

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10531



Introduced by **Representative Wilbert T. Lee**

AN ACT
TO PROMOTE RURAL HEALTH BY PROVIDING FOR AN ACCELERATED
PROGRAM FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A POTABLE WATER SUPPLY
SYSTEM IN THE COUNTRY WITHIN THREE YEARS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The right to clean and safe water is a basic human right. As enshrined in Article II, Section 15 of the 1987 Constitution “[t]he State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.” It is the responsibility of the government to ensure that every Filipino have access to clean and safe drinking water.

As an archipelagic country, the Philippines is surrounded by bodies of water. Undoubtedly, our country is geographically blessed with vast coastline and abundant water resources. However, one of the primary and persisting issues many rural communities face is the continued lack of access to clean and safe water. 40 million Filipinos, including those in the island and upland barangays, lack access to clean and potable water supply with 5,500 of the country's over 7,600 islands, being small islands, have no access to fresh water.¹

The consequences of insufficient access to clean and safe water adversely impacts public health. Contaminated water sources can lead to waterborne diseases and other health risks. In addition, it hinders economic development and worsens social inequalities, as communities without reliable access to clean water struggle to meet their basic needs and pursue livelihood opportunities.

Article XII of the 1987 Constitution outlines the objectives of the government in terms of wealth distribution and the division of goods and services for the promotion of effective industrialization and full employment of the Filipino people. It further states that all

¹ Domingo, Katrina. 2024. 40M Filipinos do not have access to clean and potable water: DENR. May 7. Accessed on 4 June 2024, <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/2024/5/7/40m-filipinos-do-not-have-access-to-clean-and-potable-water-denr-1320>.

natural resources within the Philippine territory, including water resources, shall be owned by the State. Thus, it is upon the government to protect, manage and promote clean water sources for the benefit of the Filipino people.

Through this measure, this Representation aims to address the urgent need to improve access to potable water in many rural areas across the country and reduce the risk of waterborne diseases to pave way for a healthier and more prosperous future for all Filipinos. Access to potable water not only satisfies a basic human need but also prevents various water-related health issues. The National Water Resources Board, in coordination with the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), is tasked with implementing a three-year program for the construction of potable water supply systems throughout the country. The act also outlines program guidelines, including the equitable distribution of projects, the participation of local government units, and the management and maintenance of the water supply systems by the respective local government units. An initial appropriation of Five Hundred Million Pesos (P500,000,000.00) is provided for the implementation of the Act, with subsequent appropriations to be included in the annual General Appropriation Act (GAA) until the program is completed.

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



HON. WILBERT T. LEE
Representative
AGRI PARTYLIST

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10531

Introduced by **Representative Wilbert T. Lee**

AN ACT
TO PROMOTE RURAL HEALTH BY PROVIDING FOR AN ACCELERATED
PROGRAM FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A POTABLE WATER SUPPLY
SYSTEM IN THE COUNTRY WITHIN THREE YEARS

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 “*Rural Potable Water Supply*
2 *Act*”

3
4 **Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote
5 the quality of health of every Filipino through the provision of adequate social services
6 including, but not limited to, the provision of an adequate potable water supply system to
7 minimize the exposure of waterborne disease.

8
9 **Sec. 3. *Lead Agency.*** – The National Water Resources Board (NWRB), in
10 coordination with the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Environment and Natural
11 Resources (DENR), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and the
12 Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) shall undertake a three-year program
13 for the construction of potable water supply system throughout the country. The program
14 shall prioritize areas with social and health problems brought by waterborne disease, taking
15 into consideration population, area served, project cost, and other economic, social, and
16 environmental factors as may be deemed necessary in undertaking the program within the

context of the national development plans. The lead agencies concerned, in consultation with the provincial and municipal development councils, shall determine the areas that shall be given priority.

Sec. 4. *Program Guidelines.* – The lead agencies concerned shall observe the following priorities and guidelines in the planning, construction, and management of potable water supply projects:

- a. Funds provided for in this Act shall be used only for the construction of the new potable water supply system;
- b. Priority shall be given to the construction of communal water supply;
- c. The potable water supply projects must be equitably distributed among the provinces and municipalities, giving priority to those provinces and municipalities having inadequate supply of potable water;
- d. The local government unit concerned should participate in all stages of the project. The local government shall participate in the project planning, identification, design, management of the project funds, construction, and monitoring;
- e. The potable water supply system shall be managed and maintained by the local government units concerned;
- f. The regional or provincial offices of the NWRB, DSWD, DOH, DENR, and DPWH, shall be responsible in the preparation of feasibility studies and design of communal potable water supply projects.

Sec. 5. *Promotion of Public Private Partnership (PPP).* – The NWRB, in close coordination with the local government unit concerned will explore all possible PPPs in the expeditious construction of potable water systems, in accordance with Republic Act No. 11966, also known as the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Code of the Philippines.

Sec. 6. *Appropriation.* – The sum of Five Hundred Million Pesos (P500,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated for the initial implementation of the provision of this Act. Thereafter, the succeeding appropriation shall be included in the annual General Appropriation Act (GAA) until the program shall have been completed.

1 **Sec. 7. *Separability Clause.*** – If for any reason, any part or provision of this Act is
2 declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected thereby
3 shall remain in full force and effect.

4
5 **Sec. 8. *Repealing Clause.*** - All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, rules and
6 regulations, or part thereof contrary to or are inconsistent with any provision of this Act are
7 hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

8
9 **Sec. 9. *Effectivity Clause.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
10 publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,