

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3244



Introduced by: Hon. Angelina "Helen" D.L. Tan, M.D.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is prone to disasters and hazards due to its geography and geology as well as the presence of internal disputes in some regions of the country.

In its Executive Summary, "The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan", provides the following facts which are instructive regarding the occurrence of disasters and hazards in the country:

- Tropical cyclones and its sequential effects of rain and windstorms, as well as floods are the most prevalent types of hydro-meteorological hazards in the country. Between 1997 and 2007, eighty-four (84) tropical cyclones entered the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR). These typhoons resulted to a total of 13,155 in human casualty and more than 51 million families have been affected.

- Environmental factors such as denuded forests aggravate flood risks. Even now, the effects of loose soil and reduced forest cover from past forestry activities are felt in frequent landslides and floods. Recent events show that the annual monsoon season in the country has brought severe flooding in most areas.

- In 2011, most of the disasters that claimed the lives of people and affected properties and livelihoods of the most vulnerable were brought about by increased rainfall which caused massive flash flooding in areas which don't normally experience such.

- ... the Philippines is situated along a highly seismic area lying along the Pacific Ring of Fire and is highly-prone to earthquakes. According to the Philippine Institute on Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVLOCS), the country experiences an average of five (5) earthquakes a day. Earthquake disasters are not as frequent as the typhoons and flooding that take place in the Philippines. Nevertheless, the impact generated on affected communities is usually massive and devastating.

- The Philippines is ... prone to volcanic eruptions being situated along the Pacific Ring of Fire where two major tectonic plates (Philippine Sea and Eurasian) meet. This explains the occurrence of earthquakes and tsunamis and the existence of around 300 volcanoes of which 22 are active.

- In an analysis of natural disaster hotspots by the Hazard Management Unit of the World Bank in 2005, the Philippines is among the countries where large percentages of population reside in disaster prone areas. In the 2011 World Risk Report published by United Nations University and the Institute of Environment and Human Security, looking into the four components of risk (exposure, susceptibility, coping and adapt capacities), the Philippines is the third most disaster risk country worldwide.

- Aside from natural causes, the country also experiences human-induced disasters. These are brought about by hazards that are of political and socio-economic origins, among others. Many are forced to evacuate during times of conflict. Violence continues to plague the country, with most of the fighting in the South. Intense fighting between government forces and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) during the first half of year 2009 resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians. The government and the MILF decided to lay down their arms and work toward peace accord that had failed in 2009 in Malaysia. On the other hand, the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), labelled a terrorist organization, continued to carry out bombings and rebels were killed during clashes with the military in the latter part of 2009. These human-induced disasters caused by armed fightings in the South continue to threaten the security of civilian communities which result into the displacement of thousands of civilians. So long as there is no peace settlement mechanism in Mindanao, internally displaced civilians will remain a given collateral damage of every armed conflict. Such disasters

consequently cause public anxiety, lost of lives, destruction of properties and sometimes socio-political stability.

Undoubtedly, both natural and man-made disasters bring life to a standstill as calamities do not only hamper electricity but also clean drinking water supply, which affects the public with numerous waterborne diseases.

A case in point is the experience of many victims of the recent 7.2 magnitude earthquake that hit Bohol, Cebu Province and Siquijor Island in Central Visayas where cases of diarrhea and other waterborne diseases were reported due to the disruption of running water. Many areas that were affected by the killer quake are living without adequate quantities of clean water and sanitation facilities.

Sinkholes also reportedly appeared in some areas and local folks claimed that water from underground sources turned yellowish, a problem that is aggravated by the closure of bottling stations making it difficult for the residents to find potable water.

As a result, reports say that the Maynilad Water Services, Inc. has dispatched around 400 pieces of five-gallon containers with potable water to Tagbilaran City in Bohol through the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Philippine Coast Guard.

Since the country is prone to disasters and hazards, waterborne diseases become prevalent in times of tropical cyclones, earthquakes and social conflicts. Hence, communities across the archipelago need guaranteed access to clean water and sanitation facilities to prevent the spread of diseases.

In this light, this bill aims to provide potable water to communities affected by calamities by requiring all provinces and cities throughout the country to acquire appropriate and adequate portable water filters in order to ensure the continuous supply of safe drinking water to the victims of calamities and the general public.

In view thereof, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


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AN ACT
REQUIRING ALL PROVINCES AND CITIES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY TO
ACQUIRE PORTABLE WATER FILTERS TO ENSURE POTABLE WATER SUPPLY
DURING DISASTERS

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

SECTION 1. It is the policy of the State to uphold the people’s constitutional right to life by addressing the root causes of vulnerabilities to disasters, strengthening the country’s institutional capacity for building the resilience of local communities to disasters including climate change impacts, and adhere to and adopt the universal norms, principles and standards of humanitarian assistance as concrete expression of the country’s commitment to overcome human sufferings due to recurring disasters.

Towards this end, it shall ensure the availability of appropriate technology that will guarantee the continuous supply of potable water in times of disasters.

SEC. 2. Within six (6) months after the effectivity of this Act, all provinces and cities are hereby required to acquire appropriate and adequate portable water filters, which shall be used to ensure the provision of safe drinking water during disasters.

SEC. 3. Any provincial or city local chief executive who fails to comply with this Act shall be punished with a fine of Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000.00) but not more than One Hundred Thousand Pesos (P100,000.00).

SEC. 4. The Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government, in consultation with the Department of Health, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 5. Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SEC. 6. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,