

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
QUEZON CITY

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3685

Introduced by the Honorable Representative Jesus N. Sacdalan

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to establish the Irrigation Policy Research and Development Office which shall be under the National Irrigation Administration.

The incidence of hunger is one of the most pressing issues that must be addressed by us as the country's policymakers. To alleviate extreme poverty and achieved food security in the country, the government must give priority to the agricultural sector and bring it to the mainstream of development.

But our agriculture sector is also beset with several problems. One of these is the lack of a comprehensive water resource policy framework to guide the planning and development of irrigation projects, irrigation development activities are fragmented. The different entities, namely, the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), the Bureau of Soils and Water Management and the local government units that implement irrigation development activities do so without a coordinated strategic agenda which prevents the maximization of the country's agricultural production potential.

Agriculture is critical to the reduction of poverty incidence in the country, particularly in the rural farming communities. A major key to the sustainable development of agriculture in the Philippines is the efficient agricultural irrigation or the effective and affordable supply of water to our country's agricultural lands. However, the bulk of information available indicate that the

irrigation systems are very expensive to construct, operate and maintain. Moreover, these irrigation systems have very low water use efficiency.

The actual benefits that are realized from our existing irrigation systems are, on the average, less than half of the benefits projected during the design and planning stage of the irrigation systems. Thus, policymakers and implementing agencies of the national irrigation development program must review and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of our irrigation system. There is a need to assess irrigation policy priorities and rationalize the agricultural irrigation strategies and programs to maximize agricultural productivity and achieve for the country a sustainable agricultural development. Hence, this bill.

Passage of this bill is earnestly sought so that we would be able to achieve food security and alleviate poverty in the country, for the present and future generation of Filipinos.



JESUS N. SACDALAN

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Fifteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3685

Introduced by Representative Jesus N. Sacdalan

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE IRRIGATION POLICY RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT OFFICE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. ***Short Title.*** - This Act shall be known as the “Irrigation
Reform Act.”

SEC. 2. ***Declaration of Policy.*** – It is hereby declared the policy of the
State to fight poverty and hunger and achieve food security for the greater
number of Filipinos. Towards this end, the State shall rationalize its national
policy on irrigation by reforming its irrigation development priorities and
developing effective, affordable and appropriate irrigation systems for the
country’s agricultural lands.

SEC. 3. ***Irrigation Policy Research and Development Office.*** -

There is hereby established the Irrigation Policy Research and Development Office, hereinafter referred to as the Office, to analyze agriculture sector policies and development strategies, identify constraints on the performance of irrigated agriculture, evaluate irrigation subsector needs, and develop an integrated national irrigation

SEC. 4. ***Powers and Functions.*** - The Office shall exercise the following powers and functions:

- a) Formulate policies and plans for the country's irrigation sector;
- b) Coordinate and integrate irrigation development plans, programs and projects to ensure that national and local irrigation development plans and programs are in consonance with each other';
- c) Promote broader participation of stakeholders in the irrigation sector in the planning, operation and management of irrigation programs and projects;
- d) Recommend to Congress of the Philippines such matters that may require legislation in support of national irrigation development;
- e) Establish a comprehensive national database on information relevant to agricultural irrigation;
- f) Facilitate capacity building activities for irrigation sector stakeholders; and
- g) Oversee the dissemination of information on irrigation research and development to local communities as well as relevant laws and measures on irrigation development.

SEC. 5. ***Executive Director.*** – The Office shall be headed by an Executive Director who shall be appointed by the NIA Administrator.

SEC. 6. ***Irrigation Development Program.*** - The Irrigation Policy Research and Development Program shall be organized and implemented by the Office in consultation with the National Water Resources Board, Department of Agriculture, Department of Environment and Natural Resources and other appropriate government agencies and private organizations. The Program shall be composed of the following components:

- a) Analysis of agricultural and irrigation sector strategic directions;
- b) Analysis of irrigated agriculture's strengths and weaknesses and identify its role in national poverty alleviation and food security;
- c) Assessment of irrigation development policy priorities;
- d) Database upgrading and management;
- e) Institutional capacity building; and
- f) Advocacy and information dissemination.

SEC. 7. ***Irrigation Development Action Plan.*** - The Executive Director, shall, within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, formulate and prepare a National Irrigation Development Action Plan that shall include the following activities:

- a) Definition, promotion and implementation of an irrigation development research agenda to support the national irrigation development program;

- b) Design and development of effective, affordable and appropriate irrigation systems for the specific needs of particular target area development;
- c) Promotion of the devolution of irrigation systems management and operation to all local government units or irrigation associations;
- d) Enhancement of women's participation in irrigation systems management and operation;
- e) Training and workshops for the various irrigation sector stakeholders as part of the capacity building efforts;
- f) Reassessment of irrigation development priorities towards the utilization of more cost-effective small scale irrigation systems;
- g) Establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive database of irrigation-relevant issues and information; and
- h) Monitoring and evaluation of existing programs and project implementation.

SEC. 8. ***Annual Report.*** – The Executive Director shall submit an annual accomplishment report giving a detailed account of the status of the implementation of this Act to the NIA Administrator who shall furnish the

same to the President and to both the Houses of Congress not later than March 30 of every year.

SEC. 9. ***Appropriations.*** - The amount of Five Million Pesos (P5,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated as initial fund of the Office. Thereafter, the amount necessary for the effective implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 10. ***Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** - Within sixty (60) days from the approval of this Act, the NIA Administrator shall issue the implementing rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 11. ***Repealing Clause.*** - All laws, ordinances, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with this Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 12. ***Effectivity.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.