

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Thirteenth Congress

First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2709



Introduced by:
HON. FEDERICO S. SANDOVAL II

Explanatory Note

This bill seeks to revise Section 4 of Republic Act No. 8550, otherwise known as the "Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998".

Section 4 of the Code sets forth the minimum tonnage of a vessel that can be used in commercial fishing. The Section provides that commercial fishing operators cannot use vessels of less than 3.1 gross tonnage. According to experts, said limit is too low as to include small vessels and encourages fishing by commercial fishermen in municipal waters which are exclusively reserved by law only for subsistence fisherfolks.

Three-tonnage fishing vessels can easily sneak and operate deep within the 15-kilometer radius of an unpatrolled coast, poach, and over-harvest the marine life therein, to the prejudice of the fishing communities that rely heavily on the marine resources of their immediate coastlines.

Increasing the tonnage of a vessel that can be used for commercial fishing is one effective way of keeping them out of the municipal waters. The limited operability of vessels of bigger tonnages in the shallower waters of the 15-kilometer radius will practically set an invisible boundary line that will protect the sources of livelihood reserved for marginalized fishing communities. Increasing the lower limit of the tonnage of commercial fishing vessels would, therefore, mean sustainable livelihood, increased income and productivity, and improved standard of living for our marginalized and subsistence fisherfolks.

In addition, raising the minimum tonnage of vessels that can be used for commercial fishing consequently raises the maximum tonnage that subsistence fisherfolks can use in pursuing their livelihood. That would not only mean their safety at sea, but also allow them to maximize the utilization of the resources up to the farthest extent of the municipal waters.

Further, allowing subsistence fishermen to use bigger vessels would encourage them to embark on bigger undertakings and, as a result thereof, improve their standard of living.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate enactment of the bill is earnestly requested.


FEDERICO S. SANDOVAL II
Representative
Lone District, Malabon City-Navotas

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AN ACT

AMENDING SECTION 4 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8550, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "PHILIPPINE FISHERIES CODE OF 1998"

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

SECTION 1. Paragraph 10, Section 4, of Republic Act No. 8550, otherwise known as the "Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998", is amended to read as follows:

"Section 4. *Definition of Terms.* x x x

10. Commercial Fishing - the taking of fishery species by passive or active gear for trade, business or profit beyond subsistence or sports fishing to be further classified as:

1. Small scale commercial fishing - fishing with passive or active gear utilizing fishing vessels of [3.1] **10.1** gross tons (GT) up to twenty (20) GT ;
2. Medium scale commercial fishing - fishing utilizing active gears and vessels of 20.1 GT; up to one hundred fifty (150) GT; and
3. Large scale commercial fishing - fishing utilizing active gears and vessels of more than one hundred fifty (150) GT."

SECTION 2. Paragraph 57, Section 4, of the Code is amended to read as follows:

"57. Municipal fishing - refers to fishing within municipal waters using fishing vessels of [three (3)] **TEN (10)** gross tons or less, or fishing not requiring the use of fishing vessels."



SECTION 2. This Act shall take effect upon the completion of its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general and nationwide circulation.

Approved.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'F. R.' or similar, written in a cursive style.