

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

Seventeenth Congress
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. **7159**



Introduced by ALONA Representative
Anna Marie Villaraza-Suarez

Explanatory Note

The State recognizes the important role played by the coconut industry in our national economy as one of the principal industries and one of the largest income earners of the country. According to the latest data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), coconut was considered as a major food and non-food products source and an industrial crop of the country for the first quarter of 2017.¹

The **Province of Quezon** is considered as the top producing province amongst the 67 coconut producing provinces in the country. In fact, coconut production in Quezon was estimated at 3.12 million metric tons in the first quarter of 2017. Based on the PSA report, it shares 78% of the production in the CALABARZON with the highest hectareage planted to coconut in the total of 379,435 hectares. Beyond these figures and statistics, coconut farming has always been a significant aspect of the Quezonians' way of life and culture and even in the entire CALABARZON. Moreover, it is a core area for industry development due to consistent and continuing commitment of local executives, convergence of national government agencies and on top of market opportunities being the hub of the industry in Luzon.

Despite the significance of coconut production in Quezon, there are neither institutions nor facilities in the province devoted for the innovation and generation of novel technologies and processes related to coconut production, processing and enterprise development. Although the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) currently operates three research centers in Albay, Davao and Zamboanga², no such research center is geographically accessible for farmers in the Province of Quezon and in nearby provinces and municipalities of Luzon. The PCA research center in Albay will not serve the purpose, since it is focused on biotechnology and generated research outputs are restricted for adoption in the Bicol region which is in quarantine because of the *Cadang-cadang* disease problem. As such, the establishment of research complex/facilities in Quezon province is of paramount importance to cater to the provisions of industry development not only in Quezon province, but the entire Luzon area since it is strategically located accessible in major coconut regions (MIMAROPA, Region V and IV-A).

¹ <http://www.psa.gov.ph/non-food/coconut>

² https://www.google.com/url?hl=en&q=http://www.pca.da.gov.ph/cononutrde/index.php/researchcenters&source=gmail&ust-1502776417423000&usg=AFQjCNFlySH868_f923pJhqEsVdfIKApeg

Research is the key to sustain development and access to these findings and generated technologies of the impoverished coconut farmers shall ensure sustainable and vibrant coconut industry.

This bill seeks to guarantee that Quezon remains the top producing province by revitalizing coconut-based farming and enterprise development, through the establishment of a research and development facility that is geographically accessible to the farmers and producers. This coconut research center shall bridge the gap between people and science-based innovations, on one hand, and practical knowledge and experience, on the other. This shall act as a hub for technology transfer and convergence among farmers, researchers and scientific experts. Through this, the coconut industry in Quezon, as well as in the CALABARZON and adjacent regions will have access to modern and cost-effective ways of farming that will definitely provide accelerated industry development. This will result to increase agricultural outputs and shall be translated to higher income coupled with diminishing poverty incidence in coconut growing communities

Early approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna Marie', followed by a long, sweeping horizontal stroke.

ANNA MARIE VILLARAZA-SUAREZ

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**AN ACT ESTABLISHING A COCONUT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER IN
THE PROVINCE OF QUEZON, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

Section 1. Establishment of the Quezon Coconut Research Center. – This Act as proposed shall establish the “Quezon Coconut Research Center” (hereinafter referred to as the “Center”) which shall be under the management of the Philippine Coconut Authority. The Center shall be based in the Municipality of Catanauan, Province of Quezon and shall serve as the learning hub of various state universities in Quezon and adjacent provinces.

Section 2. Objectives. – The Center shall have the following objectives and purposes:

- a. To conduct applied research and verify generated technologies on coconut and all its phases of production, processing, management and utilization, towards maximizing its nutritive, health, economic and ecological potentials;
- b. To develop and produce experts, students, coconut farmers and farmers’ organizations/cooperatives on various disciplines related to coconut production, utilization, marketing and agri-business;
- c. To provide a database of generated research information and library center of technologies in various facets of coconut farming, processing and coconut-based enterprise development;
- d. To design and implement a coconut-based farming extension programs to effectively transfer modern farming technology, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) to coconut farmers, students, private sectors and interested clients; and
- e. To perform all acts as are necessary, expedient, suitable or proper for the furtherance or attainments of the Center’s purposes.

Section 3. Multi-Partite Cooperation Agreement. – The Office of the President, through the Philippine Coconut Authority in coordination with the Department of Agriculture through the Bureau of Agricultural Research, Department of Trade and Industry and the Philippine Council for Agricultural

Research and Resources Development of Department of Science and Technology, shall enter into a multi-partite cooperation agreement to provide for the design of the facility, its operations and services and shall prepare the organizational structure and personnel complement, the proposed furniture and fixtures, the equipment components of the Center and the estimated costs thereof.

Section 4. Appropriations. – The amounts necessary for the establishment, operation and maintenance of the Center shall be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law and subsequently thereafter. Furthermore, the Center shall seek financial support from foreign donors such as JICA, KOICA, AusAID, USAID, IFAD, and FAO and similar institutions for the establishment and improvement of its infrastructures, laboratory facilities, field experiment station development and training/scholarship of qualified personnel.

Section 5. Separability Clause. – If any part or section of this Act is declared unconstitutional, such declaration shall not affect the other parts or section of this Act.

Section 6. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, rules and regulations and other issuances or part thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby amended, repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 7. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect immediately following its publication in a newspaper of general circulation or in the Official Gazette, whichever comes first.

APPROVED;