

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **6734**



Introduced by: **REPRESENTATIVE EDWIN L. OLIVAREZ**

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MANDATORY EVACUATION CENTER
IN ALL CITIES, MUNICIPALITIES, AND PROVINCES, AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The susceptibility of the Philippines to natural calamities has caused devastating effects to the country and its people throughout the years. In January 2020, Taal Volcano which is located in the province of Batangas, suddenly awoke from its forty-three (43) years of rest and, to the surprise of the Filipinos, suddenly started to spew gases, ash, and lava into the air. The damage brought about by this explosion was so extensive that it even led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people living nearby said volcano.

In 2013, the Philippines was hit by Super Typhoon Yolanda which was one of the strongest recorded typhoons in the world. The fury of this typhoon affected millions of people across different provinces in the Visayas. What was even worse was the fact that three (3) weeks before the said typhoon hit the country, Bohol Island was hit by a 7.2 magnitude earthquake which also caused damaging effects.

The reason behind the frequency of natural disasters in the country is because geographically, the Philippine archipelago is located in an area where it is vulnerable to natural calamities. The country is at the junction of several tectonic plate boundaries and rests on the Pacific's earthquake and volcano ring of fire making it susceptible to these natural calamities. To make matters worse, the Philippines is also located just above the equator and, as such, it faces the western Pacific having nothing else to take the force of storms and thereby directly making landfall in the country. In addition, according to the Global Peace

Index of 2019, the Philippines was ranked first as the most susceptible country to natural hazards brought about by the effects of climate change.

While the geographical location of the country cannot be changed and the occurrence of natural disasters cannot be prevented in its entirety, the response to the effects of natural calamities or any other hazardous events can be improved. In order to reduce the harmful effects of natural calamities and other hazardous events in the Philippines, this Bill seeks for the establishment of permanent evacuation centers in every city, municipality, and province throughout the country. These evacuation centers shall not only serve as a temporary shelter for those displaced by natural calamities but shall also ensure their safety and shall become a venue where their basic needs in times of emergency are provided for. Through the passage of this Bill, the country shall become expedient in responding to natural calamities and at the same time will be able to adopt more efficient measures in reducing the damaging effects of natural calamities. Preparedness in responding to natural calamities and other hazardous events is vital in taking a step forward into making our country more disaster-resilient.

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



EDWIN L. OLIVAREZ

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* — This Act shall be known as the “Mandatory Evacuation Center Act of 2023”.

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* — It is hereby the declared policy of the State to protect the people’s right to life and property by creating measures for disaster response and relief in times of natural calamities and other hazardous events. Towards this end, the creation of evacuation centers in every province, city, and municipality in the Philippines is hereby proposed in order to be able to provide immediate help to afflicted Filipinos and at the same time ensure their safety in times of natural calamities and other hazardous events.

SECTION 3. *Establishment of Evacuation Centers.* — There shall be an established evacuation center in every city, municipality, and province throughout the Philippines which shall provide basic needs and assistance to the people who will utilize the evacuation centers and shall serve as their temporary shelter. Said establishment center shall be a place where the safety and well-being of those who have become victims of natural calamities or any other hazardous events that may cause imminent danger to their life and property are guaranteed.

SECTION 4. *Evacuation Center Requirements.* — The following shall be the minimum requirement for every evacuation center that will be established under this Act:

- a. **Location/Designation** — Each location for every evacuation center shall be determined by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in close coordination with the Local Government Units (LGUs) concerned. The locational requirements shall be the following:
 1. It must be centrally located in the community;
 2. It must be of safe distance away from large trees, structures where hazardous materials are used and/or stored, or high-voltage power lines;
 3. It must be near a health facility;
 4. It must not be located on geotechnical stable land. This is to avoid risk of landslides and exposure to potential landslide of adjacent lands;
 5. It must not be located near military base camps, camps of insurgent groups, power plants, factories, and other areas where the chances of human-induced disasters are high.
- b. **Structural Building Capacity** — The evacuation centers shall be constructed and designed to withstand typhoons and seismic activities. Evacuation centers must be constructed to be calamity-resilient built with sturdy materials and be compliant to the specifications of the “National Building Code of the Philippines” and should be at par with the standards set by the International Building Code. The structural capacity requirements shall be the following:
 1. The structure must be elevated in such a manner that it will withstand likely impact from a high tide storm surge level of at least ten (10) meters;
 2. The structure must be a minimum of one (1) meter above the average flood level in the area where the same shall be built; and
 3. The structure shall not be less than nine (9) meters in height and designed in accordance with earthquake load standards.

c. **Amenities and Accessibility of the Evacuation Center.** — The evacuation centers shall be well-ventilated and shall have the capacity to accommodate a large number of evacuees. The centers shall have the following minimum amenities:

1. Sleeping quarters for the evacuees;
2. Separate shower and toilet facilities designated for males and females with a facility-to-user ratio of persons;
3. Amenities to enable access thereto by and for the accommodation of the disabled;
4. Provisions for emergency exit doors;
5. Food preparation areas which are provided with adequate ventilation;
6. Trash and waste segregation and collection areas;
7. Health care areas which shall include an isolation and/or quarantine area for persons who are suspected with infectious diseases;
8. Rainwater harvesting and collection facilities; and
9. Such other facilities that shall be deemed necessary in the establishment of the evacuation centers.

SECTION 5. *Operations and Management of the Evacuation Center.* — The LGUs concerned shall be primarily responsible for the operation, supervision, and management of evacuation centers established under this Act. They are also hereby authorized to issue rules and regulations on the proper use and maintenance of the evacuation centers.

The mandatory audit of infrastructures used as evacuation centers shall be conducted by the Provincial/City/Municipal Engineer and/or the building official at least once every year and immediately after the occurrence of a calamity or hazardous event.

SECTION 6. *Role of the Department of Public Work and Highways.* — The Department of Public Work and Highways (DPW) shall be in charge of the construction of evacuation centers and formulation of the building specifications

therefor based on standards, issuances, and other guidelines set by the DPWH. The DPWH shall also ensure that the construction of such evacuation centers is in accordance with the abovementioned requirements during its construction phase. The specifications of the evacuation centers shall be periodically reviewed and, if necessary, revised by the DPWH every three (3) years.

SECTION 7. *Role of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.* — The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), or its successor, shall be the primary lead agency which shall oversee the implementation of this Act.

SECTION 8. *Appropriations.* — The amount necessary to fund the construction and maintenance of the evacuation centers under this Act shall be sourced from a portion of the general appropriations of the DPWH. Every year thereafter, the amounts necessary for the constructions and maintenance of evacuation shall be included in the list of programs as part of the annual budget in the General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* — Within ninety (90) days after effectivity of this Act, the Department of Local Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the DPWH, in coordination with the appropriate government agencies concerned, shall formulate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the objectives of this Act.

SECTION 10. *Separability Clause.* — If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 11. *Repealing Clause.* — All acts, executive orders, memorandum circulars, guidelines and 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 complete publication in the Official Gazette or at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,