

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

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7716



Introduced by **ANG PROBINSYANO**
Party-List Representative Alfred Delos Santos

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The State, under Article II, Section 15 of the 1987 Constitution, is mandated to “protect and promote the right to health of the people.” Hence, under R.A. No. 6975, the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) was created.¹

Unfortunately, the BFP itself has been left to fend for its own development as an institution, as well as the welfare of its individual officers and personnel:²

The BFP’s annual appropriations also fall beyond what can be described as “desirable”.

In 2017, total new appropriations for the BFP is slightly less than P13 million.

The majority of this budget, about P11 million, is for personnel services, meaning salary and allowances of its personnel. The BFP’s funds last year also went to maintenance and other operating expenses (P1.5 million). Only P543,606 was set aside as capital outlay.

x x x

THE BFP is doubly short.

It is short of firefighters, with the ideal ratio of 1 firefighter per 2,000 people or population. The BFP is also short of all-important fire trucks and other firefighting equipment.

With its current population running up to 100 million, the Philippines needs at least 50,000 personnel doing actual firefighting on the field. Hence, the actual number of firefighters is short by more than 100 percent.

¹ Bureau of Fire Protection, “Mandates and Functions,” available at <https://bfp.gov.ph/about-us/mandates-and-functions/#.X0szwcgzbiU>.

² IFSEC Philippines, “Tragedy of fires: Death and Destruction in the Philippines,” available at <https://www.ifsec.events/philippines/visit/news-and-updates/tragedy-fires-death-and-destruction-philippines>.

Moreover, considering the vastness of the territory that requires firefighting, the BFP is short of fire stations, fire trucks, fire hoses, nozzles and breathing apparatus that could boost or enhance the BFP's fire-fighting capability.

Currently, there are 2,245 fire trucks nationwide, but only 1,958, or 87 percent, are serviceable or in working condition. Only nearly 163 are classified as unserviceable and 124 are "under repair."

The BFP is also short of "serviceable" fire hoses and nozzles.

Ideally, the BFP should have 31,430 fire hoses, but based on the latest inventory, only 24,245 hoses are serviceable, leaving a shortage of 7,185 fire hoses. The ideal number of fire nozzles is 8,980, but the number of serviceable fire nozzles is 5,876, short of 3,104 units.

A total of 8,980 sets of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) is the ideal number for the BFP. But the BFP only has 1,938 SCBA units, short of 7,042.

Less ideal

BFP Superintendent Joanne E. Vallejo told the BusinessMirror every city and municipality should have one fire truck.

As mandated by law, there should be one fire truck per city and municipality, according to Vallejo.

"We only have 2,343 fire trucks owned by the BFP and we also have 446 fire trucks owned by the LGUs," she said. "So we have a total of 2,749 fire trucks nationwide."

Vallejo added the ideal ratio is 1 fire truck for every 28,000 persons.

Every fire truck should also have 14 firefighters, according to Vallejo, the designated spokesman of BFP Chief Director Leonard R. Banago.

"The ideal ratio for every firefighter is 2,000 persons," she said. "So far, we are short of 376 activated fire stations. But not all our activated fire stations have their own fire trucks."

x x x

'Homeless' firefighters

AS of December 31, 2017, there are only a total of 145 fire stations in 81 provinces across the country. This number is the minimum requirement under the Fire Code of the Philippines.

Fire stations are a firefighter's "home away from home." There they are often required to stay overnight or are assigned on night shifts to ensure fire stations are not without a firefighter 24 hours a day.

Of the 145 fire stations for cities, 51 are BFP-owned while 94 are owned by local government units (LGUs), by private individuals or institutions or other agencies.

For the 1,489 municipalities across the 17 regions in the Philippines, there are only 1,113 activated fire stations for a total of 1,489 municipalities. This leaves a total of 376 municipalities without activated fire stations.

1 Of the 1,113 fire stations, 597 are owned by the BFP while 516 are owned by
2 the LGUs, private individuals or institutions or other agencies.

