



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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 959



Introduced by Representative Crispin Diego “Ping” D. Remulla

AN ACT
PRESCRIBING THE STRENGTHENING OF THE NATIONAL EXTENSION
SYSTEM TO ACCELERATE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The agricultural sector remains an integral part of the nation’s socio-economic development. However, persistent poverty in rural areas and declining productivity highlight the need for structural and institutional reforms. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, the value of production in agriculture and fisheries decreased by 2.2% in the fourth quarter of 2024 compared to the same period in 2023. Crop production, which accounts for the largest share of agricultural output, contracted by 1.7 percent, while fisheries posted a sharper decline of 6.0 percent. This ongoing downturn highlights the vulnerability of our rural economy and underscores the need for systemic support.

This measure proposes to decentralize the extension services system by transferring key responsibilities to the provincial level, which is deemed the most viable political and economic unit for agricultural development. The bill aims to establish the Philippine Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Agency (PAFEA), a national agency responsible for providing policy direction, establishing performance standards, and extending institutionalized financial and technical support to Local Government Units (LGUs).

By strengthening the country's extension system through decentralization and national support, this bill aims to empower local governments, improve agricultural productivity, and uplift the quality of life in rural communities.

In light of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this measure is earnestly sought.

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

CRISPIN DIEGO "PING" D. REMULLA



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

ARTICLE 1

General Provisions

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "*Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Act*".

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - The goals of the national economy are a more equitable distribution of opportunities, income and wealth; a sustained increase in the amount of goods and services produced by the nation for the benefit of the people; and an expanding productivity as the key to raising the quality of life for all, especially the underprivileged.

The State shall promote industrialization and full employment based on sound agricultural development and agrarian reform, through industries that make full and efficient use of human and natural resources, and which are competitive in both domestic and foreign markets. In pursuit of these goals, all sectors of the economy and all regions of the country shall be given the optimum opportunity to develop.

Thus, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to enable those who belong to the agriculture and fisheries sector to participate and share in the fruits of development and growth in a manner that utilizes the nation's resources in the most efficient and sustainable way possible

1 by establishing a more equitable access to assets, income, basic and support services and
2 infrastructure.

3 The State shall give priority to promote science, technology and human resource
4 development as essentials for national development and progress.

5 The State shall utilize research results through information, extension and
6 communication services. It shall support the development of a national extension system that
7 will help accelerate the transformation of agriculture and fisheries sectors of the Country from
8 a resource-based industry to a knowledge and technology-based and market-oriented industry.

9 The State shall adopt the market approach in assisting the agriculture and fisheries sector
10 while recognizing the contribution of these sectors to food security, environmental protection,
11 and balanced urban and rural development, without neglecting the welfare of the consumers,
12 especially the lower income groups. The State shall promote market-oriented policies in
13 agricultural production to encourage farmers to shift to more profitable crops.

14 The State shall empower the agriculture and fisheries sector to develop and sustain
15 themselves to meet present and future needs of the Country. Toward this end, the State shall
16 ensure the establishment and development of the agriculture and fisheries extension system
17 that increases and sustains its contributions to the achievement of the goals of agriculture
18 modernization as mandated by Republic Act 8435: a) Poverty Alleviation and Social Equity;
19 b) Food Security; c) Rational Use of Resources and Sustainable Development; d) Global
20 Competitiveness; and e) People Empowerment.

21 **SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.*** - As used in this Act, the term:

- 22 1. *Agriculturist* refers to a person who is a graduate of a bachelor's degree in agriculture
23 or any related course registered and licensed with the Professional Regulation
24 Commission or Civil Service Commission; who performs communication, curriculum
25 development, econometrics, statistical work, training and extension works in
26 agriculture production, trade, and processing including crop and animal protection,
27 food safety, agricultural and natural resource economics, and marketing;
- 28 2. *Agricultural Engineer* refers to a person registered with the Professional Regulation
29 Commission or Civil Service Commission performing training and extension work in
30 agricultural and fisheries mechanization, irrigation, drainage, soil and water
31 conservation, agricultural buildings and structures, agricultural processing and post-
32 harvest facilities;

