

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **2076**



Introduced by **Honorable Ma. Georgina P. De Venecia**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to establish the National Inter-Agency Dam Safety Monitoring Committee.

Like most countries, dams and watersheds are constructed in the Philippines primarily for the purpose of irrigation, drainage and flood control. However, flooding, destructions of crops, infrastructure and other properties, not to mention the loss of lives still occur everytime the country is battered by 20 or more typhoons each year even with the presence of dams. One could still remember the heavy and extensive flooding in 2011 caused by typhoons Pedring and Quiel in Pangasinan and most of Central Luzon where large dams are located. In both instances, there had been a lot of finger-pointing on who was responsible for devastation. Dam managers had been blamed for untimely release of water from the dams. One government agency criticized another government agency for not allowing them to release water from a certain dam which they insisted could have prevented heavy flooding in a certain province. Meanwhile, an environment activist group had been blaming the government of being irresponsible for not doing much to prevent flooding knowing the impact of climate change on the weather.

Enough is enough. It is about time to stop blaming each other everytime floods occur. Instead, the government agencies should work hand in hand in order to help prevent floods and other devastations caused by spilling waters from dams. A national inter-agency dam safety monitoring committee must be established, as the main body

responsible for the management, supervision and control of dams and watersheds in the country. Likewise, a local dam safety watch task force shall be established in the locality where the dams are located. This is so because the local government units (LGUs) where the dams are located are the most knowledgeable of the circumstances of the facility, and the most affected in case of floods.

In view of the foregoing, and to prevent confusion as to what agency of the government is responsible on matters that involve dams and watersheds in the country especially during typhoons and other natural calamities, approval of this bill is highly and earnestly recommended.


HON. GEORGINA P. DE VENECIA

Fourth District, Pangasinan

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL INTER-AGENCY DAM SAFETY
MONITORING COMMITTEE FOR PROPER AND EFFECTIVE DAM
MONITORING SYSTEM

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

SECTION 1. Short Title- This Act shall be known as "Dam Safety Monitoring Act."

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy- It is hereby declared 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 through the provision of timely, clear, comprehensive dissemination of flood warning from the proper authorities to the people. For this purpose, a national inter-agency dam safety monitoring committee shall be established to rationalize and unify the management of dams and watersheds in the country, improve and strengthen the organizations and be responsible for the dissemination of information and warning of impending discharge of dam water and improve its manpower for a better delivery of its services to the nation.

SEC. 3. National Inter-Agency Dam Safety Monitoring Committee. - A National Inter-Agency Dam Safety Monitoring Committee, hereinafter referred to as the Committee, is hereby established for the overall management, supervision and regulation of all dams in the Philippines.

The Committee shall be composed of the following:

1. Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources, as chairperson;
2. Secretary of the Interior and Local Government;
3. Secretary of National Defense;
4. Secretary of Public Works and Highways;
5. Secretary of Health;
6. Secretary of Agriculture;
7. Secretary of Social Welfare and Development;
8. Administrator of the Manila Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS);

9. Chairperson of the National Water Review Board (NWRB);
10. Head of the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), as members.

SEC. 4. **Powers and Functions.** – The Committee shall exercise the following powers and functions:

1. Maintain proper operating conditions of all dams in the country;
2. Establish and maintain in the localities where dams are located, a Local Dam Safety Watch Task Force;
3. Review and revise flood forecasting and warning systems protocol in all existing and future dams;
4. Use hydrological data and information for the efficient operations and management for reservoirs and dams;
5. Disseminate and discharge flood warnings or information to the local, municipal and provincial government offices, disaster coordinating councilor and the general public; and
6. Perform such other functions as may be necessary to carry out the purpose of this Act.

SEC. 5. **Local Dam Safety Watch Task Force.** – The Local Dam Safety Watch Task Force, hereinafter referred to as the Local Task Force, is hereby established in each locality where the dam is located to provide the necessary information for the safe and cost effective operation of the existing dams in the country and to forewarn the people in the flood plains downstream of the dams of the impending release of impounded water through spillways during typhoons.

The Local Task Force is hereby mandated to:

1. Recommend the optimum use of the impounded water for power generation, irrigation, flood control and domestic water supply;
2. Mitigate flood damages, particularly loss of human lives, by timely and adequate warnings of impending release of impounded water through spillways;
3. Assess the weather conditions affecting or expected to affect the reservoir catchment areas;
4. Prepare, issue and disseminate warnings or flood bulletins and flood information as the case may be;
5. Decide and act expeditiously on matters concerning dams in times of emergencies and when the safety of the residents in the area are in immediate danger;
6. Report regularly to the Committee, starting the condition of the dams in the locality; and
7. Perform such other functions as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act.

SEC. 6. **Composition.** – The city or municipal mayor shall organize the Local Task Force to be composed of the following:

1. City or municipal mayor where the dam is located, as chairperson;

2. Vide-mayor;
3. Members of the Sanggunian;
4. Barangay Captains; and
5. Two (2) representatives from the private sector in the locality, as members.

The city or municipal mayor shall appoint the representative from the private sector in co-terminous capacity.

SEC. 7. Flood and Dam Operations Watchman. – The Committee shall, upon recommendation of the Local Task Force, appoint a Flood and Dam Operations Watchman in each dam in the locality, who shall take care and supervise all activities concerning flood and dam operations in the area he is assigned.

The Flood and Dam Operations Watchman shall report directly to the Local Task Force on matters concerning the dam assigned to him, and the Local Task Force shall report the same to the Committee.

The qualifications and compensation of the Flood and Dam Operations Watchman shall be determined by the Committee, and the compensation shall be in conformity with prescribed compensation for local government officials and employees in co-terminous capacity.

SEC. 8. Coordination – The Committee shall be the over-all government agency responsible for all the dams in the Philippines. It shall approve the use and release of water in the dams.

In times of emergency such as, but not limited to, the presence of typhoons or discharge of water from the dams, the Local Task Force shall immediately inform the Committee of the level of water from the dam based on the analyses of hydrological data taken by the watchman assigned in the dam.

In times of extreme urgency, the Local Task Force shall inform the Committee of the date and time of the release of water from the dam and shall proceed with the discharge of water without waiting for the formal approval of the Committee.

The Local Task Force and the Committee shall continue to coordinate with PAGASA with respect to the monitoring of water levels of dams, and PAGASA shall also continue to provide updates on flood forecasting and warnings.

SEC. 9. Funding. – The amount necessary for the salary and other operational expenses of the Flood and Dam Operations Watchmen shall be taken from the regular appropriations of the Department of the Interior and Local Government.

SEC. 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The National Water Review Board shall, in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways, the Department of the Interior and Local Government and the Department of National Defense, issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECT. 11. **Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof, inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 12. **Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,