COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 827

Submitted by the Committee on Disaster Resilience on MAR 09 2021

Re: House Bill No. 8943

Recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 7519, 8049 and 8325

Sponsors: Representatives Lucy Torres-Gomez, Luis Raymund "LRay" F. Villafuerte, Joy Myra S. Tambunting, Manuel DG. Cabochan III

Mr. Speaker:

The Committee on Disaster Resilience to which were referred

House Bill No. 7519, introduced by Rep. Luis Raymund "LRay" Villafuerte, entitled:

"AN ACT
MANDATING THE LANGUAGE ACCESSIBILITY OF DISASTER-RELATED INFORMATION"

House Bill No. 8049, introduced by Rep. Joy Myra S. Tambunting, entitled:

"AN ACT
MANDATING THE LANGUAGE ACCESSIBILITY OF DISASTER-RELATED INFORMATION"

and

House Bill No. 8325, introduced by Rep. Manuel D. Cabochan III, entitled:

"AN ACT
MANDATING THE LANGUAGE ACCESSIBILITY OF DISASTER-RELATED INFORMATION"
have considered the same and recommend that the attached House Bill No. 8943, entitled:

AN ACT
REQUIRING DISASTER-RELATED INFORMATION TO BE STATED IN ACCESSIBLE LANGUAGE TO ENSURE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING THEREOF


Respectfully submitted:

LUCY TORRES-GOMEZ
Chairperson
Committee on Disaster Resilience

THE HONORABLE SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City
Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8943
(In substitution of House Bill Nos. 7519, 8049 and 8325)


AN ACT
REQUIRING DISASTER-RELATED INFORMATION TO BE STATED IN ACCESSIBLE LANGUAGE TO ENSURE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING THEREOF

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

SEC. 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as "Language Accessibility of Public Information on Disasters Act."

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – The right of the people to information on matters of public concern is recognized in our Constitution. Indeed, communication and information occupy a vital role in nation-building. In times of disaster and other emergencies, and to render meaningful and effective the right of the people to information, it shall be ensured that announcements, advisories and similar public communications are accessible in terms of the language or dialect used.
SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. – As used in this Act:

a. Disaster – a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources.

Disasters are often described as a result of the combination of: the exposure to a hazard; the conditions of vulnerability that are present; and insufficient capacity or measures to reduce or cope with the potential negative consequences. Disaster impacts may include loss of life, injury, disease and other negative effects on human, physical, mental and social well-being, together with damage to property, destruction of assets, loss of services, social and economic disruption and environmental degradation;

b. Emergency – unforeseen or sudden occurrence, especially danger, demanding immediate action;

c. State of Calamity - a condition involving mass casualty and/or major damages to property and roads, disruption of means of livelihoods, and normal way of life of people in the affected areas as a result of the occurrence of a natural or human-induced hazard.

SEC. 4. Scope of Application. – This Act shall cover disasters and other kinds of emergencies which are (1) national in scope, as declared through a State of Calamity or State of National Emergency by the President of the Philippines and (2) provincial, city, or municipal in scope, as declared through a State of Calamity or Emergency by the appropriate local government unit.
SEC. 5. Language Accessibility of Disaster-Related Information - In relation to disasters and other emergencies covered by Section 4 of this Act, it shall be mandatory for all government agencies and local government units to convert in an easily understandable form and translate to Filipino and any other appropriate regional language/s or dialect/s all their announcements, advisories, press releases, issuances, and any other information relevant to such disaster or emergency, including:

a) Tropical Cyclones, signals, and other advisories by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAG-ASA);

b) Volcano, Earthquake, tsunami, and landslide advisories and bulletins by the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS);

c) Announcements, bulletins, and other advisories of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Councils (LDRRMCs) and network of Disaster Risk Reduction Management Councils composed of national, regional, provincial, city, municipal DRRM councils and barangay DRRM committees;

d) Information on epidemics, outbreaks, and public health emergencies of the Department of Health (DOH);

e) Advisories and warnings released by DENR-MGB, human-induced hazards, BFP advisories, AFP and PNP human security concerns; and

f) Information on the Social Amelioration Program, emergency assistance, and other social protection measures of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).
SEC. 6. Translation to Filipino and Other Regional Language or Dialect. – The translation of the information covered by this Act shall be to Filipino and other regional language/s or dialect/s, as deemed necessary by the government agency and local government unit concerned considering the geographical location of the affected communities and the intended recipients of the information. The translated information shall be disseminated as widely as possible through all available media and communication channels.

SEC. 7. Role of the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino. – The Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF) shall render the necessary technical assistance and expertise to the government agencies and local government units including the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) and monitor their compliance with the duties mandated by this Act.

SEC. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within sixty (60) days from the Effectivity of this Act, the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF), in consultation with other relevant agencies and stakeholders, shall issue the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 9. Repealing Clause. – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations, or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 10. Separability Clause. – If any provision or part of this Act, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance, is held unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder of this Act shall not be affected thereby.
SEC. 11. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved
FACT SHEET

8943

House Bill No. ______ (In substitution of House Bills Numbered 7519, 8049, and 8325)

AN ACT

REQUIRING DISASTER-RELATED INFORMATION TO BE STATED IN ACCESSIBLE LANGUAGE TO ENSURE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING THEREOF

 Introduced by: LUIS RAYMUND “LRAY” F. VILLAFAUERTE, JOY MYRA S. TAMBUNTING, MANUEL D. CABOCHAN III, LUCY TORRES-GOMEZ, JULIET MARIE DE LEON FERRER MOHAMAD KHALID Q. DIMAPORO, LEONARDO BABASA, LORENZ DEFENSOR, STRIKE REVILLA, DEOGRACIAS VICTOR “DV” B. SAVELLANO

Committee Referral: COMMITTEE ON DISASTER RESILIENCE

Committee Chairperson: REP. LUCY TORRES-GOMEZ

OBJECTIVES:

To require government agencies and local government units to convert in an easily understandable form and translate to Filipino and any other appropriate regional language or dialect all announcements, advisories, press releases, issuances and any other information relevant to a local or national disaster or emergency.

KEY PROVISIONS

- Mandates all government agencies and local government units to convert in an easily understandable form and translate to Filipino and any other appropriate regional language/s or dialect/s all their announcements, advisories, press releases, issuances, and any other information relevant to such disaster or emergency;

- Disseminates the translated information as widely as possible through all available media and communication channels; and

- Mandates the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF) to render necessary technical assistance and expertise to the government agencies and local government units including the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)

RELATED LAWS:

Republic Act No. 10121, otherwise known as the “Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010".