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House approves bill for climate change response

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THE House of Representatives on Wednesday approved on third and final reading a bill that recognizes a climate change emergency and stresses the need for the government to come up with measures to stop human-caused global warming, limit its effects, and mobilize funds for mitigation efforts.

Voting 238-0, lawmakers passed House Bill (HB) No. 9084, or the "Climate Change Resilience Act," principally authored by Reps. Gus Tambunting, Rufus Rodriguez, Edgar Chatto, Anna Victoria Veloso-Tuazon, Ronald Singson, Steve Solon, Janice Salimbangon, Zia Adiong, Jose Manuel Alba, Ricardo Kho, Bienvenido Abante, Arjo Atayde, Gabriel Bordado, Linabelle Ruth Villarica, Noel Rivera, Ruth Mariano-Hernandez, and Mannix Dalipe.

"We must acknowledge that there is a climate change emergency and take steps to stop it or mitigate its effects. I strongly support this bill, being one of those who witnessed the devastating effects of super typhoon Yolanda 10 years ago. May we never see such a tragedy again," Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, the leader of the 300-plus-strong House of Representatives, said.

HB 9084 mandates the creation of a Climate Change Resiliency and Adaptability Program that shall develop and implement solutions to adapt and mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change.

The program will have the following components:

- Open sharing of data amongst the stakeholders
- Probabilistic Climate Risk Assessments (PCRA)
- Multi-level national educational plan on climate resilience
- Link between health and climate change
- Critical services
- Ecosystem protection strategies

"PCRA shall consider all possible scenarios, likelihood and inherent uncertainties, associated impacts of climate change, and the climate change projections in extremes in consultation with collective strengthening for community awareness on natural disasters agencies," the measure reads.

"The PCRA shall generate localized baseline information on climate risk faced by vulnerable communities and their support system for potential climate-related hazards," it added.

The bill also mandates a multi-sectoral approach to battling the effects of climate change and delineates the roles of government agencies in the effort.

These government agencies are the following:

1. Climate Change Commission (CCC)
2. National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC)
3. Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA)
4. Department of Education (DepEd)
5. Commission on Higher Education (CHED)
6. Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)
7. Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG)
8. Department of Science and Technology (DOST)
9. Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)
10. Department of Information and Technology (DICT)
11. National Economic Development Authority (NEDA)
12. Department of Agriculture (DA)
13. Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)
14. Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)
15. Other agencies

"The Climate Change Commission shall coordinate, monitor and evaluate programs and action plans related to climate change based on the National Climate Change Action Plan," the bill stated.

"Private entities, in coordination with the national government and LGUs, civil society organizations, and non-government organizations shall also take part in the preservation and protection of the environment by ensuring that their organizational practices are not detrimental and hazardous to the environment," it continued.

Also, a Climate Change Resiliency and Adaptability Summit is mandated to be held on the second week of September every year.

"The Summit shall be spearheaded by the CCC and shall be participated in by all stakeholders mentioned ... The Summit shall aim to collaborate all the efforts of the concerned agencies in environment preservation and protection," the bill added. (END)

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