- 1 3. *Catalytic Financing* - the provision of financial support to achieve excellence, equity
2 and increased investment by the local governments in the implementation of agriculture
3 and fisheries extension services towards the achievement of national goals;
- 4 4. *Civil Society* - refers to the group of organizations whose uncoerced collective action
5 revolves around shared interests, purposes and values. Civil societies are organizations
6 composed of community groups, women's organizations, faith-based organizations,
7 professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business
8 associations, coalitions and advocacy groups;
- 9 5. *Consumers* - are those that acquire goods or services for direct use or ownership rather
10 than for resale or use in production and manufacturing;
- 11 6. *Empowerment* - is the expansion of assets and capabilities of people to participate in,
12 negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their
13 lives; it involves providing authority, responsibility, and information to people directly
14 engaged on agriculture and fishery production, primarily at the level of the farmers,
15 fisherfolk and those engaged in food and non-food production and processing, in order
16 to give them enhanced economics rights;
- 17 7. *Fisheries* - refers to all systems or networks of interrelated activities which include the
18 production, growing, harvesting, processing, marketing, developing, conserving and
19 managing of all aquatic and fisheries areas;
- 20 8. *Fisheries Technologist* refers to a person who is a graduate of a four year course in
21 Fisheries and registered and licensed with the Professional Regulation Commission or
22 Civil Service Commission performing training and extension on fisheries, marine
23 resources and aquaculture;
- 24 9. *Food Security* - refers to the policy objective, plan and strategy of meeting the food
25 requirements of the present and future generations, of Filipinos in substantial quantity,
26 ensuring the availability and affordability of *safe* and nutritious food to all, either
27 through local production or importation, or both, based on the country's existing and
28 potential resource endowment and related production advantages, and consistent with
29 the overall national development objectives and policies;
- 30 10. *Formula grants* - these are national government financial transfers to the local
31 governments to support the regular expenditures in the provision of Agriculture and
32 Fisheries Extension Services (AFES) based on a formula that takes into consideration,
33 among others, the level of economic development of a municipality or a province;

- 1 11. *Gross Value Added in Agriculture* - refers to the total value, excluding the value of non-
2 agricultural or fisheries intermediate inputs, of goods and services contributed by the
3 agricultural and fisheries sectors;
- 4 12. *Knowledge Management* - is a systematic approach which invents, understands, shares,
5 creates and utilizes knowledge in order to create values such as customer's value,
6 employee's value, stockholder's value, business partner's value and social value to
7 achieve the vision and goal of the organization;
- 8 13. *Partnership* - a relationship between and among agencies that is characterized by
9 mutual cooperation and responsibility towards the achievement of shared goals;
- 10 14. *Private sector* - the part of a nation's economy that is not owned and managed by the
11 government;
- 12 15. *Producer* - one that produces, especially a person or organization, that produces goods
13 or services for sale;
- 14 16. *RBOs* - are rural based organizations or people's organizations composed of various
15 sectors of the rural community such as farmers, fisherfolk, growers, seed producers,
16 women, and youth;
- 17 17. *Targeted financial transfer* - is a financial support provided by the national government
18 to the LGUs in support of national goals or programs;
- 19 18. *Value chain* - is a process from seed to shelf or from the producers to the consumers,
20 showing activities and interventions of/for a chosen commodity/ties based on
21 understanding the needs for such interventions;
- 22 19. *Veterinarian* refers to a person registered with the Professional Regulation Commission
23 performing professional services related to the practice of veterinary medicine
24 including training and extension on disease prevention control and animal health.

25 **SEC. 4. *Statement of Goals.*** - Agricultural extension is a policy instrument for
26 empowering individuals and organizations; public agricultural extension shall contribute
27 towards the achievement of the national goals of agricultural development.

28 **SEC. 5. *Statement of Objectives.*** - Agriculture and fisheries extension shall contribute
29 to the following objectives:

- 30 a) To enhance the economic rights of Producers, especially the poor, to use the
31 most appropriate technologies they feel will give them the best profit and to
32 choose the most affordable loans in producing the quality and quantity of
33 products and to sell their products freely; Traders, to move goods in the
34 expectation of profits unconstrained by serious lack of knowledge and

information; and Consumers, to buy safe and nutritious foods at the lowest prices possible.

- b) To manage knowledge in strengthening the individual and organizational capabilities of producers, traders and consumers; and
- c) To help create an enabling environment that strengthens the linkage between knowledge generation and knowledge use and encourages increased investment in agriculture extension by the private sector, civil society, and Local Governments.

SEC. 6. *Clients.* - The clients of the Philippine agricultural and fisheries extension system are the producers (farmers, fisherfolk, agricultural processors), traders, and consumers along the value chain. Public extension shall focus on the delivery of public goods. The priority clients shall be the economically and socially disadvantaged groups in agriculture and fisheries. Local Government Units shall put primary attention to these groups in the provision of extension services through formula grants and targeted and catalytic financing of National Government Agencies.

ARTICLE II

Structure and Organization

SEC. 7. *Creation of the Philippine Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Agency (PAFEA).* - The Agricultural Training Institute is hereby strengthened and transformed into the Philippine Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Agency (PAFEA). It shall serve as the national apex organization for a unified and efficient agriculture and fisheries extension system of the country. It shall ensure that public extension services meet national standards of performance and effectively contribute to the achievement of national goals for agriculture and fisheries modernization.

