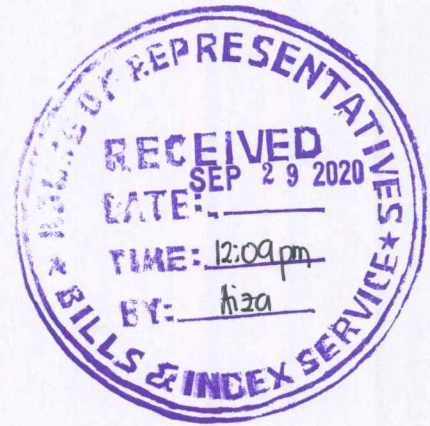


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila
EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session



House Bill No. **7792**

Introduced by Rep. Christopher V.P. De Venecia

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Food security is the primary goal of all nations. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), food security exists when "all people have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy lifestyle at all times". Over few years, food security in the Philippines has been gravely threatened by challenges which are mainly caused by the rise of population, climate change, occurrence of natural calamities, lack of adequate infrastructure and underdeveloped food production technologies. Based on the Social Weather Station, Filipino families who rated themselves hungry rose from 8.3% to 18.3% in the past 15 years. Henceforth, the country's hunger profile was categorized as a "serious problem".

Ensuring the national food security through a sustainable and globally competitive aquaculture and post-harvest industries has always been the priority of NIFTDC. From being the originally established as a three-hectare research and technology center focused on oyster, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources-National Integrated Fisheries Technology Development center (BFAR-NIFTDC) expanded into a 35-hectare prime center that currently operates a wide array of developed and matured aquaculture and post-harvest fisheries technologies for 23 years. It is located in Bonuan, Binloc, Dagupan City, about 250 kilometers north of Manila.

Breeding and propagation of economically important aquaculture commodities of marine, brackish and freshwater species are developed in the Center due to its topographical advantages. It is located along Lingayen Gulf in Dagupan City. The Center has the best laboratory facilities (Environmental Monitoring Laboratory, Microbiology Laboratory, Fish Health and Molecular Pathology Laboratory, Natural Food Production and

Phycology Laboratory), production facilities for Milkfish, Molobicus Saline Tilapia, Tilapia, Giant Freshwater Prawn, Siganids, Catfish, Seabass, Sea cucumber, Oyster, and Live bearing fishes, training facilities such as Asian Fisheries Academy (AFA), Korea-Philippines Seafoods Processing Complex (SPC) and Shrimp school and agri-tourism such as Fishery Cemetery, BUHAY-ISDA, Children's Aquafarm, Oyster Living Museum, Fish Museum) facilities which are utilized for research, extension and production.

To date, the Center has also been attracting farmers and other beneficiaries, including the people which are directly engaged to fisheries. Agri-tourism facilities like Fish Museum, Oyster Living Museum where it showcases different ornamental fishes of different sizes, Fish Cemetery where remains of breached aquatic organisms such as dolphins and turtles are laid, BUHAY-ISDA which serves as a model of new and traditional methods of producing fish and vegetables in roof tops and vacant lots in the urban areas. Children's aquafarm which encourages children to appreciate the beauty of agriculture and fisheries, and many other technologies such as the shrimp school, production of solar salt, fish condo and isda't gabi. The Asian Fisheries Academy (AFA) is a world class learning institution with modern facilities to conduct local and international training programs on fisheries technologies for sustainable development of Asia-Pacific Region, and is accredited by the PRC as a CPD provider. The Academy develops IEC materials to effectively disseminate technologies on aquaculture such as techno-brochures, techno-newsletters, training manuals and techno posters.

The Center has already proved its success by giving novel fisheries service to Filipinos. Its technologies were already acknowledged and adopted by many. It has made partnerships to local and international institutions. Cognizant of such great contributions and the important role of the Center it will play in the attainment of the country's Food Security and food self-sufficiency for fish commodities, the filing of this bill is sought for approval.



HON. CHRISTOPHER V.P. DE VENECIA

Republic of the Philippines
Congress of the Philippines
Metro Manila

Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7792

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE CURRENT FUNCTION OF THE BFAR NATIONAL INTEGRATED FISHERIES TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CENTER AND RENAMING IT TO PHILIPPINE CENTER FOR AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Section 1. Title- This Act shall be known as the "Philippine Center for Aquaculture and Fisheries Development Act of 2020".

Section 2. Declaration of Policy- It is hereby declared the policy of the State:

- a. to achieve food security through sustainable aquaculture and post-harvest practices;
- b. to attain exponential increase in production, export and expansion of livelihood opportunities among fisherfolk;
- c. to industrialize selected aquaculture production for export; and
- d. to enhance fisherfolk entrepreneurial skills and profit.

