EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE   
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES   
First Regular Session

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  

H. B. No. 5966

Introduced by Batangas Representatives

AN ACT
CREATING THE TAAL VOLCANO REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION, ESTABLISHING THE TAAL VOLCANO REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR THE PURPOSE OF EXTENDING AID, RELIEF, RESETLEMENT, REHABILITATION, LIVELIHOOD, AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO COMMUNITIES ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY THE TAAL VOLCANO ERUPTION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The eruption of Taal Volcano that began on January 12, 2020 and has persisted until the present has impacted the lives and livelihood of hundreds of thousands of Filipinos, particularly Batangueños, in the country. Based on the most recent situation report of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), the Taal Volcano eruption has affected 50,599 families or 203,763 Filipinos, with 26,767 families or 104,377 individuals taking temporary shelter in 408 evacuation centers in CALABARZON Region, while another 17,391 families or 68,755 persons are being served outside evacuation centers. Enforcement of full and partial lockdowns in the municipalities of Agoncillo, Alitagtag, Balete, Cuenca, Laurel, Lemery, Malvar, San Nicolas, Sta. Teresita, Taal, Talisay, Parts of Lipa City, Parts of Mataas Na Kahoy, and Parts of Tanauan City, however, is estimated to displace roughly half a million population in affected communities. It has caused power interruptions in 20 cities and municipalities, and has forced 264 local government units to declare suspension of classes. The eruption had also paralyzed the operation of Ninoy Aquino International Airport and Diosdado Macapagal International Airport for about three days, forcing airlines to cancel 383 domestic and 260 scheduled international flights. NDRRMC also reported that the eruption affected thousands of hectares of agricultural lands and fishing
also reported that the eruption affected thousands of hectares of agricultural lands and fishing areas, primarily in the province of Batangas, which caused an estimated three billion pesos’ worth of agricultural damage incurred by farmers, livestock raisers and fishermen. These losses, however, only foreshadow the economic and financial costs of the eruption, particularly in terms of local tourism losses; reconstruction and rehabilitation requirements; and healthcare, evacuation and relief operations costs, which is expected to reach tens of billions of pesos.

This proposed measure seeks to strengthen the mechanisms of government to address the needs of families and communities affected by the eruption of Taal Volcano. It seeks to establish a Taal Volcano Rehabilitation and Development Fund, which allocates fifty billion pesos (P50,000,000,000) to provide immediate relief to affected individuals and families; establish resettlement centers, homesites and townsites for displaced families; provide livelihood and employment opportunities for local residents; construct, repair, rehabilitate, or reconstruct public infrastructure needed in the affected communities; and to adopt and implement other interventions that could expedite the return to normalcy in affected localities. The bill also allows Congress to increase this amount through a supplemental budget or through the annual general appropriations.

Additionally, the bill seeks to establish a Taal Rehabilitation and Development Commission to provide structure and direction in the utilization of the Taal Volcano Rehabilitation and Development Fund. The Taal Commission shall be comprised of five (5) members from the Cabinet; a Vice Chairperson and Executive Director; two (2) representatives from non-government and civil society organizations; and the Executive Director of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRMMC), and the Governors of the provinces of Batangas and Cavite as ex-officio members. The Taal Commission shall be mandated to prescribe the overall strategic framework in using the Taal Volcano Rehabilitation and Development Fund to address the needs of the affected communities; to spearhead the disaster relief and rehabilitation operations; and to identify, prioritize and implement priority programs and projects to provide aid, relief, resettlement, rehabilitation, livelihood and development services to localities affected by the Taal Volcano eruption, among others.
hopes that the return to normalcy will aid not only in the economic prosperity of the Southern Tagalog Region, but of the entire country as well.

