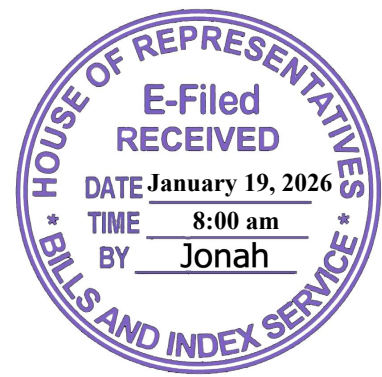


TWENTIETH CONGRESS )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
First Regular Session )



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Introduced by Representative Rufus B. Rodriguez and  
Representative Maximo B. Rodriguez, Jr.*

House Bill No. 7134

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Volunteer radio operators provide critical communications during disasters, calamities, and other emergencies. During disasters and emergencies, conventional communication infrastructures often fail. Amateur and volunteer radio operators provide resilient, low cost, rapid-response communications linking communities, response agencies, and relief operations. They perform crucial functions including relaying situational reports, coordinating evacuations, assisting search-and-rescue, transmitting medical requests, and restoring communications.

Despite the crucial roles that they play, many operators face legal ambiguity (liability exposure), limited access to official coordination channels, lack of formal recognition, and inadequate support for training, equipment, and welfare.

Hence this bill which seeks to providing statutory protections, incentives, and institutional integration which also aims to encourage volunteerism, improve disaster response capacity, and leverage existing community-based resources at low fiscal cost.

This bill seeks to establish a national registry/accreditation mechanism for volunteer operators in coordination with the national disaster management authority and the national telecommunications/amateur radio regulator. It seeks to grant civil liability protection to volunteer operators for acts or omissions made in good faith while performing accredited emergency communications, except in cases of gross negligence or willful misconduct. It also seeks to provide benefits and incentives to volunteer operators.

In view of the foregoing, immediate approval of this measure is earnestly requested.

  
RUFUS B. RODRIGUEZ

  
MAXIMO B. RODRIGUEZ, JR.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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*Introduced by Representative Rufus B. Rodriguez and  
Representative Maximo B. Rodriguez, Jr.*

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House Bill No. 7134

**AN ACT**

**PROVIDING PROTECTION, INCENTIVES, AND BENEFITS TO VOLUNTEER RADIO OPERATORS RENDERING SERVICE DURING DISASTERS, CALAMITIES, AND OTHER EMERGENCIES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

**SECTION 1.** Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the "Volunteer Radio Operators Protection and Benefits Act".

**SECTION 2.** Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to recognize the vital role of volunteer radio operators in providing emergency communication and coordination during disasters, calamities, and other emergencies. The State shall ensure their protection, welfare, and fair recognition as partners in public safety and disaster response.

**SECTION 3.** Definition of Terms. – For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- a) Volunteer Radio Operator – any person duly licensed by the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) who, without compensation, provides communication services during emergencies, disasters, or community response operations.
- b) Volunteer Service – the act of providing time, communication skills, and radio equipment during public emergencies or government-requested operations.
- c) Recognized Emergency Operation – any activity or response effort officially coordinated by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), local government units (LGUs), or other government agencies.

**SECTION 4.** Scope of Application. – This Act shall apply to all licensed volunteer radio operators who participate in emergency response, disaster relief, and other related operations under recognized coordination by public authorities.

**SECTION 5.** Rights and Protection of Volunteer Radio Operators. – Volunteer radio operators shall be entitled to the following rights and protection:

- a) Protection from Liability – No volunteer radio operator shall be held civilly liable for acts done in good faith within the scope of their volunteer duties.
- b) Security and Safety – The government and the coordinating agencies shall ensure reasonable protection and safety support to volunteer radio operators during operations.

- c) Insurance Coverage – The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), in coordination with the NDRRMC and Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), shall establish insurance coverage for volunteers injured or who perish in line of duty.
- d) Legal Assistance – Government legal aid shall be extended to volunteer radio operators for incidents arising from their official volunteer duties.

**SECTION 6.** Incentives and Benefits. – To encourage volunteerism and sustain participation, the following incentives shall be granted:

- a) Communication Equipment Support – NTC and the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) may provide technical assistance, equipment calibration, and frequency coordination to accredited volunteer groups.
- b) Exemption for payment of Radio Station License/Operator Certificate granted by the National Telecommunications Commission.
- c) Training and Capacity Building – NDRRMC, DICT, and local DRRM offices shall provide periodic training, certification, and emergency drills.
- d) Tax Incentives for Donations – Donations, sponsorships, or grants extended to accredited volunteer radio groups shall be exempted from donor's tax and may be deductible from gross income, as provided by existing laws.
- e) Recognition and Awards – The NDRRMC and LGUs shall institute annual recognition for exemplary service by volunteer radio operators.
- f) Priority Access and Movement - "Volunteer radio operators with valid accreditation shall be granted priority passage through checkpoints, restricted zones, or controlled areas when deployed for emergency response."
- g) Psychological First Aid and Post-Trauma Support - "The Department of Health and DSWD shall provide access to psychological first aid, stress debriefing, and post-trauma care for volunteer radio operators who participated in high-impact disasters."
- h) Eligibility Points / Priority in Government Hiring - "Volunteer service rendered under this Act shall be credited as civil service eligibility points or be considered preferential experience in government hiring, subject to CSC guidelines."

**SECTION 7.** Coordination Mechanism. – The NDRRMC, in partnership with the NTC, DICT, and LGUs, shall maintain a registry of accredited volunteer radio groups and their operators. They shall also formulate implementing guidelines within ninety (90) days after the effectivity of this Act.

**SECTION 8.** Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within ninety (90) days upon the approval of this Act, the NDRRMC, in coordination with the DICT, DSWD, DOF, and NTC, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

**SECTION 9.** Appropriations. – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual budget of the concerned agencies under the General Appropriations Act.

**SECTION 10.** Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

**SECTION 11.** Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

**SECTION 12.** Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,