Section 3. Definition of Terms- As used in this act, the following terms shall mean:

- a. Sustainable Aquaculture- fishery operations involving all forms of raising and culturing fish and other fishery species in fresh, brackish and marine areas in sustainable manner.
- b. Food security- state at which all people have both physical and economic access to the basic food that they need at all times
- c. Post-Harvest- handling, storing and transforming of fishery products
- d. HACCP- Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points
- e. Industrialization- development of fisheries industry
- f. IMTA-Integrated Multi-Tropical Aquaculture refers to the process of providing byproducts such as waste from an aquatic species to fertilize a plant or feed another aquatic species. The entire process is a form of recycling. In recent years, combining hydroponics (growing plants in water without soil) with the process of aquaculture (raising fish) has become a very popular form of IMTA.
- g. DA- Department of Agriculture
- h. NIFTDC- National Integrated Fisheries Technology Development Center
- i. BFAR- Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources

Section 4. Creation of Philippine Center for Aquaculture and Fisheries Development – There is hereby established a corporate body to be known as the Philippine Center for Aquaculture and

Fisheries Development, hereinafter referred to as the PCAFD, under the Department of Agriculture. PCAFD shall have its principal office at the 35 has aquaculture facility formerly known as Seafarming Research and Development Center (SRDC) located in Bonuan Binloc, Dagupan City, Pangasinan, about 250km north of Manila.

Section 5. Purposes and Objectives – The function of NIFTDC shall be strengthened and expanded to optimize production capacity of various aquaculture commodities in the country. PCAFD will develop a national aquaculture and post-harvest industry development program to sustain and further improve the gains already made in fish production and processing, improve the income and economic condition of marginal fisherfolk, expand employment opportunities in the rural and coastal areas, and ultimately promote the general welfare of the people through food sufficiency and security.

Section 6. Powers and Functions – In furtherance of its purposes and objectives, PCAFD shall have the following powers and functions:

- (a) To develop scientific, sustainable and ecosystem-based approach for managing aquaculture and to maximize its full production capacity, from fish breeding, hatchery, nursery, integrated systems, value-adding technologies to marketing of various aquaculture commodities such as but not limited to milkfish, oysters, *Molobicus saline* tilapia, mussels, shrimps, freshwater prawn, seabass, siganids, catfish, dojo, red snapper and sea cucumber;
- (b) To conduct comprehensive environmental assessment and water quality monitoring studies (physical, biological and chemical) for new and current aquaculture areas in the country to prevent or minimize the occurrence of fish diseases and fish kills;
- (c) To conduct microbial and fish health assessment of water, fish, crustaceans and fishery products which can relate to fish diseases and mortalities caused by microbial pathogens such as, but not limited to bacteria and viruses;
- (d) To establish a national facility equipped with complete and modern facilities and equipment for aquaculture research and development studies in collaboration with other institutions and potential investors;
- (e) To develop climate resilient infrastructure, practices and technologies to facilitate optimal resilience to climate change and associated impacts on productivity;
- (f) To develop aquaculture tools and implements that will help mechanize fish farming in the country;
- (g) To develop and expand core-group of aquaculture specialists on different fisheries commodities certified by the Professional Regulation Commission in partnership with the Department of Agriculture;
- (h) To develop pool of experts in the different regions on various aquaculture commodities;
- (i) To promote the inclusion and involvement of women's group in the aquaculture industry in order to achieve gender equality;
- (j) To develop export commodities from aquaculture;

- (k) To act as lead center in restocking, stock enhancement and sea ranching of coastal fisheries resources;
- (l) To act as the Central Bank of natural food (phytoplankton and zooplankton) through modernistic Phycology facilities for BFAR Regional Offices, Local Government Units, State Colleges and Universities, private farmers and fishers and satellite hatcheries all over the country;
- (m) To act as Technology Center for the propagation of high value species such as seabass, freshwater prawn, siganid, sea cucumber and red snapper;
- (n) To act as an Aquaculture Training Center of the country accredited by Professional Regulation Commission as a Continuing Professional Development provider for Fisheries Technologies and as work immersion facilities for junior and senior high school and college students in partnership with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and Department of Education (DepEd);
- (o) To provide toll processing services on seafood products for export and local market through HACCP certified Korea-Philippines Seafood Processing Complex which shall also generate job opportunities for indigent fisherfolks as Plant workers;
- (p) To develop an Agri-Aqua Tourism Center which shall provide recreation, entertainment, and/or educational experiences to visitors while showcasing income-generating opportunities from aquaculture and post-harvest businesses;
- (q) To demonstrate other income-generating technology systems such as urban aquaculture, integrated fish farming, fish condominium and solar salt farming;
- (r) To implement sustainable aquaculture that will generate profitable investment returns and at the same time create a positive environmental impact; and
- (s) To operate a business incubator unit which shall package and transfer economically viable technologies.

Section 7. Board of Trustees – The corporate powers of the Center shall be exercised, and all its business, activities and properties shall be controlled by a Board of Trustees, hereinafter referred to as the Board, composed of the Secretary of Department of Agriculture (DA) as ex officio Chairman and six (6) other members to be appointed by the President of the Philippines upon recommendation of the Secretary of DA. The appointive members of the board shall serve at the pleasure of the President of the Philippines.

