

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



SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1486

Introduced by **HONORABLE LANI MERCADO-REVILLA**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Our country's geographic location makes us prone to natural hazards. The Philippines occupies the western rim of the Pacific Ocean, the most active portion of the earth that is occupied by an ocean-encircling belt of active volcanoes and earthquake generators. Earthquakes occur every now and then. There are 22 potentially active volcanoes in the country.

To add, we experience an average of 22 typhoons per year, with at least 5 destructive ones. In 2012, Filipinos can very well remember how a strong movement of a Southwest monsoon (Habagat) affected most parts of the country over an eight-day period. The intense flooding and raining it caused left 95 people dead, 8,428 homes destroyed, and 6,706 damaged. Losses throughout the country amounted to at least P604.63 million (US\$14.31 million). ("SitRep No.11 re Disease alert on as flood deaths hit 89 by TS "Haikui"". National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council. August 16, 2012. Retrieved August 16, 2012).

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration is the government agency mandated to *provide protection against natural calamities and utilize scientific knowledge as an effective instrument to insure the safety, well-being and economic security of all the people, and for promotion of national progress*. The magnitude of the role of the PAGASA as the primary government agency tasked to monitor and report weather conditions to the public must be stressed and emphasized. This bill seeks to empower PAGASA to speedily convey precise weather information as it is vital in determining the level of preparedness in handling natural disasters. Damage can be prevented and lives can be saved if we are scientifically informed and appropriately prepared.

In view of the foregoing, passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


REP. LANI MERCADO-REVILLA
2nd District, Cavite

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

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1486

Introduced by **HONORABLE LANI MERCADO-REVILLA**

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

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 Modernization Act of 2013”.

Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy. It is hereby declared to be the policy of the State to utilize scientific knowledge and information as an effective instrument to ensure the safety, well-being and economic security of the people; to promote national progress and to contribute to regional socioeconomic development through various applications of meteorology, geophysics and space sciences. Towards this end, the State shall undertake the modernization of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) to elevate its technological and operational capacity to effectively and efficiently perform its mandate.

Sec. 3. Objectives. Pursuant to the foregoing policy, the PAGASA modernization program shall be implemented in accordance with the following objectives:

- a) To upgrade physical resources and operational techniques through acquisition of state-of-the-art instruments, equipment and facilities to enhance current capabilities in providing timely and reliable forecasting, warning services for the general public and information for agriculture, transportation and other industries across the country;
- b) To raise the salary and compensation of the officers and employees of PAGASA to make their pay competitive in the global market;
- c) To raise the research and development capability and human resource development, adopting a rationalized and integrated approach with focus on improvement of operations for specialized services and cost recovery;
- d) To develop mechanisms for integrating disaster management and socioeconomic development planning at the national and local levels;
- e) To establish regional weather service centers in strategic areas in the country to broaden the agency's bases for delivery of service to the countryside;

- f) To cultivate greater awareness by the public of weather systems, the progress of typhoons, climatic changes and other related information through the educational projects and programs; and
- g) To develop a technology-based and financially self-sufficient data center which will serve as the central information station for real time weather updates available to every individual and for the Philippines' typhoon preparedness plan.

Sec. 4. Manpower Training. The three (3)-year modernization plan shall include a manpower training component that shall include undergraduate and postgraduate degree training subcomponents. Scholarships shall be provided for undergraduate and graduate degree trainings. The University of the Philippines-Los Baños is mandated, along with the Bicol University, the Central Luzon State University, the Mariano Marcos State University, the Pamantasan ng Lunsod ng Maynila and the Visayas State University to offer an undergraduate degree program in Meteorology within three (3) years from the enactment of this Act. Other state and private universities and colleges may likewise offer a Bachelor of Science in Meteorology.

Sec. 5. Period of Implementation. The modernization program under this Act shall be implemented over a period of three (3) years: *Provided, however,* that payments for amortization of outstanding multi-year contract obligations incurred under this Act may extend beyond this period.

Sec. 6. Formulation and Submission of PAGASA Modernization Program. The Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the Director of PAGASA, in coordination with the Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and the Director General of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), shall be responsible for formulating the PAGASA Modernization Program based on the policy objectives provided in this Act.

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

Sec. 7. Appropriations. The amount necessary to carry out the implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current fiscal year appropriations of the Department of Science and Technology – Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (DOST-PAGASA). Thereafter, the amount needed for the continued implementation of the modernization program shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

The above stated amount may be augmented by grants, bequests, contributions and donations whether from local or foreign sources: *Provided,* That acceptance of grants, bequests, contributions and donations from foreign shall be subject to the approval of the President upon the recommendations of the Secretaries of the DOST and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

Sec. 8. Progress Report. The Director of PAGASA shall prepare an annual report on the status of the implementation of the PAGASA Modernization Program. The annual report shall be submitted, through the Secretary of the DOST, to the President and to the Chairpersons of the Committees on Science and Technology of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Sec. 9. 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, certifications, and scientific and technical

publications for which the necessary fees can be charged: *Provided*, That the fees collected shall be deposited as income of the General Fund: *Provided, further*, That the fees collected 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.

Sec. 10. Separability Clause. If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

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

Approved,