

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

TWENTIETH (20th) CONGRESS
FIRST REGULAR SESSION

House Bill No. **830**



Introduced by
Rep. ROBERT NAZAL

AN ACT
PROMOTING AND PROVIDING INCENTIVES FOR
WATER CATCHMENT SYSTEMS FOR AGRICULTURAL IRRIGATION AND
SUSTAINABLE FARMING PRACTICES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Water determines the fate of Philippine agriculture; yet one-third of the nation's irrigable land still has no dependable water, constraining food security at a time of intensifying climate stress. Closing this irrigation gap through farm-level water catchment systems is both an economic necessity and a climate adaptation imperative.

According to the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), only 65.28% of the country's 3.12 million hectares of technically irrigable land was serviced by irrigation as of 31 December 2021, leaving roughly one million hectares rain-dependent. Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority show that irrigated rice paddies averaged 3.62 metric tons per hectare in 2023, whereas rain-fed fields produced only 2.98 metric tons, a 21% yield gap. Climate change diagnostics likewise confirm a 0.68 degree Celsius rise in national mean temperature between 1951 and 2015, making dry seasons hotter and drier and compounding agricultural water stress.

Research by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies identifies rainwater harvesting systems, small farm reservoirs, and run-off impounding ponds as cost-effective climate adaptation measures for Filipino farms. National policy likewise promotes irrigation development through the Free Irrigation Service Act (Republic Act No. 10969), which mandates the provision of affordable irrigation services to smallholder farmers. The Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028 calls for the accelerated implementation of the National Irrigation Master Plan and the Water Security Road Map. However, large-scale infrastructure projects alone cannot promptly serve widely dispersed small farms. On-farm water catchment systems provide a scalable and cost-efficient complement that delivers direct benefits to the most vulnerable producers.

This bill therefore seeks to institutionalize a national program that will secure year-round water supply for crops and livestock, boost farm productivity and rural incomes, relieve pressure on surface and groundwater sources, and strengthen resilience to droughts, El Niño events and other climate-induced shocks.

The measure mandates the Department of Agriculture, through the National Irrigation Administration, to promote water catchment technologies and issue national technical guidelines for their design, construction and maintenance. It grants value-added-tax exemptions on inputs, real-property-tax reductions, grants, concessional loans and free technical assistance to encourage adoption. Local governments are required to integrate water-catchment projects into provincial development and land-use plans and to provide matched funding. The bill further supports research and development on optimal sizing, materials innovation and integration with sustainable-farming practices, and it directs annual reporting to Congress on installed systems, irrigated area, water saved and farm-income gains.

By enabling the irrigation of the remaining one million hectares, the program can add about 640,000 metric tons of *palay* each year which account roughly 5% of the national output in 2024 and generate approximately 12 billion pesos in additional gross farm revenue at current prices. On-farm reservoirs will also buffer dry-season deficits, reduce reliance on deep-well pumping, slow groundwater depletion and provide a rapid, lower-cost alternative to large dams, thereby improving the efficiency of public spending for water infrastructure.

Bridging the irrigation divide through farm-level water catchment systems will advance the constitutional mandate to ensure food security, uplift smallholder livelihoods and fortify Philippine agriculture against intensifying climate risks. In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of the proposed Agricultural Water Catchment Promotion Act of 2025 is earnestly sought.



Rep. ROBERT NAZAL
Bagong Henerasyon Party-List

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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 “Agricultural Water Catchment Promotion Act of 2025.”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.

It is hereby declared the policy of the State to ensure water security for the agricultural sector, promote sustainable farming practices, and enhance the resilience of farmers to climate change and drought conditions.

To this end, the State shall promote and provide incentives for the adoption of water catchment systems as a primary source of irrigation, thereby alleviating pressure on surface water and groundwater sources currently utilized for agricultural purposes. This Act aims to create an enabling environment for the widespread adoption of water catchment systems in agricultural areas throughout the country.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms.