The board shall meet regularly at least twice a month or as often as the exigencies of the service demand; the presence of at least five (5) members shall constitute a quorum, and the majority vote of the members present, there being a quorum, shall be necessary for the adoption of any resolution, rule, regulation, decision or any other act of the Board.

The members of the Board, including the Chairman, shall receive per diem as the Board may determine, for each Board meeting actually attended; Provided, that such per diem shall not exceed Five Thousand Pesos (₱5,000.00), during any one month for each member. The said members shall also be entitled to reimbursable transportation and representation allowances in going to and coming from board meetings and transacting official business for the Center.

Section 8. Powers and Functions of the Board. The Board shall exercise the following powers and functions:

(a) To define and approve the programs plans, policies, procedures and guidelines for the Center in accordance with its purposes and objectives, and to control the management, operation and administration of the Center;

(b) To approve the Center's organizational structure, staffing pattern, operating and capital expenditure, and financial budgets, prepared in accordance with the corporate plan of the Center;

(c) To approve salary ranges, benefits, privileges, bonuses, and other terms and conditions of service for all officers and employees of the Center, upon recommendation of the Executive Director;

(d) To appoint, transfer, promote, suspend, remove or otherwise discipline any subordinate officer or employee of the Center upon recommendation of the Executive Director;

(e) To create such committee of committees and point their members thereof, as may be necessary or proper for the management of the Center or for the attainment of its purposes and objectives;

(f) To determine the research priorities of the Center consistent with the framework of its purposes and objectives and in coordination with research planning and monitoring mechanics; and

(g) To exercise other powers and functions and perform such other acts as may be necessary or proper for the attainment of the purposes and objectives of the Center, or as may be delegated by the Secretary of Department of Agriculture.

Section 9. Executive Director – The Center shall be headed by an Executive Director who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines upon recommendation of the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture. He must have a Doctoral Degree in Aquaculture or Fisheries Technology. He shall serve at the pleasure of “the President of the Philippines”.

Section 10. Powers, Function and Duties of the Executive Director. – The Director shall be directly responsible in the Board and shall have the following powers, functions and duties:

(a) To exercise over-all supervision and direction over the implementation of all research and development programs of the Center, and in general to supervise and direct the management, operation and administration of the Center;

(b) Within the limits of the authority delegated to him by the Board, to execute contracts, incur obligations, acquire and dispose of assets and deliver documents on behalf of the Center;

(c) To implement and enforce policies, decisions, orders, rules and regulations adopted by the Boards; and

(d) To exercise such other powers and functions and perform such other duties as may be authorized or assigned by the Board.

Section 11. Services of Government Personnel. The PCAFD may, for the purpose of its research and development activities, obtain, and secure the services of scholars, scientists and technical personnel of with relative expertise to aquaculture and fisheries science.

Section 12. Buildings, Facilities and Equipment. The Center is hereby authorized to own, hold, plan and construct buildings and other facilities as may be necessary or property to attain its purposes and objectives; Provided, however, that it will initially utilize facilities of BFAR- National Integrated Fisheries Technology Development Center.

The Center is further authorized to purchase equipment, supplies and materials, either locally or abroad, as may be necessary to carry out its powers and functions and attain its purposes and objectives, and shall be exempt from payment of any all forms of taxes, duties, fees and charges imposed by any governmental authority, whether national or local, on any and all such importation, equipment, materials, articles and services.

Section 13. Appropriation. The Secretaries of Department of Agriculture and Department of Budget Management are hereby authorized and directed to set aside out the existing funds of the Department of Agriculture, the amount of Two Hundred Million Pesos (₱200,000,000.00) as the initial funds of the Center for CY 2021 to be used for its start-up and operating expenses.

The Center shall encourage collaborations with international research institutions and economies. It shall utilize revenues for the use of its facilities and revenues from produced breeders, fingerling, fry and eggs. Thereafter, the government contribution to the Center shall be provided for in the annual General Appropriations Act. The appropriations herein provided shall be subject to the fiscal control and management procedures provided for in Executive No. 714 dated August 1, 1981.

All funds, savings and income of the Center shall constitute a revolving fund which shall be considered part of the funds automatically released to the latter, subject to the fiscal control and management procedures provided for in Executive Order No. 714 dated August 1, 1981. Such funds, savings and income shall be used to achieve the purposes and objectives for which the Center is established.

Section 14. Separability Clause. The provisions of this Executive Order are hereby declared separable. If any portion hereof shall be held invalid or unconstitutional, such invalidity of unconstitutionality shall not affect the other provisions which shall remain in full force and effect; Provided, That the latter provisions can stand alone and been forced in their entirety.

Section 15. Effectivity. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from the date of its publication in the official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.