

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 419



INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ARTHUR C. YAP

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Every year, an average of 20 – 25 typhoons and tropical depressions hit the country leaving behind massive destruction of agricultural resources, properties and loss of lives. The damage is further aggravated by the lack of disaster preparedness of the people as well as of government agencies concerned. Worse, there have been instances of inaccurate weather forecasts by the government through the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), which all the more confuse the public.

These errors committed by the agency are attributable to inadequate equipment and technical know-how of its personnel to cope up with the changing weather and climate conditions in the country. Recently, there have been reports of dissension among, and exodus of employees of the agency due to low wages and insufficient benefits given to them considering the highly technical nature of their functions and the hazards they face on the job. This has resulted to a brain drain of available expertise in the field and has made it more difficult for the agency to discharge its mandate.

On the above premises, there is a need to modernize the equipment and facilities of PAGASA, further train its personnel, and increase the base pay and benefits of its officials and personnel to improve the agency's services and enhance professionalism and patriotism among its employees.

Primarily, this bill seeks to:

- 1) Upgrade the physical resources and operational techniques of the agency to improve its capability and services in providing timely and accurate weather forecasts and warnings;
- 2) To raise the research and development capability of human resources development by adopting a rationalized and integrated approach; and,
- 3) To increase the base pay and benefits of the agency's personnel to encourage them to continue on their jobs and avert a brain drain, and to encourage a higher level of commitment to their tasks and sworn duties.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of the bill is earnestly urged.


ARTHUR C. YAP
Representative

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE MODERNIZATION OF THE PHILIPPINE
ATMOSPHERIC, GEOPHYSICAL AND ASTRONOMICAL
SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (PAGASA), PROVIDING FUNDS
THEREFORE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

1 **SECTION 1. Title** – This Act shall be known as “The PAGASA Modernization
2 Act of 2013”

3 **SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy** – It is hereby declared to be the policy of
4 the State to utilize scientific knowledge and information as an effective instrument to
5 ensure the safety, well-being and economic security of the people; to promote national
6 progress and to contribute to regional socioeconomic development through various
7 applications of meteorology, geophysics and space sciences. It also recognizes the
8 responsibility of the State to strengthen the capability of the State towards the
9 institutionalization of a highly efficient and competent personnel of the government
10 agency tasked to provide weather services and information to the public. Towards this
11 end, the State shall undertake the modernization of the Philippine Atmospheric,
12 Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) to elevate its
13 technological and operational capacity to effectively and efficiently perform its mandate,
14 and to standardize the base pay and other benefits of its personnel making it par with
15 other government agencies rendering similar technical services to the people.

1 **SECTION 3. Objectives** – Pursuant to the foregoing policy, the PAGASA
2 modernization program shall be implemented in accordance with the following
3 objectives:

4 a) To upgrade physical resources and operational techniques through acquisition of
5 state-of-the-art instruments, equipment and facilities to enhance current
6 capabilities in providing timely and reliable forecasting, warning services for the
7 general public and information for agriculture, transportation and other industries
8 across the country.

9 b) To raise the research and development capability and human resources
10 development, adopting a rationalized and integrated approach with focus on
11 improvement of operations for specialized services and cost recovery.

12 c) To develop mechanisms for integrating disaster management and socioeconomic
13 development planning at the national and local levels.

14 d) To establish regional weather service centers in strategic areas in the country to
15 broaden the agency's bases for delivery of service to the countryside;

16 e) To cultivate greater awareness by the public of weather systems, the progress of
17 typhoons, climatic changes and other related information through the educational
18 projects and programs;

19 f) To develop a technology-based and financially self-sufficient data center which
20 will serve as the central information station for real time weather updates
21 available to every individual and for the Philippines' typhoon preparedness plan;
22 and,

23 g) To standardize the base pay and other benefits of its personnel to promote
24 professionalism and commitment to the service.

25 **SECTION 4. Manpower Training** – The three (3)-year modernization plan
26 shall include manpower training component that shall include undergraduate and
27 postgraduate degree training subcomponents. Scholarships shall be provided for
28 undergraduate and graduate degree trainings. The University of the Philippines Los

1 Banos is mandated, along with the Bicol University, the Central Luzon State University,
2 the Mariano Marcos State University, the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila and the
3 Visayas State University to offer an undergraduate degree program in Meteorology
4 within three (3) years from the enactment of this Act. Other state and private universities
5 and colleges may likewise offer a Bachelor of Science in Meteorology.

6 **SECTION 5. *Period of Implementation*** – The modernization program under
7 this Act shall be implemented over a period of three (3) years. *Provided, however,* That
8 payments for amortization of outstanding multi-year contract obligations incurred under
9 this Act may extend beyond this period, including increases in the base pay and other
10 benefits of the agency’s personnel as provided for in this Act.

11 **SECTION 6. *Formulation and Submission of PAGASA Modernization***
12 ***Program*** – The secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the
13 Director of PAGASA, in coordination with the Secretary of the Department of Budget
14 and management (DBM) and the Director-General of the National Economic and
15 Development Authority (NEDA), shall be responsible for formulating the PAGASA
16 Modernization Program based on the policy objectives provided in this Act.

17 Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of the
18 DOST shall submit to the President the PAGASA Modernization Program for final
19 approval.

20 **SECTION 7. *Standardization of the Base Pay and Other Benefits of PAGASA***
21 ***Personnel.*** - In order to promote the general welfare, commitment to service and
22 professionalism, the DBM shall determine the various ranks and qualifications of
23 personnel of the agency, and the corresponding base pay, allowances and other benefits
24 to enhance the achievement of the objectives of this Act : *Provided,* that the base pay,
25 allowances and other benefits of the abovementioned personnel shall be in accordance
26 with the existing compensation and position classification laws and regulations.

27 **SECTION 8. *Appropriations.*** – The amount necessary to carry out the
28 implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current fiscal year appropriations
29 of the Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and

1 Astronomical Services Administration (DOST-PAGASA). Thereafter, the amount needed
2 for the continued implementation of the modernization program shall be included in the
3 annual General Appropriations Act.

4 The above-stated amount may be augmented by grants, bequests, contributions
5 and donations whether from local or foreign sources: *Provided*, That acceptance of
6 grants, bequest, contribution and donations from foreign governments shall be subject to
7 the approval of the President upon the recommendations of the Secretaries of the DOST
8 and the Department of Foreign governments shall be subject to the approval of the
9 President upon the recommendations of the Secretaries of the DOST and the Department
10 of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

11 **SECTION 9. *Progress Report.*** - The Director of PAGASA shall prepare an
12 annual report on the status of the implementation of the Modernization Program. The
13 annual report shall be submitted, through the Secretary of the DOST, to the President and
14 to the Chairpersons of the committees on Science and Technology of the Senate and the
15 House of Representatives.

16 **SECTION 10. *Cost Recovery Measures*** – The PAGASA, with the approval of
17 the DOST Secretary shall implement a sustainable cost recovery program that will allow
18 it to earn revenue from its issuance of specialized weather information, certifications, and
19 scientific and technical publications for which the necessary fees can be charged:
20 *Provided*, That the fees collected shall be deposited as income of the General Fund:
21 *Provided, further*, That no fees shall be charged on the issuance of regular and special
22 reports to the general public that effect national safety, weather and economy, and such
23 other relevant data.

24 **SECTION 11. *Separability Clause.*** - If any provision or part of this Act is
25 declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions hereof which are not affected
26 thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

27 **SECTION 12. *Repealing Clause.*** - All laws, orders, proclamation, rules and
28 regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are
29 hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

1 **SECTION 13. *Effectivity Clause.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days
2 after its publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.