

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

SIXTEENTH (16th) CONGRESS
Second Regular Session



House Bill No. 5318

Introduced by REPRESENTATIVE ERIC L. OLIVAREZ

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is regularly hit by typhoons all year round.

All throughout these years, we are witnesses to the extent of devastation these typhoons and other natural calamities can cause to our nation. Just a year ago, typhoon Yolanda left hundreds of our fellow Filipinos homeless and thousands of them dead. It took a considerable number of months before the whole affected community regained an ounce of strength to start recovering. During a state of calamity, every Filipino family becomes vulnerable to countless problems entailed a strong typhoon and/or other natural disasters. Each person needs to start from scratch to get back a little of what they used to have.

In a state of calamity, it is therefore understandable for those affected people to prioritize obligations and responsibilities one by one. The need to eat and find shelter after a typhoon or an earthquake wiped out everything a person or a family has, is of course always the main concern. Then the other responsibilities follow after that.

During these moments, it is hard enough for the head of the family, or a person living alone, to recover from their loss. And it is the obligation of the State to help each and every one affected by such calamities and to lessen their burdens as much as possible.

One of the ways this can be done is to allow the affected people and/or families a grace period for paying up utility bills until such time that the situation has stabilized in the areas hit by such calamities.

Through this measure, the victims of typhoons and other fortuitous events will be able to focus on securing their basic and primary needs first before anything else. They will not have to worry about the due bills which they have to pay and so they can make use of their money, or what's remaining thereof- wisely.


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**AN ACT GIVING THE PERSONS AFFECTED BY TYPHOONS
AND OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS IN AREAS DECLARED TO
BE IN A STATE OF CALAMITY MORATORIUM,
FORBEARANCE OR GRACE PERIOD IN THE PAYMENT OF
UTILITY BILLS**

Section 1. Short Title. This Act shall be known as the Delayed Payment of Bills for Persons Affected by a State of Calamity Act of 2015.

Section 2. Coverage. This Act shall cover all natural persons residing or operating any business in a certain area declared to be in a State of Calamity, and who have utility payment obligations in the said affected locality.

Section 3. Limitation. Natural disasters shall include typhoons, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, and their analogous events. Provided, that the area affected by such disasters is declared to be in a State of Calamity by the proper authorities. Moreover, utility bills covered under this act shall include water, electricity, telephone, internet, cable and other similar bills.

Section 4. Authorized Delayed Payment. All persons covered under this Act shall be allowed a grace period of sixty (60) days from the cessation of the natural disaster or until the situation has stabilized in the areas declared to be in a state of calamity, whichever is later, to pay utility bills which have fallen due during the time the area has been hit by a natural disaster or declared to be in a state of calamity.

Section 9. Implementing Rules and Regulations. The Department of Energy (DOE), National Telecommunication Commission (NTC) and the Department of Interior and Local Government in coordination with the concerned local government unit shall issue and promulgate the Implementing Rules and Regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act. Such rules and regulations shall take effect upon their publication in three (3) newspapers of general circulation.

Section 10. Repealing Clause. – All laws, presidential decrees, letters of instructions, executive orders, rules and regulations insofar as they are inconsistent with this Act, are hereby repealed or amended as the case may be.

Section 11. Separability Clause. – In the event that any provision of this Act or any portion thereof is declared unconstitutional by a competent court, the other provisions shall not be affected thereby and shall remain valid and enforceable.

Section 12. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect after its complete publication in at least three (3) newspapers of general circulation.

APPROVED.