

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Seventeenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5753



Introduced by Honorable Deogracias Victor "DV" B. Savellano

EXPLANATORY NOTE

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH AN AQUATIC RESEARCH AND EXPERIMENTAL BREEDING STATION FOR LAKE, RIVER AND OTHER INLAND FISHES IN THE PROVINCE OF ILOCOS SUR, MUNICIPALITIES OF MAGSINGAL AND CABUGAO, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

The Declaration of Principles and State Policies as enshrined in the 1987 Constitution, particularly, Article II Section 16, provides that the State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature. The human endeavor to understand the roles that various organisms play in the earth's ecosystems, must include accurate and detailed knowledge of the biology of fishes. As such, the State is duty bound to think of ways on how to further develop and enhance its natural resources.

Experimental studies using live, intact organisms such as fishes or any aquatic forms continue to play an essential role in developing knowledge and better understanding of life processes, life forms, and the environment in general. Fishes are worthy of experimental and observational research and understanding their biology cannot be accomplished in the absence of experimentation. Fishes being used for experimental studies have the following benefits to wit:

- 1.) Fishes are useful indicators of environmental quality and ecological integrity;
- 2.) Fishes provide an important source of food for many of the world's humans and terrestrial animals and are an important source of food for other aquatic animals;
- 3.) Fishes are important part of aquatic environments and ecological systems; and
- 4.) Fishes are useful indicators of environmental quality and ecological integrity, and their individual adaptations and physiological specializations make them suitable for use as physiological and biomedical models.

Article 13 Section 7 of the 1987 Constitution likewise provides that the State shall protect the rights of subsistence fishermen, especially of local communities, to the preferential use of local marine and fishing resources, both inland and offshore. It shall provide support to such fishermen through appropriate technology and research, adequate financial, production, and marketing assistance, and

other services. The State shall also protect, develop, and conserve such resources. The protection shall extend to offshore fishing grounds of subsistence fishermen against foreign intrusion. Fish workers shall receive a just share from their labor in the utilization of marine and fishing resources.

The conservation of the aquatic resources having inviolable support from the Constitution, the State is duty bound to extend the widest latitude of understanding with respect to the protection of such resources considering the abundance of natural resources the Philippines has to offer.

Case in point is the shores of the Philippines. They are havens that attract people to live, work and recreate. These coastal estuaries, wetlands, barrier islands, coral reefs, tidal flats and rocky shores are also vital to a myriad of fish and wildlife species, as well as, to the well-being of Filipinos who live and work in coastal communities. Many coastal areas have ports for the exchange of trade and economic activities with other countries. These coastal areas are potential rich source of alternative energy, marine resources and tourism destination. Among the many coastal areas in the Philippines, Cabugao and Magsingal which are municipalities of Ilocos Sur are the most promising.

Magsingal is a third class municipality in the province of Ilocos Sur, Philippines. According to the 2015 census, it has a population of 30,792 people. The name of the municipality came from the term "*Mayisingal*," an Ilocano term which means "to be moved." It was applied when the bell tower was moved from a previous location to its current site.

On the other hand, Cabugao is a first class municipality in the province of Ilocos Sur, Philippines. According to the 2015 census, it has a population of 37,501 people. It is the second northernmost town of the province of Ilocos Sur. It is 27 kilometres (17 mi) from Vigan City, the capital of the province; 55 kilometres (34 mi) from Laoag City (Ilocos Norte); 163 kilometres (101 mi) from the San Fernando, La Union, the regional center; and 432 kilometres (268 mi) north of Manila. It is accessible to almost all modes of land transportation and a 7-kilometer portion of the MacArthur Highway passes through the town center. Its total land area is 9,556 hectares (23,610 acres). It is bounded on the north by Sinait; on the south by San Juan; on the east by Nueva Era, Ilocos Norte and the Cordillera Mountain Ranges; and on the west by the South China Sea. The Cordillera mountain range borders on the eastern part of the municipality. Hills are located in all the four corners of the municipality. Off the coast of Barangay Sabang there is Salomague Island.

In addition, Cabugao has so many rivers and Cabugao River is the largest river among them. Two tributaries to the east feed the main channel of the Cabugao River. The headwaters of the north fork of the Cabugao River originate in Sitio Caset in Barangay Maradodon and the southern fork's headwaters originate in Sitio Gaco in Barangay Cacadiran. Cabugao's drinking water supply comes from three water resources in the Cordillera mountain range.

