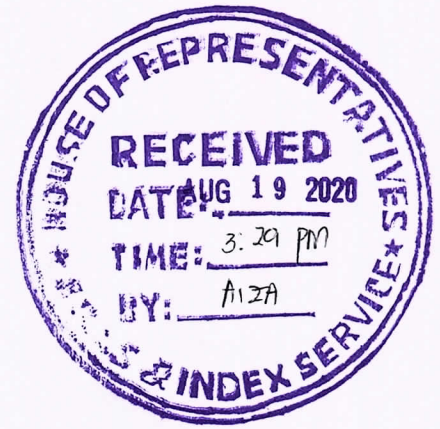


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Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7439

Introduced by **HON. FERNANDO T. CABREDO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This measure seeks to develop the root crops industry in the Bicol Region through the establishment of a Root Crops Research and Development Center in the City of Ligao in the Province of Albay. The Center shall among others, undertake and conduct research and technical studies on the development, production, management, marketing and promotion of root crops and its by-products. It shall also provide technical assistance to root crops farmers and other stakeholders in the Region.

This bill also creates a Root Crops Subsidy Fund that shall be used to financially support the root crops industry in the Bicol Region. The fund shall be directly and exclusively used for root crops planting and cultivation, research and technical studies, and skills training and capital development.

Root crops, like sweet potato or "kamote", peanuts, cassava, taro, and others, have broad adaptability that allows them to be produced even under unfavourable conditions such as drought, poor soils and even typhoons. They are also a rich source of nutrition, are affordable, and are a primary source of sustenance for many people, especially in developing countries. It provides important sources of income through direct sale and value-addition via processing for food and non-food uses.

While coconut is one of the major produce in the Bicol Region, it is notable that root crops such as sweet potatoes have shown resilience in recent typhoons, contributing directly to food security during difficult times, particularly in Albay. Bicol Region, due to its locations, frequently experiences typhoons, floods, and drought that it leads to severe damages of properties and loss of livelihoods in agriculture.

Given the different climatic conditions in the country, the Department of Agriculture adopted a crop diversification scheme wherein planting cash crops and permanent crops increases farming productivity and generates higher yields.

According to Secretary William Dar of the Department of Agriculture, there is a need to diversify crop production in the Philippines as about 80% of the country's farmlands are devoted to only three (3) crops such as rice, corn, and coconut. Thus, crop diversification is a strategic plan to increase crop portfolio so that farmers will not solely depend on a single crop like coconut to generate income. DA Secretary Dar believes that aside from its economic benefits to farmers, diversified crops will enhance natural biodiversity, strengthen agro-ecosystem, reduce risk of total crop failures, and provide farmers with alternative source of income.

Crop diversification means the simultaneous growing of cash crops or permanent crops wherein a wide range of crops can be grown under a main crop. Permanent crops like coffee, cacao, abaca, lanzones and other fruit trees can be established. Cash crops, on the other hand, include corn, peanut, sweet potato, arrowroot, ramie and vegetables, among others. High-value crops like cassava, sweet potato, radish also aid in crop diversification.

It is therefore high time that an alternative source of income such as root crops should be developed in the Region that will provide higher profitability and stability in production.

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


FERNANDO T. CABREDO

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7439

Introduced by **HON. FERNANDO T. CABREDO**

AN ACT
DEVELOPING THE ROOT CROPS INDUSTRY IN THE BICOL REGION,
CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE THE ROOT CROPS RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT CENTER AND THE ROOT CROPS SUBSIDY FUND, AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Title. - This Act shall be known as the "Root Crops Research and Development Center in the Bicol Region Act."

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote, support, and strengthen the root crops industry in the Bicol Region, thus providing livelihood opportunities to root crops farmers in the Region.

SECTION 3. Creation of the Root Crops Research and Development Center. - Within a year from the approval of this Act, there shall be established the Root Crops Research and Development Center in the City of Ligao, Province of Albay. The Center shall be attached to the Bicol University.

SECTION 4. Functions of the Root Crops Research and Development Center. - The Root Crops Research and Development Center shall perform the following functions and duties:

- a. Undertake and conduct research and technical studies on the development, production, management, marketing and promotion of root crops and its by-products;

- b. Publish research studies, papers, articles, and other works or writings on root crops on a regular basis for the benefit of root crops farmers and other stakeholders nationwide.
- c. Provide technical assistance and support to root crops farmers and producers and other stakeholders in the Bicol Region;
- d. Develop improved production and harvesting techniques and effective cropping systems for root crops;
- e. Develop high yielding, good quality, and pest resistant varieties of sweet potato, cassava, gabi, and other root crops;
- f. Train faculty members and other research personnel who will undertake research and development work on root crops;
- g. Develop a Root Crops Development Roadmap / Program;
- h. Provide and develop marketing tools for root crops and its by-products;
- i. Establish standards in grading, sampling and inspection, tests and analysis, specifications, packaging, preservation, conservation, and transportation of root crops and its by-products;
- j. Coordinate with the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Bicol University, local government units, other concerned government agencies, and other stakeholders in order to consolidate all policies, programs, and projects on root crops research and development; and
- k. Perform such other functions and duties necessary or incidental to the promotion and development of the root crops industry.

SECTION 5. Root Crops Subsidy Fund. - There is hereby created a Root Crops Subsidy Fund that shall be used to financially support the root crops industry in the Bicol Region. The fund shall be directly and exclusively used for:

- a. Root crops planting and cultivation;
- b. Research and technical studies; and
- c. Skills training and capital development for the root crops industry.

SECTION 6. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - The DA and DENR, in collaboration with DTI, DOST, and the Bicol University, shall issue and promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of the Act.

SECTION 7. Appropriations. - For effective implementation of this Act, the amount of Two Hundred Million Pesos (Php 200,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated from the current and annual budgetary allocations of the DA, fifty percent (50%) of which shall serve as the initial amount for the Root Crops Subsidy Fund under Section 5 of this Act. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual budget of the DA and under the General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 8. Repealing Clause. - All laws, decrees, executive issuances, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby deemed repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SECTION 9. Effectivity Clause. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,