



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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 955



Introduced by Representative Crispin Diego “Ping” D. Remulla

AN ACT
INSTITUTING THE FARMERS AND FISHERFOLK ASSISTANCE ACT
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is an unfortunate reality that our farmers and fisherfolk, the very backbone of our nation’s food security, were made victims of a grand and systemic misappropriation of public funds, now infamously known as the Fertilizer Fund Scam. These individuals, often marginalized and struggling under difficult economic conditions, were unaware of the extent and gravity of the fraudulent diversion of resources intended to support their agricultural needs and economic upliftment. It was only through the conclusion of legislative committee investigations that the full magnitude of this anomaly was brought to light.

The scandal, which resulted in the loss of ₱728 million in public funds, not only deprived our farmers and fisherfolk of essential assistance but also betrayed the trust of the Filipino taxpayers. It further exposed significant weaknesses in the mechanisms for allocating, distributing, and monitoring government resources intended for vulnerable sectors.

This measure, therefore, seeks to give due recognition to the commendable efforts of the committees that pursued the investigation in aid of legislation. More importantly, it aims to introduce necessary reforms to ensure that such abuses are never repeated.

Specifically, this measure proposes to: (1) institute clear and enforceable safeguards to protect all government appropriations allocated to farmers and fisherfolk; (2) streamline and simplify the processes for the availment, requisition, and release of funds and goods intended for these sectors; (3) dismantle the flawed systems and bureaucratic practices that enabled unscrupulous officials to defraud public funds; and (4) institutionalize stricter penal provisions against those who will attempt to replicate such schemes of plunder and deception.

By enacting this legislation, Congress reaffirms its commitment to protecting public funds, promoting agricultural development, and defending our farmers and fisherfolk from exploitation and abuse.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Remulla', with a stylized flourish at the end.

CRISPIN DIEGO “PING” D. REMULLA



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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 355

Introduced by Representative Crispin Diego “Ping” D. Remulla

AN ACT
INSTITUTING THE FARMERS AND FISHERFOLK ASSISTANCE ACT
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

1 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** - This Act shall be known as the “*Farmers’ and Fisherfolk*
2 *Assistance Act*”.

3 **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** - It is the policy of the state to effectively assist and
4 provide funds for the farmers’, fisherfolk and other agricultural sectors’ needs, insulating
5 the funds from misuse, misappropriation or diversion, imposing penalties for violation
6 thereof.

7 **SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.***

8 (a) *Farmers* – refer to natural persons cultivating, planting, marketing and
9 distributing crops, vegetables, fruits and other agricultural products from land and
10 sea and shall include fisherfolk;

11 (b) *Other Farmers* – refer to corporations, associations, cooperatives, foundations,
12 NGOs, people’s organizations and artificial beings with juridical capacity
13 involved in similar activities stated in paragraph (a) hereof as done by farmers;

14 (c) *Funds* - refers to appropriation from public funds for use of the farmers included
15 in the General Appropriations Act, special laws or local ordinances intended for
16 the farmers;

(d) *Farm use* – refers to seedlings and fertilizers including farm tools, gadgets, implement and equipment necessary for cultivation, development, improvement or fertilization of farmlands, orchards and other agricultural lands; and,

(e) *Department* – refers to the Department of Agriculture.

SEC. 4. *Requisition, Release and Disbursement of Funds.* – Any provision of law to the contrary notwithstanding, the requisition, release and disbursement to farmers of funds intended or earmarked for use in the cultivation, development, improvement or fertilization of farmlands, orchards and other lands devoted to the planting of crops, agricultural food products, vegetable and fruits shall be through a Voucher System whereby the farmers themselves shall determine and requisition the farm inputs, implements and other farm uses as they need and submit such through vouchers to the regional office of the Department for approval of the Regional Director and release within a period of not exceeding sixty (60) days from approval based on and within the allocation in the budget for the specific locality where the farm is located; *Provided, however,* that in purchasing or making available such agricultural inputs, implements and other farm uses as determined by the totality of the aggregate vouchers or requisitions, the provisions of Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Act of 2003, shall be strictly complied with by the Regional Director of the Department.

SEC. 5. *Internal Pre-Audit Service.* – In lieu of purchasing the said requisitioned agricultural farm inputs, implements and other farm uses, the Regional Office, may release funds directly to the requesting farmer, in which case, he shall immediately submit all the covering documents to the internal auditor in the region who shall, not later than thirty (30) days from such receipt, submit his audit report to the national office of the Department charged with monitoring the use of the funds, implementation of the project and evaluation of the progress or effects of the program to the country, furnishing copies thereof to the Congressional Oversight Committee on Agriculture.

SEC. 6. *Violations and Penalties.* – The following violations shall constitute criminal offenses punishable under this Act as follows:

(a) Diversion, misuse or misappropriation of the funds or a portion thereof or of the farm inputs, implements and other farm uses intended to be released to the farmers, or falsely or fraudulently making it appear that such requisition or release of funds or farm inputs has been made when in fact there is none, shall, in addition to the penalties provided for in the Revised Penal Code, be punishable with imprisonment of not less than twelve (12)

1 years but not more than twenty (20) years; *Provided, however*, if such funds
2 or farm uses be utilized for election purposes, money laundering or other
3 illegal and unlawful activities, the penalty shall be imposed in the maximum
4 period; *Provided finally*, That in the event it is established that the use of
5 the whole or a portion of the fund or farm uses also constitutes the crime of
6 plunder, the penalty for plunder shall be applied.

7 (b) Any farmer, group, corporation, association, cooperative, foundation, NGO,
8 people organization or other artificial being with juridical capacity granted
9 any fund or farm uses which shall use the same for vote-buying, reselling or
10 purposes other than those provided herein or shall be involved in the false
11 or fraudulent requisition or misuse or misappropriation of the fund or farm
12 uses, shall be punishable with imprisonment of not less than ten (10) years
13 but not more than fifteen (15) years; *Provided, however*, in case of a
14 corporation, association, cooperative, foundation, NGO, people's
15 organization or other artificial being with juridical capacity, whether
16 registered or not, composed of two or more persons, the stockholders,
17 members, directors, trustees, officers and the individuals composing it shall
18 be liable in their personal capacity and suffer the penalties provided herein
19 unless the individuals composing it shall prove that he/she never took part
20 in the transaction and benefited from the proceeds of the funds or the farm
21 uses;

22 (c) Failure or unjustifiable refusal of the Regional Director or his subordinate
23 to act upon, process and evaluate within the period of time hereinbefore
24 fixed or to release the funds or farm uses to the farmer applicant when there
25 is no legal nor justifiable reason to do so shall be punishable with
26 imprisonment of not less than six (6) years but not more than twelve (12)
27 years; and,

28 (d) Any other violation of this Act shall be punishable with imprisonment of
29 not less than five (5) years nor more than ten (10) years.

30 **SEC. 7. Grievance Mechanism.** – The Department shall establish a grievance
31 mechanism where farmers and fisherfolks may report delays, denials, or suspected misuse
32 of funds. Reports must be acted upon within fifteen (15) days from receipt. The identity of
33 complainants shall be kept confidential unless otherwise authorized.

1 **SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.*** - If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or
2 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provisions not otherwise affected shall remain
3 valid and subsisting.

4 **SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.*** - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order,
5 letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the
6 provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

7 **SEC. 10. *Effectivity Clause.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
8 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,