3
4 **'Landless' stations**

5
6 ACCORDING to Vallejo, some municipalities still have no fire stations of their
7 own as the BFP has no land to construct the station. The BFP, she said, is
8 not allowed to purchase land for such purpose.

9
10 Because of that, she said the BFP relies on the generosity of the LGUs to
11 donate the land where a fire station can be constructed.

12
13 x x x (emphasis in the original)

14
15 Things have gotten so bad that in 2019, the Commission on Audit
16 declared that even the BFP's modernization program failed:³

17
18 Given this dire situation, it is high time that Congress step in to extend
19 aid to the BFP. This bill is offered as a starting point for such aid. It aims to
20 raise the salary received by the BFP's fire officers, so as to improve their
21 quality of life.

22
23 It is for the foregoing premises that the approval of this Bill is earnestly
24 sought.

25


26 **ALFRED C. DELOS SANTOS**

27 *Representative, Ang Probinsyano Party-List*

³ Lian Buan, "COA raises alarm over BFP's failed modernization program," *Rappler*, January 23, 2019, available at <https://rappler.com/nation/bureau-fire-protection-modernization-program-audit-report>.

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

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7716

Introduced by **ANG PROBINSYANO**
Party-List Representative Alfred Delos Santos

AN ACT
TO UPGRADE THE SALARY SCALES OR LEVELS OF FIRE OFFICERS OF
THE BUREAU OF FIRE PROTECTION, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Fire Officers
2 Salary Upgrade Act of 2020.”
3

4 SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – In order to achieve the mission of
5 the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) to “commit to prevent and suppress
6 destructive fires, investigate its causes; enforce Fire Code and other related
7 laws; respond to man-made and natural disasters and other emergencies,”⁴
8 its Fire Officers should be properly compensated and their working and living
9 conditions continuously improved.
10

11 SECTION 3. *Coverage.* – This Act shall cover all Fire Officers of the BFP
12 (Fire Officer I to Senior Fire Officer IV), regardless of employment status.
13

14 SECTION 4. *Upgraded Salary Scales of Levels.* – Upon the effectivity of
15 this Act, the salary grade of all Fire Officers of the BFP shall be reallocated by
16 two (2) scales or levels up.
17

18 SECTION 5. *Hazard Pay.* – The Hazard Pay of all Fire Officers of the BFP
19 shall likewise be increased from Five Hundred Forty Pesos (P540.00) to One
20 Thousand Eighty Pesos (P1,080.00) per month.
21

⁴ BFP Memorandum Circular Number 2016-003 dated 27 January 2016 with Subject: Implementing Guidelines for the Adoption of BFP’s New Vision and Mission Statements available at <https://bfp.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Implementing-Guidelines-for-the-Adoption-of-BFPs-New-Vision-and-Mission-Statements.pdf> (last accessed 2 August 2020).

1 SECTION 6. *Appropriation.* – The Government shall appropriate such
2 amount as may be necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act. Initial
3 funds required for the implementation of this Act shall be sourced from the
4 savings of the Executive Branch of the government and other possible sources
5 that may be determined by the Office of the President. The subsequent funds
6 needed shall be included in the General Appropriations Act for the year
7 following the implementation of this Act.

8
9 SECTION 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60)
10 days from the promulgation of this Act, the necessary rules and regulations
11 for the proper implementation of its provisions shall be formulated by the
12 appropriate government office or agency in coordination with all the
13 stakeholders and covered establishments and institutions.

14
15 SECTION 8. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act shall be
16 declared unconstitutional or invalid, such declaration shall not invalidate
17 other parts thereof which shall remain in full force and effect.

18
19 SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, presidential
20 decrees or issuances, letters of instruction, administrative orders, rules, and
21 regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are
22 hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

23
24 SECTION 10. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15)
25 days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general
26 circulation.

27
28 Approved,