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

REP. VILMA SANTOS-RECTO  
Batangas, 6th District

REP. LIANDA B. BOLILIA  
Batangas, 4th District

REP. ELENITA MILAGROS ERMITA-BUHAIN  
Batangas, 1st District

REP. RANEO E. ABU  
Batangas, 2nd District

REP. MA. THERESA V. COLLANTES  
Batangas, 3rd District

REP. MARIO VITTORIO A. MARIÑO  
Batangas, 5th District
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COMMISSION, ESTABLISHING THE TAAL VOLCANO REHABILITATION AND
DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR THE PURPOSE OF EXTENDING AID, RELIEF,
RESETTLEMENT, REHABILITATION, LIVELIHOOD, AND DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO COMMUNITIES ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY
THE TAAL VOLCANO ERUPTION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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 “Taal Volcano Rehabilitation and
Development Act.”

Section 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
extend assistance to individuals, families and communities in difficult circumstances brought
about by catastrophic meteorological, hydrological, and geological events. Towards this end,
the State shall provide programs and services to individuals and communities affected by the
Taal Volcano Eruption in 2020 and its aftermath to ensure that the lives of individuals and
communities in affected provinces, cities and municipalities may return to normalcy at the
earliest possible time and that the economic gains and development in the affected localities
are sustained and accelerated.

Sec. 3. Statement of Objectives. – This Act is intended to provide assistance to
victims, and individuals and communities affected by the eruption of Taal Volcano and its
aftermath through the provision of funds for the immediate relief, establishment of
resettlement centers, homesites and townsites, particularly for those living within the
volcano’s permanent danger zone; provision of livelihood and employment opportunities;
construction, repair, rehabilitation, or reconstruction of public infrastructure; and the adoption
and implementation of other interventions to expedite the return to normalcy in affected
localities.

The Taal Volcano Rehabilitation and Development Commission, created in Section 6
of this Act, shall prioritize victims of the Taal Volcano eruption and its aftermath in the
provision of programs and services under this Act. The term “victims” shall refer to the
following:

(a) Individuals who perished or disappeared as a result of the Taal Volcano
eruption or its aftermath;

(b) Individuals who suffered death in the family as a result of the Taal Volcano
eruption or its aftermath;

(c) Individuals who were displaced or injured as a result of the Taal Volcano and
its aftermath;

(d) Individuals whose dwellings have been damaged, rendered uninhabitable, or
destroyed as a result of the Taal Volcano and its aftermath; and

(e) Individuals whose sources of livelihood have been permanently lost as a result
of the Taal Volcano and its aftermath.

Sec. 4. Taal Volcano Rehabilitation and Development Fund. – The Taal Volcano
Rehabilitation and Development Fund, hereinafter referred to as the Taal Fund, is hereby
created with a funding of Fifty Billion Pesos (P50,000,000,000) to carry out the purposes of
this Act. Donations and grants from foreign and domestic sources made for the purpose of
providing aid, relief and rehabilitation services in areas affected by the eruption of Taal
Volcano shall form part of the Taal Fund. The amount may be augmented by appropriations
from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund as provided in Republic
Act No. 11260 and Republic Act No. 11465, otherwise known as the General Appropriations
Act for Fiscal Years 2019 and 2020, respectively. In the subsequent years, Congress may
increase the amount allocated to the Taal Fund through a supplemental budget or through the
annual general appropriations.

Sec. 5. Guidelines in Allocation and Utilization of the Taal Fund. – The following
guidelines shall be observed in the utilization of the Taal Fund:

(a) The Taal Fund can be used to augment aid, relief, resettlement, rehabilitation
and livelihood programs and projects implemented by government agencies concerned for the
victims of the Taal Volcano eruption and its aftermath in the affected communities: Provided,
That any program or project charged against the Taal Fund shall only be deemed
complementary and supplementary to and shall not be a replacement of any existing program, project or activity on disaster relief, risk reduction and management already implemented by the government agencies concerned, including local government units;

(b) The Taal Fund shall be used for infrastructure projects, including but not limited to the construction, repair, rehabilitation, or reconstruction of resettlement centers, homsites and townsites; roads and bridges; flood control, drainage, water and irrigation systems; communication systems and power lines; hospitals; school buildings; government offices; tourism facilities; public markets; and other similar infrastructure and facilities;

(c) Aid, relief, resettlement, rehabilitation and livelihood services shall be equitably extended to all victims of the Taal Volcano eruption and its aftermath, irrespective of political or party affiliation, sex, creed, religious belief, or ethnic origin;

(d) Labor-intensive technology shall be used in the identification, selection and implementation of programs and projects; and

(e) No money from the Taal Fund shall be released without prior identification of programs and projects to be funded, nor shall it be used to settle obligations incurred before the approval of this Act.

