

(H. B. 1558)

(No. 69)

(Approved March 10, 2006)

AN ACT

To amend subsection (g) of Section 7 of Act No. 211 of August 2, 1999, as amended, known as the "Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Emergency Management and Disaster Administration Agency Act," in order to exempt nonprofit organizations whose mission is to promote the principle of community self-management and empowerment, as defined in Act No. 1 of March 1, 2001, known as the "Puerto Rico Special Communities Integral Development Act," of the charges that the Commonwealth Emergency Management Agency may impose for seminars, training sessions, conferences, workshops or courses on emergency and disaster management.

STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

In order to comply with the ministerial mandate of guaranteeing the public safety of its citizens, the Government of Puerto Rico created the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Emergency Management and Disaster Administration Agency. Modern society defines the emergency management concept as the process through which the people are prepared to deal with the consequences linked to natural events or events created by man. Although man does not have the power to prevent the unknown or the unexpected, this Agency was created under the premise that the Government can indeed mitigate the consequences of the unexpected if the people are duly prepared.

Throughout history, we have witnessed how our marginalized communities have been those most affected in emergency situations. At

times, the reason for this has been the lack of orientation as to how to proceed in an emergency, while at other times the reason has been the lack of foresight associated to ignorance of the risks inherent to the emergency. The elimination of those factors could be the difference between saving and losing a life.

Act No. 1 of March 1, 2001, created the Puerto Rico Special Communities Program. This program seeks to improve the living conditions in the marginalized communities of our Island. Through this initiative, our government established the basis for ensuring a better quality of life for our people. Quality of life may be translated into better housing conditions, education, access to public services and safety, among others.

Since the Special Communities are entities of limited economic resources, the charges authorized by the legislation in effect to the Emergency Management Agency for training sessions on the prevention of emergencies or disasters constitute an additional burden for our community leaders. The latter are those who collaborate with the government in its duty to preserve the public safety of the people.

If the people who have greater exposure to high risk situations were to be duly oriented and trained in the management and prevention of emergencies, the government would be able to minimize their impact. This legislation seeks to foster the improvement of the living conditions of our fellow citizens of limited resources and to reduce emergency management improvisation.

To promote the implementation of the public policy of the government, all available tools that guarantee the prevention of disasters should be used. Furthermore, since it is the Community Organizations that play the main role in the improvement of their communities, the training thereof in the

prevention of disasters and emergencies would be an investment rather than a burden for the Government.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF PUERTO RICO:

Section 1.- Subsection (g) of Section 7 of Act No. 211 of August 2, 1999, as amended, is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 7.- Faculties and Powers of the Director.—

The Director shall have the responsibilities, faculties and powers necessary and convenient to enforce the provisions of this Act, including but not limited to the following:

...

...

- g) Charge fees for seminars, training sessions, conferences, workshops, or courses on emergency and disaster management. This charge shall be rendered ineffective in the case of a nonprofit organization whose mission is the promotion of the community self-management and empowerment principle, as defined by Act No. 1 of March 1, 2001, known as the “Puerto Rico Special Communities Integral Development Act.” It is thus provided that every Community Organization established with the purpose of furthering the principles set forth in Act No. 1 of March 1, 2001, shall be exempt from the payment of the charges imposed herein.

...”

Section 2.- This Act shall take effect immediately after its approval.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify to the Secretary of State that the following Act No. 69 (H.B. 1558) of the 3rd Session of the 15th Legislature of Puerto Rico:

AN ACT to amend subsection (g) of Section 7 of Act No. 211 of August 2, 1999, as amended, known as the “Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Emergency Management and Disaster Administration Agency Act,” in order to exempt nonprofit organizations whose mission is to promote the principle of community self-management and empowerment, as defined in Act No. 1 of March 1, 2001, known as the "Puerto Rico Special Communities Integral Development Act," of the charges that the Commonwealth Emergency Management Agency may impose for seminars, training sessions, conferences, workshops or courses on emergency and disaster management,

has been translated from Spanish to English and that the English version is correct.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, today 27th of June of 2007.

Francisco J. Domenech
Director