



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 425

Introduced by **HON. MIGUEL LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In the Province of Camarines Sur, flooding remains among the most destructive and persistent natural disasters. This threat is especially severe and recurrent in the province due to its geographical features, climate vulnerability, and the lack of an integrated and sustainable flood management system.¹

The 5th District of Camarines Sur, also called Rinconada, is highly prone to flooding. It includes the towns of Baao, Bato, Balatan, Buhi, Bula, Nabua, and the city of Iriga. Because of its low-lying terrain, it naturally collects rainwater from nearby areas in Camarines Sur and Albay. The Bicol River runs through the district, which is also surrounded by three major lakes located in Buhi, Bato, and Baao. The Bicol River and surrounding lakes often suffer from siltation, which reduces their capacity to hold water.² Combined with the lack of adequate flood control systems, these interconnected waterways make the area highly vulnerable during heavy rains.

The devastating impact of Severe Tropical Storm Kristine in October 2024 exposed the poor state of flood preparedness and resilience in the province. According to news reports, the torrential downpour dumped more than two months' worth of rainfall in just 24 hours, triggering massive flooding in the Bicol Region, most severely in Camarines Sur.³

The Rinconada district was among the hardest hit, with major flooding inundating homes, damaging infrastructure, and isolating entire communities. For instance, Waras Bridge, located at the boundary between Iriga City and Baao, collapsed.⁴ In Nabua and Bula, floodwaters reached unprecedented levels, inundating homes up to the second floor. Camarines Sur Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council data showed that 83,628 families or 32% of the total number of families affected in the entire Camarines Sur are from Rinconada.⁵

These repeated calamities underscore the urgent need to adopt a comprehensive, integrated, and multi-sectoral flood prevention, control, defense, and management system specific to the province of Camarines Sur.

¹ World Bank. (2021). *Philippines: Climate Risk Country Profile*. <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/philippines>

² Inquirer.net. (2020, March 2). *Dredging of Cagayan, Bicol rivers approved*. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1361491>

³ ABS-CBN News. (2024, October 24). *Albay received two months' worth of rain in 24 hours amid Kristine onslaught*. <https://www.abs-cbn.com/regions/2024/10/24/-albay-received-2-months-worth-of-rain-in-24-hours-amid-kristine-onslaught-1035>

⁴ Ugalde, M. T. (2024, November 8). *Waras Bridge collapse sparks public protest*. Bicol Mail. <https://www.bicolmail.net/single-post/waras-bridge-collapse-sparks-public-protest>

⁵ Camarines Sur PDRRMC. (2024). *Situational Report on Tropical Storm Kristine*.

While national laws such as Republic Act No. 10121 (Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010) and Republic Act No. 7160 (Local Government Code of 1991) provide general guidelines for disaster management, these must be localized and institutionalized at the provincial level to effectively address unique topographical and hydrological conditions.

This bill, therefore, seeks to institutionalize an integrated flood management system for the Province of Camarines Sur. It promotes strong collaboration among national government agencies, local government units (LGUs), civil society organizations, and indigenous peoples' groups, with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) as lead implementer and the PDRRMO of Camarines Sur as a central planning and coordination partner.

This proposed measure envisions a system that integrates both structural interventions and community-based strategies. It also emphasizes the importance of protecting the environment, preserving cultural heritage, ensuring inclusive service delivery, and respecting the rights of indigenous people. Ultimately, it seeks to make Camarines Sur more resilient to weather disturbances particularly flooding to protect life, property, and livelihoods and contribute to the national goals for climate resilience, disaster preparedness, and sustainable development.

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


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Introduced by HON. MIGUEL LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A COMPREHENSIVE AND INTEGRATED FLOOD PREVENTION, CONTROL, DEFENSE, AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR THE PROVINCE OF CAMARINES SUR AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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 "Comprehensive and Integrated Camarines Sur Flood Prevention, Control, Defense, and Management System Act."

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy and Objective. — It shall be the policy of the State to:

- (a) Protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature;
- (b) Protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among our people to effectively carry out the programs and projects of the government essential for the growth and health of the nation, especially in times where the country experiences natural or manmade disasters, calamities, risks and security threats;
- (c) Adopt disaster risk reduction and management approach that is holistic, comprehensive, integrated and proactive in lessening the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of disasters including climate changes, and promote the involvement and participation of all sections and all stakeholders concerned, at all levels, especially the local community;
- (d) Recognize and strengthen the capacities of local government units (LGUs) and communities in mitigating and preparing for, responding to, and recovering from the impact of disasters;
- (e) Institutionalize the policies, structures, coordination mechanisms and programs with continuing budget appropriation on disaster risk reduction from national down to local levels towards building a disaster-resilient nation and communities;

Towards this end, this Act aims to establishing a comprehensive and integrated flood prevention, control, defense, and management system in the province of Camarines Sur to mitigate flooding caused by climate change and other factors.

