

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Fifteenth Congress
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **5478**



Introduced by Honorable Antonio F. Lagdameo, Jr.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to establish the National Banana Research Center in the Philippines.

The banana industry is a very important source of income, employment and export earnings in the Philippines. The country's banana industry is worth \$720 million a year, provides employment to 240,000 workers and contributes P830 million in taxes to local government units.

According to the Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA), there are now 13 out of 26 provinces in Southern Philippines, including the Muslim areas, which are dedicated to banana production. The industry employs 240,000 workers and thereby pays at least Php21 Billion in wages every year. The industry pays almost Php1 Billion in local taxes yearly for business permits, real estate taxes, and other fees on top of Php900 Million in taxes paid by contractors and suppliers. The Philippine banana industry also supports 30,000 Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARB'S) and from small landowners under various contract-growing arrangements or lease arrangements.

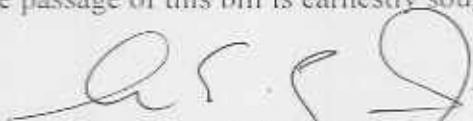
For over 44 years, the banana industry has been integral to the socio-economic development of Southern Philippines and of the whole country as well. Mindanao is home to about 81 percent of the country's banana production and generates export income largely from banana exports. Although Mindanao continues to dominate the Philippine banana industry, local banana growers and producers have voiced their concerns on the industry's sustainability.

More importantly, there is a pressing need to put up a banana research institute that will take scientific research and analysis to further develop the industry. This will address the vital issues on food security and stability of the banana industry.

The industry has suffered from the recent setbacks of economic embargo of the US over Iran, El Niño phenomenon and the recurrence of the uncontrollable spread of Panama disease. Also known as fusarium wilt, Panama disease has been dormant for about 50 years, but a virulent strain has now reappeared in plantations in the Philippines, having spread from Australia to countries in Southeast Asia and Taiwan. This type of disease could also spread to other banana varieties, threatening the livelihoods of thousands of farmers in the country.

This bill therefore seeks to establish a specialized banana research center which shall be responsible for the conduct of comprehensive studies and scientific approaches to sustainable banana farming. The establishment of a banana research center is the first concrete remedy towards addressing concerns such as prevention of diseases that infest banana farms, improved farming techniques and post-harvest practices as well as the exploration of potential banana varieties.

In view of the foregoing, immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



ANTONIO F. LAGDAMEO, JR.

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14 AN ACT
15 ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANANA
16 RESEARCH CENTER AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR
17

18 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines*
19 *in Congress assembled:*
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21 SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the
22 policy of the State to promote industrialization and full employment based
23 on sound agricultural development and agrarian reform, through industries
24 that make full and efficient use of human and natural resources, and which
25 are competitive in both domestic and foreign markets. Toward this end, the
26 establishment of a banana research center is necessary² in order to develop a
27 more balanced and integrated program on banana industry that will resolve
28 problems and issues in banana plantations.

29 SEC. 2. *Philippine National Banana Research Center.* – The
30 Philippine National Banana Research Center, hereinafter referred to as the
31 Banana Center, is hereby established under the Department of Agriculture to
32 provide research and development techniques for the production, post-harvest

1 handling and maintenance of germplasm collection and gene bank that are
2 capable of producing good quality varieties of banana.

3 SEC. 3. *Duties and Functions.* – The Banana Center shall
4 exercise the following duties and functions:

5 a) Integrate, collate and support studies on the banana industry;

6 b) Intensify research that may result in developing productive, high
7 yielding, good varieties of banana;

8 c) Conduct comprehensive studies and scientific approaches to
9 sustainable banana farming and enhance research on problems associated
10 with the prevention of diseases that infest banana farms in order to lessen
11 risks to health and the environment;

12 d) Establish and maintain germplasm collection and gene bank for
13 banana;

14 e) Upgrade the skills of development facilitators and banana
15 farmers through trainings, seminars and workshop on farming techniques,
16 banana production and postharvest handling and processing;

17 f) Establish national and international linkages for banana research,
18 development and production activities;

19 g) Coordinate with local government units (LGUs), non-
20 government organizations (NGOs) and companies involved in the
21 development of banana industry; and

1 h) Receive and manage grants, aid, donations or any kind of
2 assistance for achieving its objectives.

3 SEC. 4. *Executive Director.* – The Banana Center shall be headed
4 by an Executive Director who shall be appointed by the President of the
5 Philippines upon the recommendation of the Secretary of Agriculture. The
6 Executive Director shall be a recognized agriculturist with experience in
7 banana research development or a specialist banana grower actively involved
8 in banana farming and production technologies.

9 SEC. 5. *Duties and Responsibilities.* – The Executive Director
10 shall exercise the following duties and responsibilities:

11 a) Exercise over-all supervision and direction over the
12 implementation of all research and development programs of the Banana
13 Center and in general to supervise and direct its management, operation and
14 administration;

15 b) Execute contracts, incur obligations, acquire and dispose of
16 assets and deliver documents on behalf of the Banana Center;

17 c) Approve the organizational structure, staffing pattern, operating
18 and capital expenditures of the Banana Center;

19 d) Recommend the officers and employees of the Banana Center on
20 the basis of the highest possible standards of merit and fitness for public
21 servants subject to the civil service laws, rules and regulations;

22 e) Implement and enforce policies, decisions, orders, rules and

1 regulations issued by the Department of Agriculture; and

2 f) Exercise such other powers and functions and perform such
3 other duties as may be authorized, delegated, or assigned by law.

4 SEC. 6. *Annual Report.* – The Executive Director shall submit to
5 the President of the Philippines, through the Secretary of Agriculture, an
6 annual report generally dealing with the activities and operations of the
7 Banana Center, together with the audit report on the relevant accounts.

8 SEC. 7. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the
9 implementation of this Act shall be charged to the appropriations for the
10 Department of Agriculture. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for the
11 operation and maintenance of the Banana Center shall be included in the
12 annual General Appropriations Act.

13 SEC. 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60)
14 days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall issue
15 the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this
16 Act.

17 SEC. 9. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part of this Act
18 is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not
19 affected shall remain in full force and effect.

20 SEC. 10. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and
21 regulations and other issuances, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with
22 the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

1 SEC. 11. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days
2 after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspapers
3 of general circulation.

4 Approved,

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