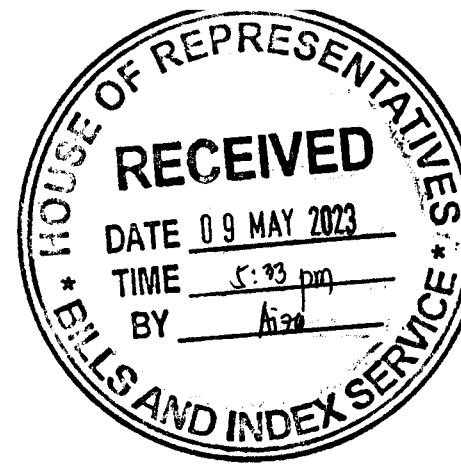


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8007



Introduced by **Representative Wilbert T. Lee**

AN ACT
PROVIDING A FUEL SUBSIDY FOR MUNICIPAL FISHERIES,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution under Article XIII, Section 7 explicitly provides that the State shall protect the rights of subsistence fisherfolk, especially of local communities, to the preferential use of the communal marine and fishing resources, both inland and offshore.

The fishing industry is one of the main drivers of the Philippine economy. In 2022, total fisheries production grew to 4,339.89 thousand metric tons or by 2.2 percent, from the previous year's output of 4,248.26 thousand metric tons. Increases in production were noted in marine municipal fisheries and aquaculture, while commercial and inland municipal fisheries reported setbacks during the year.¹

Meanwhile, the marine municipal fisheries output reached 946.88 thousand metric tons in 2022. It reported an increase of 2.2 percent above the 926,37000 metric tons of production it had in 2021. The subsector contributed 21.8 percent to the total fisheries production in 2022.² On the other hand, the inland municipal fisheries production was registered at 175.35 thousand metric tons in 2022. This volume of production during this period indicates a decrease of 14.7 percent from the 205.54 thousand metric tons output in the previous year.³

Despite the fishing sector's major contribution, our fishermen continue to be among the fundamental sectors' poorest people. According to the preliminary estimates of PSA's 2021 poverty statistics, fisherfolk registered the highest poverty incidence rate of 30.6 percent, significantly higher than the 26.2 percent in 2018.⁴ These sectors had the highest

¹ Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). Fisheries Situation Report for Major Species, January to December 2022

² *Ibid.*

³ Supranotes no. 1

⁴ Fisherfolk, farmers remain poorest in PH – PSA. (2021). Retrieved 26 April 2023, from: <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2023/3/26/fisherfolk-farmers-poorest-2021.html>.

proportion of individuals belonging to families with income below the official poverty thresholds compared to other basic sectors.⁵

The fisheries production in the last quarter of 2022 dropped by 6.6 percent.⁶ This demonstrates that the country's agriculture and fishing industries have received poor attention from the national government.⁷ Other factors that contributed to the decline in agri-fisheries production include the government's lack of assistance for underserved communities as well as its persistent refusal to give production subsidies to those in need, noting that only 4 percent of the country's more than two million registered fishermen had benefitted from the P3,000 fuel discount.⁸

Thus, the measure proposes to guarantee a fuel subsidy for municipal fisherfolk who utilize motorized boats. It proposes to provide a fuel voucher not lower than One Thousand Pesos (PHP 1,000.00) per month for each eligible beneficiary. In addition, beneficiaries of this program shall also be automatically enrolled and covered under the National Health Insurance program of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth). The Social Security System (SSS) shall also provide microinsurance mechanisms to beneficiaries of the program.

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



HON. WILBERT T. LEE
Representative
AGRI PARTYLIST

⁵Fisherfolk, farmers remain poorest in PH – PSA. (2021). Retrieved 26 April 2023, from: <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2023/3/26/fisherfolk-farmers-poorest-2021.html>.

⁶ Peña, K. D. (2023). *When those who feed the nation are the poorest: Farmers, fisherfolk in deepest poverty pit*. Retrieved 26 April 2023, from: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1748786/when-those-who-feed-the-nation-are-the-poorest-farmers-fisherfolk-in-deepest-poverty-pit>.

⁷ Peña, K. D. (2023). *When those who feed the nation are the poorest: Farmers, fisherfolk in deepest poverty pit*. Retrieved 26 April 2023, from: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1748786/when-those-who-feed-the-nation-are-the-poorest-farmers-fisherfolk-in-deepest-poverty-pit>.

⁸ Peña, K. D. (2023). *When those who feed the nation are the poorest: Farmers, fisherfolk in deepest poverty pit*. Retrieved 26 April 2023, from: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1748786/when-those-who-feed-the-nation-are-the-poorest-farmers-fisherfolk-in-deepest-poverty-pit>.

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

1 **Section 1. Short Title.** - This Act shall be known as the “*Pantawid Pambangka Act of*
2 *2023.*”

3 **Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy.** - The State recognizes the crucial role of municipal
4 fisherfolk in ensuring food security in the country. It is hereby declared a policy of the State
5 to provide support to municipal fisherfolk, in recognition of their sacrifices and contributions
6 to the nation, and in pursuit of the Constitutional mandate to promote social justice in all
7 phases of development.

8 **Sec. 3. The Pantawid Pambangka Program.** - Pursuant to the declared policy of
9 this Act, hereby established the Pantawid Pambangka Program, herein referred to as the
10 Program which shall provide a fuel voucher not lower than One Thousand Pesos (PHP
11 1,000.00) per month for each eligible beneficiary under this Act: *Provided*, that the amount
12 shall be revised every year to account for inflation. The Program shall be administered by the
13 Department of Agriculture (DA).
14

15 **Sec. 4. Program Beneficiaries.** - The beneficiaries of this Act shall be municipal
16 fisherfolk who fish within municipal waters, whether coastal or inland, and who use
17 motorized fishing vessels of three (3) gross tons or less: *Provided*, that registration under the
18 National Program for Municipal Fisherfolk Registration of the Bureau of Fisheries and
19 Aquatic Resources shall be a precondition for the receipt of benefits under this Act.

1 **Sec. 5. Convergence of Social Services.** - Beneficiaries of this program shall also be
2 automatically enrolled and covered under the National Health Insurance program of the
3 Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth). The Social Security System (SSS)
4 shall also provide micro-insurance mechanisms to beneficiaries of the program.

5 **Sec. 6. Non-Diminution of Benefits.** - Nothing in this Act shall be construed to
6 reduce existing benefits granted under existing laws, decrees, executive orders, or any
7 contract, agreement, or policy between the employer and employee.
8

9 **Sec. 7. Appropriations.** - The equivalent of ten percent (10%) of any increase in the
10 collections in the excise tax on fuel shall be earmarked for the implementation for this Act,
11 which shall be indicated as a separate line item under the annual appropriations of the DA
12 under the General Appropriations Act.
13

14 **Sec. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** - Within six (6) months from the
15 effectivity of this Act, the DA shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry
16 out the provisions of this Act.
17

18 **Sec. 9. Separability Clause.** - If any provision or part of this Act is declared
19 unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and
20 in effect.
21

22 **Sec. 10. Repealing Clause.** - All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, and
23 administrative regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are
24 hereby repealed or amended accordingly.
25

26 **Sec. 11. Effectivity Clause.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
27 complete publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,