

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 1160



Introduced by **REP. JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines ranks among the most disaster-vulnerable countries in the world, experiencing frequent and severe natural hazards such as typhoons, floods, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions. In 2023 alone, over 2.2 million individuals were affected by such events across the country.¹ At the forefront of preparedness, response, and recovery operations are the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (“DRRM”) Officers and Personnel who carry out these critical functions under challenging and high-risk conditions.

Despite their indispensable role, many DRRM personnel remain in non-permanent positions, with limited access to benefits, inadequate training, and no clear career progression. According to the Commission on Audit (“COA”), some Local Government Units (“LGU”) still do not have properly functioning Local DRRM Offices as required by law.² This bill seeks to address these gaps by providing DRRM personnel with security of tenure, standardized compensation, hazard pay, access to mental health and wellness programs, and continuing professional development.

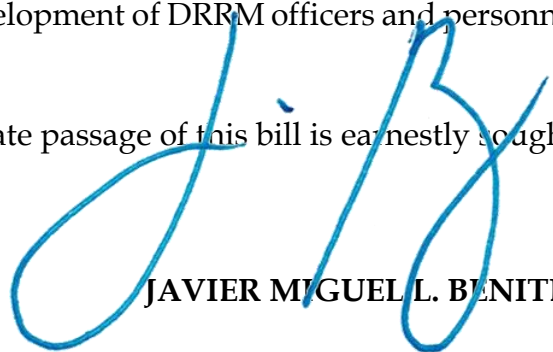
It is declared as the policy of the State to recognize the essential contribution of DRRM personnel in protecting lives, safeguarding communities, and minimizing disaster-related losses. As such, the State shall ensure their institutional support, professionalization, and welfare as an integral component of a resilient and responsive governance framework.

¹ National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC). “SitRep No. 15 re Preparedness Measures for Typhoon Egay and Southwest Monsoon,” August 2023.

² Commission on Audit (COA). Annual Audit Report on the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (NDRRMF), 2022.

While existing laws such as Republic Act No. 10121 (2010) have laid the groundwork for DRRM systems and structures, there remains a pressing need to institutionalize support for the individuals responsible for their implementation. A 2021 Senate report also emphasized the lack of career development and support mechanisms for DRRM workers, particularly at the local level.³ This proposed *Magna Carta* seeks to fill that gap and to secure the rights, protection, and development of DRRM officers and personnel across all levels of government.

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



JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ

³ Senate Economic Planning Office. "Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management: Issues and Challenges," Policy Brief, January 2021.

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Introduced by **REP. JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ**

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A MAGNA CARTA OF DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICERS AND PERSONNEL, INSTITUTIONALIZING THEIR RIGHTS, WELFARE, SECURITY OF TENURE, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Magna Carta* for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Offices and Personnel.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to recognize the critical role of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (“DRRM”) Officers and Personnel in saving lives, protecting communities, and mitigating the adverse effects of disasters. In line with this, the State shall ensure the institutional protection, welfare, capacity-building, and professionalization of DRRM workers to enhance climate resilience at all levels of governance.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For the purposes of this Act, the following terms are defined as follows:

- (a) *DRRM Officers and Personnel* – refers to individuals employed, appointed, designated, or contracted in the public sector in a permanent, temporary, contractual, or job order capacity to perform disaster risk reduction and management functions, including prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, and rehabilitation.
- (b) *DRRM Functions* – includes risk assessment, planning, early warning, emergency response, search and rescue, incident command, evacuation, humanitarian logistics, disaster recovery, rehabilitation, preparedness

programs, and other activities aligned with the four thematic areas under R.A. No. 10121.

- (c) *DRRM Office* – refers to the local or national government unit, division, or department responsible for implementing Republic Act No. 10121 (2010), including the Local DRRM Office (“LDRRMO”) or National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (“NDRRMC”) Secretariat.

SEC. 4. Coverage. – This Act shall apply to all DRRM officers and personnel engaged in DRRM-related functions, whether regular, permanent, contractual, or designated, in national government agencies, Local Government Units (LGU), state universities and colleges, and government-owned and controlled corporations.

SEC. 5. Rights and Benefits. – DRRM Officers and Personnel shall be entitled to the following:

- (a) Security of tenure and protection against unjust termination or political interference;
- (b) Hazard pay not less than twenty percent (20%) of their monthly basic salary when exposed to hazardous conditions during operations;
- (c) Subsistence allowance and other risk-related compensation in accordance with law;
- (d) Legal assistance and indemnification for acts done in the lawful performance of duty;
- (e) Continuing education, specialized training, and access to scholarship and certification programs;
- (f) Access to psychosocial services, mental health programs, and wellness support;
- (g) Inclusion in government insurance, medical assistance, death and disability benefits;
- (h) Opportunities for promotion and merit-based career advancement;
- (i) Right to self-organization, collective negotiation, and participation in DRRM policy-making processes;

(j) Appropriate work-hour policies, compensatory time-off, and rest after prolonged deployment.

SEC. 6. *Standards and Qualifications.* – The Civil Service Commission (“CSC”), in coordination with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (“DILG”), the Office of Civil Defense (“OCD”), and the Department of Budget and Management (“DBM”), shall:

(a) Establish qualification standards, competency benchmarks, and plantilla positions for DRRM officers and personnel;

(b) Institutionalize a competency-based framework to guide recruitment, training, and promotion;

(c) Ensure DRRM personnel are designated or hired in all LGUs in accordance with the provisions of R.A. No. 10121.

SEC. 7. *Professional Development.* – DRRM Officers and Personnel shall undergo mandatory training in accordance with standards prescribed by the OCD, the Department of Science and Technology (“DOST”), and other relevant agencies. They shall also have access to government-funded and accredited training, certification, and capacity-building programs. The OCD, in partnership with academic institutions and training providers, shall develop a standardized national training curriculum.

SEC. 8. *Institutional Mechanisms.*

(a) LGUs and national government agencies shall ensure the proper functioning of their DRRM offices and provide sufficient resources for DRRM personnel;

(b) LGUs shall utilize their Local DRRM Fund (“LDRRMF”) to support the welfare, training, and logistical needs of DRRM personnel;

(c) Agencies shall provide DRRM personnel with protective equipment, communications tools, mobility, and other logistical support necessary for effective and safe performance of duties;

(d) National DRRM agencies shall integrate personnel welfare programs in their institutional plans.

SEC. 9. *Insurance and Benefits.* – All DRRM Officers and Personnel shall be entitled to government service insurance coverage, including:

(a) Death and permanent disability benefits for duty-related injury or death;

- (b) Medical treatment and hospitalization;
- (c) Access to mental health support and post-trauma interventions; and
- (d) Accident insurance coverage during deployment or training.

SEC. 10. *Health, Wellness, and Safety Programs.* – Employing agencies shall institute programs that promote physical, mental, and emotional well-being, including mandatory health assessments, psychological debriefing post-deployment, and wellness leave.

SEC. 11. *Database and Monitoring.* – The DILG and OCD shall establish and maintain a national registry of all DRRM officers and personnel, monitor compliance with this Act, and submit an annual report to Congress on the implementation of the *Magna Carta* and the status of DRRM human resources nationwide.

SEC. 12. *Funding.* – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against current appropriations and shall thereafter be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. Local government units shall likewise allocate funds to support DRRM personnel under their jurisdiction.

SEC. 13. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (“IRR”).* – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the CSC, in coordination with the DBM, DILG, OCD, and other relevant agencies, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement this Act.

SEC. 14. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 15. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, and rules inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 16. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,