resources and operational techniques through acquisition of state-of-the-art instruments, equipment and facilities, with emphasis on weather and flood monitoring and warning system and agro-meteorological observation system to strengthen services for agriculture;

c. Intensification of human resources development to keep at pace with rapid scientific and technological advances.

d. 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.

SEC. 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 system for meteorological and hydrological elements, whenever possible satellite-based communications networks, supercomputers for data processing analysis 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.

SEC. 5. PAGASA Modernization Oversight Committee. There is hereby created a Modernization Oversight Committee composed of the Secretary of Science and Technology, the Director of the PAGASA, the Chairperson of the Congressional Committee on Science and Technology, and a representatives from the Office of the President, through the Project Monitoring Staff of the National economic and Development Authority (NEDA), who shall oversee the implementation of the modernization program provided under this Act. The Committee shall be chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST).

SEC. 6. PAGASA Modernization Fund. There is hereby created the PAGASA modernization Fund which shall be used exclusively to fund the modernization program which shall include whatever funds may be made available from, but not limited to, the following sources:

a. 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.

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

SEC. 7. Cost Recovery Measures. The PAGASA, with the approval of the DOST Secretary, shall implement a sustainable cost recovery program that will allow it to earn revenue from its issuance of specialized weather information, certification, and scientific and technical publications for which the necessary fees can be charged; Provided that one hundred percent (100%) of the collected shall be retained by PAGASA for the next twenty (20) years starting six (6) years after the effectivity of this Act, for the operation and maintenance of the equipment acquired during the modernization program; Provided, however, that no fees shall be charge on the issuance of regular and special reports to the

general public that affect national safety , weather, and economy, and such other relevant data:

SEC. 8. Progress Report. The Secretary of the DOST and the Director of the PAGASA Committees on Science and Technology a quarterly reports on the progress of the modernization program for the duration of its implementation.

SEC.9. 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.10 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.