Sec. 6. Taal Volcano Rehabilitation and Development Commission. – The Taal Volcano Rehabilitation and Development Commission, hereinafter referred to as the Taal Commission, is hereby created to carry out interventions necessary for the realization of the purposes of this Act.

The Taal Commission shall be organized within thirty (30) days after the approval of this Act. It shall have a term of six (6) years from its organization: Provided, That the President may, through the issuance of a proclamation within six (6) months prior to the expiration of the term, extend the term once for not more than a period of three (3) years. For the purpose of coordination and administration, the Taal Commission shall be attached to the Office of the President.

Sec. 7. Powers and Functions of the Taal Commission. – To carry out its objectives under this Act, the Taal Commission shall have the following powers and functions:

(a) To prescribe the overall strategic framework in the utilization of the Taal Fund as provided in Section 4 of this Act;

(b) To formulate policies and plans for the implementation of aid, relief, resettlement, rehabilitation, livelihood, and development programs and services to communities adversely affected by the eruption of Taal Volcano and its aftermath, in
harmony with the plans and policies of other agencies and instrumentalities of the National Government;

(c) To make a determination of the areas to be prioritized to mitigate potential damage to lives, habitation, infrastructure, agricultural and other resources;

(d) To identify, prioritize and coordinate the implementation of the various programs and projects to be funded in accordance with Section 4 of this Act;

(e) To sue and be sued in its name, and to adopt, alter and use a seal;

(f) To enter into, make, perform and carry out contracts of every class, kind and description which are necessary to the realization of its purposes with any individual, firm or corporation, organization or association, private or public, subject to the usual budgeting, accounting and auditing requirements: Provided, That approval of contracts or agreements with foreign government entities shall require prior consultation with and approval of the President;

(g) To apply for, receive and accept grants and donation of funds, equipment, materials and services needed for the development of the affected localities from domestic and foreign sources;

(h) To monitor the progress of the relief, resettlement, rehabilitation, livelihood, and development efforts of the government in relation to the eruption of Taal Volcano and its aftermath;

(i) To coordinate and consult with national government agencies, local government units and non-government organizations concerned in the prioritization of programs and projects;

(j) To call upon any department, office, instrumentality, agency, or any political subdivision of the government for assistance, including the detail or secondment of essential personnel, as may be necessary for the attainment of the objectives of the Taal Commission; and

(k) To perform such other powers as may be necessary and proper to carry out the purposes of this Act.

Sec. 8. Composition of the Taal Commission. – The Taal Commission shall be composed of the following members:

(a) Secretary of Agriculture as ex-officio member;

(b) Secretary of Budget and Management as ex-officio member

(c) Secretary Labor and Employment as ex-officio member;

(d) Secretary of Housing and Urban Development as ex-officio member;
(e) Secretary of Public Works and Highways as ex-officio member;

(f) Vice-Chairperson and Executive Director to be appointed by the President;

(g) Two (2) members from non-government and civil society organizations engaged in disaster relief and rehabilitation efforts to be appointed by the President;

(h) Executive Director of NDRRMC as ex-officio member;

(i) Governor of the Province of Batangas as ex-officio member; and

(j) Governor of the Province of Cavite as ex-officio member.

The President shall designate from among the ex-officio members of the Taal Commission the Chairperson thereof. The Executive Director and members of the Taal Commission shall serve for a term of six (6) years unless sooner terminated for cause or further extended pursuant to Section 6 of this Act.

Sec. 9. Powers and Responsibilities of the Executive Director. — The Executive Director of the Taal Commission shall have the following powers and functions:

(a) To execute and administer the policies and decisions of the Taal Commission;

(b) To manage the day-to-day operation of the Taal Commission;

(c) To directly coordinate the activities of all agencies and instrumentalities of the Government in the planning and implementation of projects in affected communities;

(d) To monitor the programs and projects and evaluate the effects of execution by these agencies and instrumentalities;

(e) To submit to the Taal Commission periodic reports relating to the development of the affected communities; and

(f) To perform such other powers as may be necessary and proper to carry out the purposes of this Act.