For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

- A. “Agricultural Water Catchment System” refers to a system specifically designed for harvesting, storing, and processing rainwater, runoff, or other non-potable water sources for the primary purpose of irrigating agricultural lands, livestock watering, and other farm-related uses. This may include, but is not limited to, rainwater harvesting tanks, farm ponds, check dams, and other similar structures.
- B. “Implementing Agency” refers to the Department of Agriculture (DA), in coordination with the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) and the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), which shall be authorized to implement the provisions of this Act.
- C. “Farmer” refers to any person engaged directly or personally in farming and/or producing any agricultural crop.
- D. “Farm Land” refers to land devoted to agricultural activity.
- E. “Local Government Units (LGUs)” refer to provinces, cities, municipalities, and barangays.

SECTION 4. Promotion and Awareness.

The Implementing Agency shall undertake comprehensive information campaigns and advocacy programs to promote the benefits and technical aspects of agricultural water catchment systems to farmers, farmers' associations, cooperatives, LGUs, and other agricultural stakeholders. These campaigns shall highlight the economic advantages, environmental benefits, and resilience-building aspects of adopting such systems, including practical guides on design, installation, operation, and maintenance suitable for various farm sizes and climatic conditions.

SECTION 5. Technical Guidelines and Standards.

The Implementing Agency, in consultation with relevant experts and agricultural institutions, shall establish and disseminate technical guidelines and standards for the design, construction, installation, operation, and maintenance of various types of agricultural water catchment systems. These guidelines shall consider local hydrological conditions, crop water requirements, soil types, and climate change projections, ensuring the safety, efficacy, and sustainability of the systems. The guidelines shall also incorporate best practices for water quality management for irrigation purposes.

SECTION 6. Incentives and Subsidies.

To encourage the widespread adoption of agricultural water catchment systems, the Implementing Agency shall provide a range of incentives and subsidies, which may include, but are not limited to:

- A. Tax Breaks and Exemptions: Farmers and agricultural enterprises investing in the installation of agricultural water catchment systems shall be eligible for tax breaks, including exemptions from value-added tax (VAT) on the purchase of materials and equipment directly used for such systems, and reduced real property taxes on land incorporating such systems.
- B. Grants and Direct Subsidies: Direct financial grants or subsidies shall be provided to individual farmers, farmers' associations, and cooperatives for the construction or acquisition of agricultural water catchment systems. Priority shall be given to small-scale farmers, subsistence farmers, and those in areas frequently affected by drought or water scarcity.
- C. Low-Interest Loans: Access to low-interest loans from government financial institutions shall be facilitated for farmers and agricultural enterprises for the purpose of establishing and upgrading agricultural water catchment systems.
- D. Technical Assistance and Training: Free technical assistance, training, and capacity-building programs shall be provided to farmers on the proper design, construction, operation, and maintenance of agricultural water catchment systems.

SECTION 7. Coordination and Collaboration.

The Implementing Agency shall establish strong coordination mechanisms and foster collaboration with LGUs, irrigators' associations, water districts, agricultural cooperatives, non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions to facilitate the effective promotion and implementation of this Act. LGUs are highly encouraged to:

- A. Integrate the promotion and development of agricultural water catchment systems into their local development plans, agricultural development programs, and land use plans.
- B. Provide additional incentives or support mechanisms for farmers and farm businesses within their respective jurisdictions that adopt agricultural water catchment systems.
- C. Allocate portions of their annual budgets for the promotion, installation, and maintenance of agricultural water catchment systems, especially in areas identified as water-stressed for agriculture.

SECTION 8. Research and Development.

The Implementing Agency, in collaboration with relevant research institutions, shall promote and support research and development activities aimed at improving the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and sustainability of agricultural water catchment technologies suitable for various agro-climatic conditions in the Philippines. This shall include studies on optimal sizing, material innovation, and integration with other sustainable farming practices.

SECTION 9. Monitoring and Evaluation.

The Implementing Agency shall establish a robust system to monitor and evaluate the implementation of this Act, including the number of agricultural water catchment systems installed, the area of farmlands irrigated, water savings achieved, and the overall impact on farm productivity and farmer livelihoods. An annual report shall be submitted to Congress detailing the progress, challenges, and recommendations for further enhancing agricultural water security through water catchment systems.

SECTION 10. Funding.

The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 11. Separability Clause.

If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 12. Effectivity Clause.

This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,