The Philippine Agricultural and Fisheries Extension Agency (PAFEA) shall coordinate all government extension programs in agriculture and fisheries.

SEC. 8. *Powers and Functions.*

- a) Provide direction in the development of national extension policies in agriculture and fisheries;
- b) Orchestrate the development of the extension strategic plan, including its financing in coordination with the Department of Budget and Management and other stakeholders;
- c) Develop and implement national policies and programs aimed at the continuous improvement of the quality of extension methods, products, and services towards a

- 1 more efficient and client-responsive national agriculture and fisheries knowledge
2 management system;
- 3 d) Develop a system towards the management of the country's extension resources for
4 agriculture and fisheries to ensure a sustainable, participatory. And efficient system
5 of funding for information, education, and communication materials (IEC) and to
6 achieve optimal efficiency along the value chain;
- 7 e) Provide leadership in the development and implementation of the National
8 Agriculture & Fisheries Knowledge Network (NAFKN) in agriculture and fisheries
9 of the Department through a system of partnerships that may include, but not be
10 limited to, the (Local Government Units) LGUs, the regional development council
11 (RDC), the Regional Agriculture and Fisheries Council (RAFCs), the academe
12 especially the SUCs of agriculture and fisheries, the Civil Society Organizations
13 (CSOs), producers, rural based organizations (RBOs) and the private sector;
- 14 f) Provide national leadership in consultation with agriculture and fisheries councils
15 (AFCs), in developing extension partnerships towards increased investment and
16 private sector participation;
- 17 g) Team up with state universities and colleges (SUCs) of agriculture and fisheries as
18 key partners in the implementation of the national programs specially in the areas
19 of extension innovations, national training, and monitoring and evaluation of
20 extension institutions and programs;
- 21 h) Provide leadership in developing and implementing a national system of
22 strengthening institutional extension capacities at all levels of implementation; and,
- 23 i) In coordination with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM); the Local
24 Government Units, The Department of Local governments, and other stakeholders,
25 the PAFEA shall set up a review mechanism for all agriculture and fisheries
26 extension programs and budgets of national agencies to determine cost
27 effectiveness of operations and potential impacts to national goals.

28 **SEC. 9. *Structure of PAFEA.*** - It shall be headed by a Director General (DG) with a
29 rank of Assistant Secretary to be assisted by two Deputy Director Generals (DDG) and they
30 shall be appointed by the President upon recommendation of the Secretary of Agriculture from
31 a list submitted by an independent Search Committee organized and based on the qualification
32 standards set by the Council for Extension Research Development in Agriculture and Fisheries
33 (CERDAF). They shall have a fixed tenure of six (6) years and may be re-appointed for an
34 additional term of four (4) years based on very satisfactory performance.

1 **SEC. 10. *The Council for Extension Research Development in Agriculture and***
2 ***Fisheries (CERDAF).*** - The Council for Extension Research Development in Agriculture and
3 Fisheries (CERDAF) is hereby strengthened. It shall ensure that the agriculture and fisheries
4 research, development and extension policies and programs of the Department are consistent
5 with national policies and priorities.

6 a) Functions and duties of the Council for Extension Research Development in
7 Agriculture and Fisheries (CERDAF).

- 8 1. Approve policies covering program priorities and resource
9 allocation in research and extension of all agencies of the
10 Department;
- 11 2. Enhance coordination and linkage of government institutions
12 involved in agriculture and fisheries research, development and
13 extension;
- 14 3. Strengthen the participation of various stakeholders, especially
15 the civil society, local government units, and private sector in
16 the development of National Research Development and
17 Extension (NRDE) agenda and programs;
- 18 4. Strengthen the institutional efficiency of the NRDE system,
19 including the setting up of a monitoring and evaluation system
20 on the effectiveness and efficiency of its various components;
21 and,
- 22 5. Set guidelines in the use of services and facilities, collection of
23 fees and in the utilization of income.

24 **SEC. 11. *Composition of the Council for Extension Research Development in***
25 ***Agriculture and Fisheries (CERDAF).*** - The Undersecretary for Policy and Planning of the
26 DA shall be the Chair of the Council. There shall be a Vice Chair to be elected from among the
27 other members of the Board. The Executive Director of the Philippine Agriculture and
28 Fisheries Extension Agency (PAFEA) and the Director of the Bureau of Agriculture Research
29 (BAR) shall be *ex officio* members, and the Chair shall appoint the Executive Director of
30 PAFEA as Secretary of the Council. The CERDAF shall have the following as members:

31 (1) Designated Undersecretaries for Policy & Planning of the following
32 Departments:

- 33 i. Department of Science and Technology;
- 34 ii. Department of Environment and Natural Resources;

- iii. Department of Agrarian Reform;
- (2) Presidents of the following LGU organizations:
 - i. League of Provinces;
 - ii. Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP);
- (3) Four (4) CSO representatives from the rural youth, rural women, and farmer, and fisherfolk sectors as identified and selected by the Department of Agriculture;
- (4) One (1) private sector representative designated by the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP);
- (5) Representatives from scientific/professional organizations/societies;
- (6) One representative each from the following national professional organizations: i) agriculturists; ii) agricultural engineers; iii) fishery technologists and iv) veterinarians.