Likewise, due to the vast agricultural lands and rivers Cabugao has to offer, its people are forced to engage primarily in farming and fishing. Cabugao, with its big poblacion, is one of the most urbanized towns in the province.

Considering the factual circumstances surrounding Magsingal and Cabugao's situations, particularly, the promising growth thru aquatic development, validated by the 1987 Constitution, which mandates the 'right to a balanced and healthy ecology' of the nation's marine wealth, and the Local Government Code stipulates the responsibility of local government units to 'manage and maintain ecological balance within their territorial jurisdiction, the development of the Natural resources found in

Cabugao is imperative. Also, the Fisheries Code (Republic Act 8550) of 1997 institutionalizes the goals of maintaining a 'sound primordial ecological balance' and stipulates the details of autonomy and mandates of different users and management authorities. Also the ArcDev Framework for Sustainable Philippine Archipelagic Development, developed from the National Marine Policy with assistance from UNDP, departs from the assumption that Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) has been exceeded and argues that the state is obligated to ensure goals of poverty alleviation and livelihoods within 'ecological limits' and 'optimal utilization' (DENR et al., 2004, p. 163). The definition of what comprises the desirable, optimal and assumed stable state of the ecosystem is frequently dependent on the economic benefits which can be derived for the government or business partners.

Illustrative example is the Industry of Fishery in the Philippines. It is an economic sector of great importance for the Philippine state, corporations and the trade partners. In the ArcDev Framework this economic interest is coupled to interests of territorial integrity, national security and enforcement of UNCLOS (UN Convention Law of the Sea).

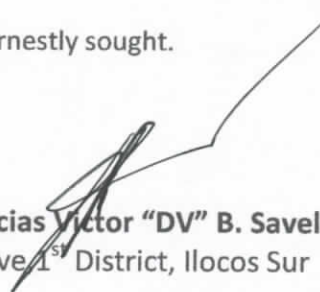
In line with the assistance that the LGU may provide, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) is hereby authorized to establish, acquire and maintain such facilities and equipment as may be necessary to implement the intents and purposes of this Act. For this purpose, the aquatic research and experimental breeding station for lake, river and other inland fishes may promulgate such rules and regulations regarding the breeding, propagation and distribution of fries, fingerlings and spawners to those engaged in the fishing industry.

It must focus on the scientific understanding and the global protection, conservation, and sustainability of aquatic animals, fishery resources, and aquatic ecosystems. Their policies and standpoints must be based primarily on information developed through scientific practices, but must also reflect ethical concerns, including the conservation of the diversity and abundance of fish populations, and respect for life and life processes.

Also, at a practical level, BFAR must set guidelines that are intended to provide general recommendations on field and laboratory endeavours, such as sampling, holding, and handling fishes.

Lastly, considering the numerous benefits as aforementioned, and avenues it provides where the people of Magsingal and Cabugao can have the chance to uplift their standard of living and be able to support their families, the steamrolling of this bill will not only put Magsingal and Cabugao on the map but will also set a precedent to nearby provinces in taking into account the success it may accomplish thru this Act.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of house bill _____ is earnestly sought.



Hon. Deogracious Victor "DV" B. Savellano
Representative 1st District, Ilocos Sur

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

SECTION 1. There shall be established an aquatic research and experimental breeding station for lake, river and other inland fishes in the Province of Ilocos Sur, Municiplaities of Magsingal and Cabugao, which shall be under the supervision and control of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) of the Department of Agriculture and in cooperation the LGUs concerned.

SEC. 2. The BFAR is hereby authorized to establish, acquire and maintain such facilities and equipment as may be necessary to implement the intents and purposes of this Act. For this purpose, the aquatic research and experimental breeding station for lake, river and other inland fishes may promulgate such rules and regulations regarding the breeding, propagation and distribution of fries, fingerlings and spawners to those engaged in the fishing industry.

SEC. 3. The Secretary of Agriculture shall include in the Department's program the establishment and operationalization of the aquatic research and experimental breeding station for lake, river and other inland fishes in the Province of Camarines Sur, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 4. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,