

Monday, August 27, 2012

QC dev't council allows 'Bistek' to use calamity funds for disaster preparedness

By **Arlie O. Calalo**

The Quezon City Development Council, which is composed of 142 village chiefs, has agreed to allow Mayor Herbert "Bistek" Bautista to use the calamity funds to boost its disaster preparedness programs to prevent loss of life during natural or man-made calamities.

At a regular meeting, members of the council, which is also composed of city hall officials, unanimously approved the mayor's request that the calamity funds be utilized now for the purpose.

"We are responsible for our people. We should act now to prevent or minimize loss of life during disasters in the city," the city chief executive said.

He added: "We cannot just ignore the plight of the poor residents and we cannot always rely on Him to save their lives from disaster for we are responsible to the government to make sure they are safe from harm."

The city's chief executive noted that the past calamities should remind everyone of the urgent need to prepare now for any emergency, most

especially now that QC does not only have to contend with floods but also with the problem of having a Valley Fault Line that passes through some barangays and subdivisions.

Bautista said a top priority for the risk reduction and disaster preparedness is the implementation of the three-meter easement along city's waterways such as creeks and rivers, which the city's Development Council also approved during its regular meeting.

He also directed City Engineer Joselito Cabungeal and City Building Official Isagani Verzosa to implement the three-meter easement in the creeks and rivers. He added that private and public properties, including houses and commercial buildings, that will encroach on it will have to be demolished.

"QC should be a disaster-free city," Bautista said.

He added the city government is willing to relocate the displaced families in accordance with the

Urban Development and Housing Act.

Meanwhile, Bautista directed the QC Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Council, Environmental Protection and Waste Management Department, Barangay Operations Center, the building official and the engineering department to notify owners of establishments along the three-meter easement of creeks and rivers to immediately vacate these areas for their safety.

At the same time, he asked Cabungeal and Verzosa to be strict in issuing permits, especially for constructions along or near the Valley Fault Line.

"We cannot be lax in the evaluation of permits and liberal in giving exemptions for developments along or near the fault line. We must make sure that structures are strictly in accordance with the construction and building standards that ensure safety against earthquake risks," he said.

He added the safety of the people must be beyond the push and pull of politics.

* calamity funds
* disaster preparedness

More flexibility in tapping LGU calamity funds sought

Quezon City Mayor Herbert Bautista urged the Commission on Audit (COA) to study the possibility of revising some provisions in the use of calamity funds to make it more useful to the needs of the local government units (LGU).

Bautista repeatedly issued the call in a meeting with Interior and Local Government Secretary Jesse Robredo where both batted for changes in the way calamity funds are tapped to enable the LGU a free hand to enforce programs that will enhance its disaster mitigation and preparedness capabilities.

Under present CoA rules, 70 percent of the fund cannot be used when there is no existing calamity, and the

remaining 30 percent is limited as quick and standby response fund.

Robredo proposed that the embargo should be applied to the 30 percent instead.

"There is a need to give the LGU with more flexibility in the use of calamity funds," he said.

Among the more pressing areas Robredo cited where the calamity fund can be properly utilized are in providing training programs to barangay tanods and in enhancing the disaster-risk reduction management programs of the different local government units.

"We need force multipliers to augment the police in its peacekeeping efforts," Robredo said. (Chito A. Chavez)

LGU Calamity Funds
XX

CALAMITY FUNDS

ed.

The Manila Times

SUNDAY/NOVEMBER 17, 2002

QC dads want calamity fund used vs terrorism

NINE Quezon City councilors recently filed a bill that would authorize Mayor Feliciano "Sonny" Belmonte to declare the city in a state of calamity to allow the city government to tap the calamity fund to fend off terrorist attacks.

Council minority leader Rommel Abesamis said the bill was justified because there was an immediate need to stop lawless elements in the city.

Section 3 of the Rules and Regulations Implementing RA 8185 defines calamity as a "state of extreme

distress or misfortune or cause or loss misery caused by natural forces such as earthquakes, typhoons, floods, hurricane, epidemics or other disaster causing widespread loss of an/or extreme damage to human lives, livestocks, crops and properties."

The councilors argued that the recent bombing of a Golden Highway Transit bus along Royal, EDSA, and the spate of bomb threats at Quezon City Hall and the Hall of Justice building justified the bill.

JENA T. BAI AQRO

calamity fund - confusion