

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
H.B. No. 2004

INTRODUCED BY THE HONORABLE ANGELO PALMONES

**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE EXEMPTION OF THE
PHILIPPINE ATMOSPHERIC, GEOPHYSICAL, ASTRONOMICAL
AND SEISMOLOGICAL ADMINISTRATION (PAGASA) FROM
THE GOVERNMENT SALARY STANDARDIZATION LAW AND
PROVIDING FOR THE SALARY SCALE FOR PAGASA
EMPLOYEES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Typhoons, monsoon rains, thunderstorms and other high impact weather events such as, floods, storm surges, as well as droughts pose serious threats to life and property. Hundreds of lives and billions of pesos worth of property are lost every year from the ravages of these disaster-causing natural events thus affecting adversely the economic and social conditions in the country.

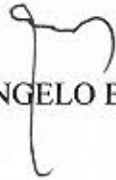
The Philippines is in the middle of these high-impact weather related phenomena. From 1987 to 1996, deaths due to tropical cyclones were 9,428 while damage to property exceeded 5,570 million pesos. Since then there were destructive typhoons that hit the country. These included typhoon Mellenyo in 2006, Frank in 2007, Ondoy and Pepeng in 2008, and most recently typhoon Basyang which inflicted 39 deaths, 84 missing and loss of properties amounting to One Hundred Forty Eight (P148 M) million pesos.

It may not be possible at this point in time to prevent destructive natural phenomena from occurring, however, it is possible to reduce such losses through an effective disaster mitigating program, by adopting appropriate advances in science and technology.

The ability of PAGASA to make accurate weather forecasts is hampered either by outdated forecasting equipment or simply the lack of them. One example is the forecast for typhoon Basyang. It was earlier forecast that the typhoon would pass through northern and central Luzon, it in fact passed through Southern Tagalog region and through Metro-Manila catching the population in these areas unprepared.

Equally important in the forecasting of weather events are the personnel of PAGASA who collect weather data from the field, those who process the data and those who make analysis and forecasts and those who inform the public of the impending weather events. Data processing, analysis and forecasting require team-work by specialized and highly trained personnel. At present, of the 1,452 staff of PAGASA 608 have a bachelor's degree, 44 with Master's degree and 10 with PhD degree. This miniscule number of highly trained personnel is under constant threat of being depleted due to the lure of higher-paying jobs overseas. In addition there is no university in the Philippines that offers the bachelor's degree in meteorology. What is present is a masteral and PhD degree training.

Thus the ranks of trained meteorologist/weather forecasters continue to dwindle because of higher paying jobs outside the Philippines.



ANGELO B. PALMONES

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

SECTION 1. *Title* - This Act shall be known as the PAGASA Salary Standardization Act of 2010.

SECTION 2. *Statement of Policy and Objectives* – It is the policy of the State to protect life and property and promote the general welfare of the people which are essential in the enjoyment of the blessing of democracy. It is the purpose of this Act to provide commensurate remuneration to the employees of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) in order for the institution to be able to keep its highly trained personnel from migrating to other countries for higher paying jobs and in order for the institution to be able to deliver reliable and timely forecasts of meteorological and weather events to reduce if not prevent the loss of life and properties in the country.

SECTION 3. *Exemption from the Government Salary Standardization Law (RA 6758)* – In order to provide salaries and compensation for the employees of PAGASA commensurate to those offered in foreign countries PAGASA is exempted from the operation of the Government Salary Standardization Law (RA 6758). Furthermore, since weather forecasting starts from the gathering of meteorological data from the field which are fed to the PAGASA Central Office for processing, analysis and forecasting of extreme weather events such as typhoon, floods and storm surges, field and office/administrative personnel other than forecasters are included in the exemption.

SECTION 4. – *Range of increases in salary rates of PAGASA employees* – The Department of Budget and Management (DBM), the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) shall jointly determine the appropriate compensation of PAGASA employees but such compensation shall not be lower than 150 percent nor higher than 200 percent of their current salaries and on top of pending government salary adjustments that are due them, should there be any.

SECTION 5. – *Effectivity of the salary increases* - The new salary rates become effective on January 1, 2011.

SECTION 6. – *Funding for this Act* - The initial funds to implement the provisions of this Act shall come from the calamity funds of the Office of the President and thereafter shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 7. – *Implementing Rules and Regulations* – The DOST shall be responsible for the promulgation of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of this Act in close consultation with the DBM and CSC and shall be promulgated within 180 days from the approval of this Act.

SECTION 8. *Separability clause* – If any section or provision of this Act shall be declared invalid or unconstitutional, such shall not invalidate any other section or provision of this Act.

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof which are in conflict with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 10. *Effectivity* – This Act shall take effect thirty (30) days following its full publication in the Official Gazette or two (2) major daily newspaper of general circulation.

Approved