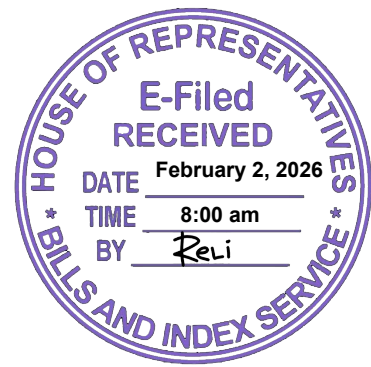


TWENTIETH CONGRESS)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

House Bill No. 7500

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) was established by virtue of Republic Act No. 6975, otherwise known as the Department of the Interior and Local Government Act of 1990. Its role and functions were further reinforced by the passage of Republic Act No. 9514, also known as the Revised Fire Code of the Philippines of 2008. In 2010, the BFP launched its Modernization Program pursuant to R.A. No. 9514 which aimed to upgrade the government's firefighting capability with adequate personnel and equipment in order to safeguard the public from the hazards of destructive fire.

This bill seeks to strengthen and modernize the Bureau of Fire Protection in order to better serve the Filipino people. It also aims to conduct the employment of more trained personnel as well as the procurement of modern fire equipment in order to maximize the services for public safety. In addition, the bill aims to establish an efficient and reliable monitoring scheme to keep track of the projects implemented by the modernization program and ensure their timely accomplishment. Lastly, this bill intends to encourage BFP's continued partnership with key stakeholders for a coordinated effort in safeguarding the public from the hazards of destructive fires.

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


RUFUS B. RODRIGUEZ


MAXIMO B. RODRIGUEZ, JR.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

House Bill No. 7500

AN ACT

**STRENGTHENING AND MODERNIZING THE BUREAU OF FIRE PROTECTION,
PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the "Fire Protection Modernization Act".

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is the policy of the State to uphold public safety through the prevention and suppression of all kinds of destructive fires as well as the promotion of the professionalization of the fire service. Moreover, the State shall enforce all laws, rules and regulations in order to guarantee compliance to the standard of fire prevention and safety measures and ensure accountability in fire protection and prevention service. Towards this end, the State shall implement a Fire Protection Modernization Program.

SECTION 3. Additional Functions of the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP). - Aside from its existing functions under Republic Act No. 9514 and Republic Act No. 6975, the BFP shall have the following functions:

a) Be responsible for the prevention and suppression of all destructive fires on buildings, houses and other structures, including those found in economic zones including Igorot-industrial economic zones, free ports and special economic zones, IT parks/centers, manufacturing economic zones, medical tourism parks/centers, tourism economic zone, and other similar entities;

b) Establish and maintain regional arson laboratories and research and testing facilities with complete equipment;

c) Respond to disasters, whether manmade or natural, and respond to other emergencies, including rescue, emergency medical, hazardous materials (hazmat), chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) materials, and other emergencies;

d) Conduct monthly fire prevention campaigns and information drive in all local government units, particularly in informal settler areas and economically depressed areas, in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG); and

e) Require the building owner to submit plans and specifications of the said building and other pertinent documents as may be determined by BFP and evaluate the same to ensure compliance with the Fire Code and other applicable codes and standards. For this purpose, a fire safety evaluation clearance shall be issued as a prerequisite for the issuances of the building permit.

SECTION 4. Fire Protection Modernization Program. - The Bureau of Fire Protection, in coordination with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), shall establish and implement a Fire Protection Modernization Program, which shall consist of the following components:

a) Fire Protection Service. - The modernization program shall include the establishment of Fire Protection Service (FPS) in all local government units with no existing fire protection services, and the establishment of rescue hotlines in all local government units;

b) Force Restructuring and Organizational Development. - The modernization programs shall develop the Bureau of Fire Protection into an efficient, responsive and modern agency of the Department of the Interior and Local Government with the capability to implement Republic Act No. 9514 otherwise known as the Fire Code of the Philippines. The Bureau of Fire Protection, within ninety (90) days from the promulgation of the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of this Act, shall recommend and submit to the Secretaries of Department of the Interior and Local Government and Department of Budget and Management the revised organizational structure and staffing patterns for officers and personnel of the UP. The revised organizational structure shall include all the offices of the BFP, the Fire Training Service, and the REP Central and Regional Hospitals. The BFP shall design and establish a qualification upgrading program for the BFP officers and personnel in accordance with the Civil Service Commission rules and regulations;

c) Monitoring and Evaluation Services. - The modernization program shall put in place a monitoring and evaluation scheme to be supervised by the Regional Offices in order to track the individual progress of each of its component to be able to strengthen its monitoring the projects implemented and ensure their timely completion. The MP shall likewise further develop its partnership with key stakeholders for a coordinated effort in safeguarding the populace from the hazards of destructive fires.

d) Material and Technology Development. - The modernization programs shall upgrade existing fire protection equipment and services and acquire new equipment for fire protection. Provided, the acquisition of new equipment shall be synchronized with the phase-out of uneconomical and obsolete major equipment and weapons systems in the BFP inventory;

e) Specialized Services Development. - The modernization program shall establish specialized fire protection services within the BFP such as but not limited to high-rise building fires, forest fires, aircraft/airport fires, ship fires, chemical fires, disaster rescue services, emergency medical services, and the like; and

f) Human Resource Development. - The modernization program shall include trainings for MP personnel and establish training facilities, hire internationally accredited training consultants and advisers if experts of equal qualification cannot be secured locally, to accelerate the personnel development program. All newly appointed uniformed personnel of the UP shall undergo a Mandatory Training Program. Within one hundred eighty (180) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of DILG and the BFP Chief shall submit the details of the Fire Protection Modernization Program to Congress.

SECTION 5. Multi-Year Contracts or Other Contractual Arrangement. - The Secretary of Interior and Local Government may, subject to the approval of the President, under provisions of existing laws and regulations including those of the Commission on Audit and under such terms and conditions favorable to the government, enter into multi-year contracts or other contractual agreements with local or foreign suppliers or contractors in the implementations of this Act.

SECTION 6. Annual Report. - The BFP shall submit to the Office of the President and Congress, through the Secretary of Interior and Local Government, an annual report containing the process and status of the implementation of the Fire Protection Modernization Program.

SECTION 7. Period of Implementation. - The Fire Protection Modernization Program under this Act, shall be implemented over a period of three (3) years effectives upon the date of the approval of this Act. Provided, that payments for amortization of outstanding multi-year contract obligations incurred under the modernization program may extend beyond this period.

SECTION 8. Appropriation. - The amount necessary to implement the provisions of this Act shall be sourced from the BFP Modernization Trust Fund as provided for in Republic Act No. 9514. An additional amount of Five Billion Pesos (P5,000,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated to be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year immediately following the effectivity of this Act.

SECTION 9. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - Within thirty (30) days from the approval of this Act, the BIT and DILG shall promulgate the rules and regulations necessary to implement the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 10. Separability Clause. - Any portion or provision of this Act that is declared unconstitutional shall not have the effect of nullifying other portions or provisions hereof as long as such remaining portions can still subsist and be given effect in their entirety.

SECTION 11. Repealing Clause. - All laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, other issuances or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with 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,