



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 4727



Introduced by **Honorable ERLPE JOHN "PING" M. AMANTE**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to establish the Philippine Eel Research Center in the Municipality of Jabonga, Province of Agusan del Norte.

Global demand for eels has been growing dramatically. Between 1997 and 2007, around a million tons of eel commodities were exported worldwide valuing over USD 11 billion. It is estimated that 400,000 tons of live eels were exported during the same period reaching a peak of over 50,000 tons in the year 2004 (FAO, 2009). The mounting appetite is mainly driven by East Asia where eels are highly prized as a delicacy for its believed medicinal and aphrodisiac properties.

Eels command a premium price in the world market. In the Philippines alone, an adult eel could fetch P1,000 while a kilo of eel fries would cost P15,000. However, these tempting rewards have attracted many people to gather eels in the wild leading to serious deterioration of its population. In fact, the Anguillid eel found in the Philippines is now considered an endangered species.

Exacerbating the effect of over-gathering is the very nature on how eels grow and develop. Eels are catadromous, meaning in their life cycle they live partly in saltwater (spawning area) and freshwater (growth habitat). Currently, there is no method to reproduce eel larva for aquaculture due to these natural complexities; thus fishermen need to catch the wild eels when they enter the river and travel upstream, and farm them in ponds.

In order to ensure that Filipinos will be able to benefit sustainably in the lucrative global trade of eels, the government must build research and technological capabilities in the breeding of eels and development of eel fishery management measures.

The Municipality of Jabonga in the Province of Agusan del Norte is an ideal location for such research center for eels due to its proximity to both

Lake Mainit and Butuan Bay where these creatures thrive. There are no official records on the actual production in the province; however gathering of eels, known locally as casili, and its fries in the adjacent areas has been going on for a long time. Notably, the casili even grew to become closely associated with Agusan del Norte as a local delicacy.

In addition, the establishment of the first and only eel farm in the Philippines (as of June 2014) in the nearby City of Cabadbaran will be a boost to our bid to host this research center because this will foster public-private partnership in the effective transfer and application of technologies.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this Bill is earnestly sought.


ERLPE JOHN "PING" M. AMANTE



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 4727

Introduced by **Honorable ERLPE JOHN "PING" M. AMANTE**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE EEL RESEARCH CENTER
IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF JABONGA, PROVINCE OF AGUSAN DEL
NORTE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF

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

SECTION 1. There shall be established, under the supervision of Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, a Philippine Eel Research Center in the Municipality of Jabonga, Province of Agusan del Norte.

SECTION 2. The Department of Agriculture shall formulate the rules and regulation necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 3. The Secretary of Agriculture shall include in the Department's program the establishment and operationalization of the Philippine Eel Research Center, the funding of which shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,