SECTION 3. Flood Prevention, Control, Defense, and Management System. — The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) shall serve as the lead implementing agency

for the construction and development of the comprehensive and integrated flood prevention, control, defense, and management system in the Province of Camarines Sur.

In the exercise of its mandate, the DPWH shall give primary importance to the coordination and planning guidance of the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO) of Camarines Sur. The DPWH shall work in close collaboration with the PDRRMO in order to ensure that all interventions align with the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (PDRRMP), and are responsive to the province's local conditions, hazards, and vulnerabilities.

The DPWH shall also coordinate with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Health (DOH), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Transportation (DOTr), National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), LGUs within the Province of Camarines Sur, and accredited civil society and indigenous peoples' groups representing local communities.

SECTION 4. *Operating and Guiding Principles.* — In establishing the Camarines Sur flood prevention, control, defense, and management system, the DPWH, in coordination and consultation with the aforementioned government agencies, LGUs and civil society and indigenous peoples group, shall adhere to the following principles of safety, resilience and sustainability.

As far as practicable, the Camarines Sur flood prevention, control, defense, and management system shall secure the residents of Camarines Sur from floods while:

- (a) ensuring the residents' access to adequate, affordable and safe housing and resettlement;
- (b) providing residents access to safe, affordable, accessible, ecofriendly and sustainable transport systems and improving road safety;
- (c) enhancing inclusive, ecofriendly and sustainable urbanization;
- (d) protecting and safeguarding the cultural and natural heritage of the province in a manner consistent with Republic Act No. 10066 ("National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009 ");
- (e) significantly reducing the number of deaths and the number of people affected
- (f) by floods and water-related disasters;
- (g) substantially decreasing the direct economic losses caused by flood and water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations;
- (h) supporting positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning;
- (i) supporting LGUs and indigenous communities within the province of Camarines Sur, through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable, ecofriendly and resilient flood prevention, control, and defense infrastructures; and
- (j) respecting the rights of the indigenous peoples communities to their ancestral domains/lands, to free and prior consent, to indigenous knowledge systems and political structures, and such other rights as provided under Republic Act No. 8371 ("Indigenous Peoples ' Rights Act of 1997 ") where infrastructure projects of the DPWH undertaken to give effect to this shall directly or indirectly affect or

involve areas inhabited by indigenous peoples/communities.

SECTION 5. *Funding.* — The amount needed for the implementation of the construction of the Camarines Sur flood prevention, control, defense, and management system shall be included in the appropriations of the DPWH under the General Appropriations Act. Such funds may be augmented through loans, in accordance with the provisions of the law on government borrowing from financial institutions. This project may also be funded through a Public-Private Partnership in accordance with laws, rules and regulations governing such partnerships.

SECTION 6. *Transfer or Geographical Reassignment of Public Health Workers.* —

- (a) A disaster risk and emergency responder shall not be transferred and/or reassigned, except when made in the interest of public service or exigencies of service, in which case, the employee concerned shall be informed of the reasons therefor in writing.
- (b) If the public health worker believes that such transfer and/or reassignment lacks justification, he/she may appeal his/her case to the Civil Service Commission, which shall cause his/her transfer and/or reassignment to be held in abeyance: Provided, That no transfer and/or reassignment whatsoever shall be made three (3) months before any local, national or special elections: Provided, further, That the necessary expenses of the transfer and/or reassignment of the public health worker and his/her immediate family shall be paid for by the Government.
- (c) For the purposes of this Act, a "transfer" is a movement from one position to another which is of equivalent rank, level or salary without break in service; while a "geographical reassignment" (hereinafter referred to as "reassignment") is a movement from one geographical location to another.

SECTION 7. *Submission of Reports.* — Within ninety (90) days after the approval of this Act, and at the end of every calendar quarter thereafter, the Secretary of Public Works and Highways, in close coordination with the PDRRMO, shall submit progress reports to each House of Congress on the implementation of this Act.

SECTION 8. *Separability Clause.* — If any provision of this Act is declared invalid, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

SECTION. 9. *Repealing Clause.* — All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders and their implementing rules, inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SECTION.10. *Effectivity.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in one (1) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,