



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

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. **8566**



INTRODUCED BY REP. JOSE “BONG” J. TEVES, JR.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In 2020, Super Typhoon Rolly (*Rolly*) ravaged the entire abaca industry in our country. In the Abaca Capital of the Philippines – the province of Catanduanes alone, an estimate of Four Hundred Million Pesos (PHP 400,000,000.00) worth of damage was left by the said typhoon according to the local government unit. Before *Rolly*, the Abaca Capital earns around One Hundred Fifty Million Pesos (PHP 150,000,000.00) a month as its main agricultural product. Aside from Catanduanes, there are many other abaca producing provinces in Visayas such as the provinces of Leyte, Samar, Negros Oriental, Ilo-ilo, and Aklan, and all the provinces in Mindanao.

To put it in context, the abaca is the top export product of the Philippines in the global market. Our country supplies the 80% demand of abaca in the international market, making the Philippines the number one source of abaca in the world. As such, our country benefits at least One Billion U.S. Dollars (USD 1,000,000,000.00) of income from our abaca products pre-pandemic.¹ Despite this international accomplishment and stature, the abaca industry in the Philippines is being overlooked by the national government. After the wrath of *Rolly* in 2020 and during the pandemic, no assistance of any kind from the government were given to our

¹ http://www.scielo.org.co/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0304-28472023000110263#:~:text=Furthermore%2C%20during%202020%20only%20in,2021%3B%20FAO%2C%202022).

abaca farmers. The government through the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas even decreased the income of our abaca farmers by shifting our One-Thousand Peso bills from fiber to plastic. At present, the abaca farmers are still suffering the damage brought about by *Rolly* in 2020, that is on top of the economic struggles due to the COVID-19 pandemic we are currently experiencing.

Given the aforementioned facts, this measure seeks to provide financial assistance in the amount of Ten Thousand Pesos (PHP 10,000.00) to our abaca farmers to support, improve, and further increase their production of abaca. This is also to provide relief to our abaca farmers in times of national emergencies and crises just like the Super Typhoon Rolly and the pandemic. This is similar to the financial assistance the government provides to our rice farmers and other livestock raisers.

By passing this measure, we are giving importance to our abaca farmers and recognizing that indeed we are the top producer of abaca in the world.

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



HON. JOSE "BONG" J. TEVES, JR.
Deputy Majority Leader
Representative, TGP Party-List



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

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. **8566**

INTRODUCED BY REP. JOSE “BONG” J. TEVES, JR.

AN ACT
PROVIDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO ABACA FARMERS AND PROVIDING
OTHER FORMS OF RELIEF, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as “Financial Assistance to Abaca Farmers Act of 2023”.

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to promote a just and dynamic social order through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life.

It is also the policy of the State to protect and enhance the right of all the people to human dignity, reduce social, economic, and political inequalities, and remove cultural inequalities by equitably diffusing wealth and political power for the common good.

SECTION 3. Financial Assistance to Abaca Farmers. – A program of the national government providing for financial assistance to qualified abaca farmers is hereby established for rural poverty reduction and mitigate the decline of abaca farmers’ income and abaca

production which may have been caused by a national emergency, crises, or any natural calamity that may have occurred.

Aside from the financial assistance, qualified abaca farmers shall also be provided for with other forms of relief such as the provision of fertilizers, adequate tools, and treatments for abaca crops.

SECTION 4. Qualified Abaca Farmers. – The Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA) shall select qualified beneficiaries of the program using a standardized targeting systems. To be qualified to receive a financial assistance and other forms of relief, the abaca famer must meet the following criteria:

- (a) Classified as poor or nearly-poor based on a standardized targeting system and the poverty threshold issued by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) at any time of the selection;
- (b) Must have been engaged in the cultivation of abaca crop in the Philippines.

SECTION 5. Amount of Financial Assistance. – Qualified and selected beneficiaries under Section 4 of this Act shall be granted a financial assistance in the amount of Ten Thousand Pesos (PHP 10,000.00) to be provided for by the DA and PhilFIDA.

SECTION 6. Reporting. – The DA in coordination with the PhilFIDA shall publish, on an annual basis, a full report on the implementation of this Act. The report shall include, but not limited to, financial disclosures, the number of abaca farming household-beneficiaries included in the program based on geographic, socioeconomic and cultural circumstances, and recommendations to improve the implementation of the program. The report shall be submitted either in print or by way of electronic document to the Senate and the House of Representatives prior to the submission of the President's annual budget.

SECTION 7. Appropriation. – The amount necessary for the implementation of the provisions of this Act shall be sourced from the annual budget of the Department of Agriculture and the Philippine Fiber Industry Authority.

SECTION 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DA and PhilFIDA in coordination with other government agencies concerned, shall promulgate the rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 9. Separability Clause. – If, for any reason, any section or provisions of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions hereof shall not be affected thereby.

SECTION 10. Repealing Clause. – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SECTION 11. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) national papers of generical circulation or Official Gazette.

Approved,