



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



House Bill No. 613

Introduced by Representative **ANTONINO B. ROMAN III**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines ranks among the world's top seaweed producers, yet the full potential of this industry remains underutilized, particularly for fisherfolk and coastal communities. Many lack secure tenure over marine areas, deterring long-term investment and support. Moreover, the absence of clear zoning in municipal waters leads to conflicts, inefficiencies, and missed opportunities.

This bill seeks to empower fisherfolk through a collaborative and cost-effective approach—requiring coastal local government units to establish Marine Aquaculture Zoning Plans that clearly identify Seaweed Production Zones. By securing tenure through renewable Seaweed Use Rights, this Act creates the foundation for sustainable livelihoods, value-added processing, and private sector engagement. It also supports the national goals for food security, climate resilience, and inclusive growth under the blue economy framework.

The bill mandates the integration of gender and youth inclusion into all seaweed development initiatives and calls for the construction of disaster-resilient infrastructure and use of climate-smart technologies. Bataan is designated as a pilot site to ensure early implementation and demonstrate replicable models.

Rather than requiring a new bureaucracy, this bill leverages existing mandates of DA-BFAR, DILG, and LGUs, and fosters interagency collaboration, local participation, and innovation. With minimal new funding and strong stakeholder alignment, it guarantees high-impact, scalable results for coastal development.

Immediate passage of this measure is earnestly sought.


ANTONINO B. ROMAN III



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 613

Introduced by Representative **ANTONINO B. ROMAN III**

AN ACT
MANDATING COASTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS TO ADOPT
MARINE AQUACULTURE ZONING PLANS, ESTABLISHING SEAWEED
PRODUCTION ZONES, PROVIDING FOR TENURE SECURITY FOR
FISHERFOLK, PROMOTING CLIMATE-RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. — This Act shall be known as the "Marine Aquaculture Zoning and Seaweed Tenure Security Act."

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. — It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote inclusive and sustainable aquaculture development, empower fisherfolk and coastal communities, and rationalize the use of municipal waters through participatory marine spatial planning. The State recognizes the need to provide fisherfolk with secure access to seaweed farming areas and to create an enabling environment for investment, innovation, climate resilience, and disaster risk reduction in marine-based livelihoods.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. — For purposes of this Act:

- a. "Marine Aquaculture Zoning Plan (MAZP)" refers to a spatial management tool adopted by local government units to delineate zones within municipal waters for specific aquaculture uses.
- b. "Seaweed Production Zone" refers to a designated area within the MAZP where seaweed farming is the preferred use and shall be prioritized for government assistance and tenure issuance.

- c. “Seaweed Use Right” refers to a conditional, renewable, and non-transferable tenure instrument granted to individuals or groups for the cultivation of seaweed within a Seaweed Production Zone.

SEC. 4. Mandatory Marine Aquaculture Zoning by LGUs. — All coastal municipalities and cities shall adopt a Marine Aquaculture Zoning Plan (MAZP) for their municipal waters within two (2) years from the effectivity of this Act, in accordance with guidelines issued by the Department of Agriculture – Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG).

SEC. 5. Establishment of Seaweed Production Zones. — The MAZP shall include the identification and delineation of Seaweed Production Zones, which shall be based on scientific, environmental, and socio-economic assessments conducted in coordination with DA-BFAR and the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA).

SEC. 6. Issuance of Seaweed Use Rights. — LGUs shall issue Seaweed Use Rights to registered fisherfolk, cooperatives, or accredited community organizations for the cultivation of seaweed within the designated zones. Such rights shall be valid for a renewable term of five (5) years, subject to compliance with performance and environmental conditions.

SEC. 7. Technical and Financial Assistance. — DA-BFAR, in coordination with DILG, shall provide technical assistance to LGUs in the preparation of MAZPs and the implementation of this Act. The national government shall prioritize the provision of post-harvest infrastructure, seedlings, training, and climate-resilient technologies to Seaweed Production Zones.

SEC. 8. Integration into Local Development Plans. — LGUs shall integrate the MAZP and Seaweed Production Zones into their Comprehensive Development Plans (CDPs), Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUPs), and Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAPs).

SEC. 9. Inclusion of Women and Youth. — All seaweed-related support programs shall ensure the participation of women and youth, including preferential access to use rights, training, financing, and cooperative membership. DSWD, DTI, and BFAR shall issue implementing guidelines ensuring gender-responsiveness and youth inclusion.

SEC. 10. Incentives for LGU Compliance. — Coastal LGUs that adopt and implement MAZPs and establish Seaweed Production Zones within the prescribed period shall be eligible for incentive grants, technical equipment packages, or additional infrastructure funding from DA-BFAR, DILG, and other relevant agencies.

SEC. 11. Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster-Resilient Infrastructure. — The national government, through DA-BFAR, DOST, and LGUs, shall promote the use of climate-resilient seaweed varieties, floating and offshore cultivation systems, and the construction of disaster-resilient drying, storage, and processing facilities in Seaweed Production Zones.

SEC. 12. Pilot Implementation. — The Province of Bataan shall serve as a pilot site for the implementation of this Act. The DA-BFAR and DILG shall coordinate with the provincial government and its coastal municipalities to serve as models for scaling and replication.

SEC. 13. Funding. — The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's budget of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior and Local Government. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 14. Implementing Rules and Regulations. — Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DA-BFAR, in consultation with DILG, LGUs, fisherfolk organizations, and relevant stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 15. Separability Clause. — If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder of this Act shall not be affected thereby.

SEC. 16. Repealing Clause. — All laws, executive orders, administrative orders, rules, and regulations inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 17. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,