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Hontiveros files bill seeking to build 100-meter strip of coastal vegetation to help address flooding

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by [Hannah Torregoza](#)

Senator Risa Hontiveros is seeking the passage of a bill establishing a national coastal vegetation program that will help coastal communities defend against the damaging effects of typhoons.



Sen. Risa Hontiveros
(Senate of the Philippines / FILE PHOTO / MANILA BULLETIN)

Hontiveros filed Senate Bill No. 1917, An Act Establishing the National Coastal Greenbelt Program, that aims for a science-based, cost-effective national program to address flooding by building a 100-meter strip of coastal vegetation, such as planting a greenbelt of mangroves to provide safeguards to people living in coastline areas especially during natural calamities.

The bill specifically mandates the Climate Change Commission (CCC) to convene all relevant national government agencies to identify priority areas especially in the Eastern Pacific seaboard, where typhoons often make landfall.

The CCC will be tasked to facilitate the formation of the 100-meter strip of mangrove and beach forest species from the sea towards land.

“Our coastline of 36,000 kilometers is among the longest in the world and these coastal greenbelts will help us mitigate the damaging impacts of waves and storm surges.” Hontiveros said.

“Coastal forests can also reduce the force, depth, and velocity of a tsunami, lessening damage to property and reducing loss of life,” she added.

She said these “greenbelt of mangroves” will serve as “protection zones” to help prevent coastal erosion and mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change on human lives and properties.

According to Hontiveros, the devastation brought about by the recent typhoons in some parts of the country would have been prevented had the government invested in more science-based environment protection programs such as planting mangroves in vulnerable coastal areas.

“With at least 20 typhoons battering the Philippines in a year, it is imperative to think of innovative, sustainable, and cost-efficient ways for us to be able to protect our safety, our properties, and communities from the devastating impacts of natural disasters. Let us listen to science. Hindi na ito dapat maulit (This should not happen again),” she said.

She also said building coastal greenbelts is expected to protect biodiversity, improve fisheries productivity, and enhance the tourism and livelihood potential of the priority areas.

“Nature-based solutions will not only help us reduce disaster risks. They will also address our biodiversity crisis,” added the lawmaker.

Hontiveros also stressed the importance of innovative, sustainable, and cost-efficient ways for vulnerable coastal communities to protect themselves, their properties, and communities from the devastating impacts of natural disasters.

“The proposed 100-meter strip coastal vegetation is a critical step towards transforming coastal villages into highly resilient and sustainable communities prepared to weather any storm,” she said.

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