Sec. 10. Implementation of Programs and Projects. — The agencies of government involved with the aid, relief, resettlement, rehabilitation and livelihood services as well as infrastructure support shall be the implementing agencies of the Taal Commission in accordance with existing laws, rules and regulations.

The survey, construction, repair, rehabilitation or reconstruction of public infrastructure and facilities, and the provision of aid, relief, resettlement, rehabilitation and livelihood services to individual beneficiaries may be undertaken by the implementing government agencies concerned in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the “Government Procurement Reform Act.”

The Taal Commission may also seek the assistance or engage the services of private sector entities, non-government organizations, civil society organizations, and other volunteer
organizations in the implementation of priority programs and projects as provided in Section
11 of this Act and in accordance with existing rules and regulations.

Sec. 11 Partnership with Private Sector Entities, Non-Government Organizations,
Civil Society Organizations, and Other Volunteer Organizations. – To tap the resources and
expertise of the private sector, the Taal Commission is hereby authorized to enter into
cooperative agreements with private sector entities in the implementation of relief,
resettlement, rehabilitation, and livelihood programs and projects in accordance with existing
laws, rules and regulations.

The Taal Commission, in the implementation of relief, resettlement, rehabilitation and
livelihood programs and projects, may also seek the assistance of or enter into agreements
with non-government, civil society and other volunteer organizations: Provided, That these
organizations have proven track records in the provision of relief, resettlement, rehabilitation
and livelihood services in the country.

Sec. 12. Preference for Locally-Available Manpower. – Residents in the affected
communities, particularly the victims of Taal Volcano eruption, shall be given preference in
hiring or employment in the construction, repair, rehabilitation and reconstruction projects as
may be identified by the Taal Commission.

Sec. 13. Report to Congress. – The Taal Commission shall submit to Congress a
detailed quarterly report on the implementation of this Act, which includes, but is not limited
to the following information:

(a) Revenues that accrue to the Taal Fund, including the list of local and foreign
donors and the nature of their donation;

(b) Aid, relief, resettlement, rehabilitation and livelihood services funded through
the Taal Fund, including the amounts released, obligated and disbursed for such services; the
list of names of approved individual beneficiaries; the implementing agency, private
contractor, or partner organization that has undertaken the project; and the evaluation of the
effectiveness of the system used to deliver such services; and

(c) Construction, repair, rehabilitation and reconstruction projects financed or being
financed by the Taal Fund, including the amounts released, obligated and disbursed for such
projects, the mode of procurement for such projects; the roster of contractors; and the
accomplishments for the expended appropriations, including the percentage of completion.

Sec. 14. Appropriations for the Taal Fund. – The amount of Fifty Billion Pesos
(P50,000,000,000) is hereby appropriated from any available funds in the National Treasury
not otherwise appropriated. Such amount shall remain valid until the dissolution of the Taal Commission.

The release and validity of the allotments from the Taal Fund shall be subject to the specific guidelines and procedures as may be issued by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) upon consultation with the Taal Commission: Provided, That the release of the said amount shall be programmed as follows:

(a) From the approval of this Act to December 31, 2020, the sum of Thirty Billion Pesos (P30,000,000,000);

(b) For fiscal year 2021, the sum of Ten Billion Pesos (P10,000,000,000); and

(c) For fiscal year 2022, the sum of Ten Billion Pesos (P10,000,000,000).

Provided, That undisbursed amounts at the end of any fiscal year shall be carried over to the succeeding fiscal year.

Sec. 15. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The President shall issue the necessary implementing rules and regulations within thirty (30) days upon the approval of this Act.

Sec. 16. Separability Clause. – If any provision, section or part of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, such judgment shall not affect, invalidate or impair any other provisions, sections or parts hereof.

Sec. 17. Repealing Clause. – All laws, acts, decrees, executive orders, issuances, and rules and regulations or parts thereof which are contrary to and inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

Sec. 18. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation or in the Official Gazette.

Approved,