(2) Presidents of the following LGU organizations:

- i. League of Provinces;

- ii. **Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP);**

(3) Four (4) CSO representatives from the rural youth, rural women, and farmer, and fisherfolk sectors as identified and selected by the Department of Agriculture;

(4) One (1) private sector representative designated by the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP);

(5) Representatives from scientific/professional organizations/societies;

(6) One representative each from the following national professional organizations: i) agriculturists; ii) agricultural engineers; iii) fishery technologists and iv) veterinarians.

SEC. 12. *Offices under the PAFEA.* -To carry out the functions of the Agency, PAFEA shall have four technical offices as follows: (1) Policy Development; (2) Extension Innovations & National Training; (3) Knowledge Products & Services Development; and (4) Extension Governance & Partnerships.

The PAFEA shall maintain a small regional office to: (1) liaise with the Department Regional Field Units (RFUs) that should serve as the principal arm of the Department to implement extension policies and programs in the regions (2) provide regional technical assistance in the implementation of PAFEA policies and programs and (3) monitor and evaluate extension offices and programs being undertaken by government agencies. The PAFEA is authorized to utilize existing Agricultural Training (ATI) plantilla positions but in no case shall it exceed 85% of the plantilla positions in 2010.

ARTICLE III

Organization of the Local Government Extension Services

SEC. 13. *Province as the LGU Unit of Operation for Agriculture & Fisheries Extension.* - To achieve efficiency and to provide more responsive services, the administrative unit for the planning and implementation of the extension services at the level of Local Government Units is the province through the Provincial Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Services under the Office of the Governor. The Provincial Agriculture and Extension Services shall be headed by a technically qualified career Provincial Agriculturist (PA). The PAS shall be appointed by the Director General of PAFEA, chosen from three qualified nominees

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submitted by the Governor. Its staff shall be composed of technically qualified career agriculturists, economists, statisticians, agricultural engineers, fishery technologists and veterinarians appointed by the Provincial Governor.

SEC. 14. *Extension Personnel in the Municipalities.* - All municipal and non-chartered agriculture and fisheries extension personnel are hereby transferred to the province, and they shall be appointed by the Governor and become employees of the provincial government upon the effectivity of this Act. However, they will continue to serve municipalities and non-chartered cities as detailed employees of the province based on a rationalized organizational structure endorsed by the LGUs and approved by the PAFEA and the DBM. The Municipal Agriculture and Extension Services shall be headed by a technically qualified career Municipal Agriculturist Officer (MAO) who shall be appointed by the Director General of PAFEA, chosen from three qualified nominees submitted by the Governor.

SEC. 15. *Salaries and Wages of Extension Personnel.* - The salaries and wages of the agriculture and fisheries technical extension personnel shall be paid by the National Government through an annual grant-in-aid to be paid out of the regular appropriation of the PAFEA of the Department of Agriculture; *Provided, however, that* during the first year of the effectivity of this Act, the local government concerned shall reallocate its savings from the personal services for agricultural personnel to its agriculture and fisheries operations; *Provided, further, that* every year thereafter, the concerned LGU shall appropriate the equivalent funds as the minimum amount for its agricultural and fisheries operation or counterparts to national grants-in-aid in agriculture and fisheries, without prejudice to the provision of additional funds that may be allocated by the LGUs for this purpose. The salaries and wages of technical extension personnel shall be standardized and equal to that of comparable positions of national employees without prejudice to the provision of additional staff benefits by concerned LGUs where finances warrant. The provision of grants in aid to pay for the salaries and wages of the technical personnel of the LGU extension services shall be subject to external review and evaluation every five years to determine its impact to the quality of services and its cost-effectiveness. A copy of the report shall be provided to Congress and serve as the basis for the continuation or modification of the grants-in-aid.

SEC. 16. *Professionalization of Extension Services.* - The PAFEA, in coordination with the Civil Service Commission and subject to the approval of the CERDAF, shall develop qualification standards beyond the minimum set by the Civil Service Commission for the various managerial, technical, and non-technical positions of the extension services of the country including that of all local government units. The PAFEA shall also develop a career

1 path of all technical extension personnel that will allow them regardless of assignment or
2 location in government, to move vertically in the promotion system. Managerial positions shall
3 be open to all qualified personnel regardless of geographic or agency assignment. Towards this
4 end, the PAFEA shall issue guidelines for the creation of a merit promotion boards for each
5 extension agency that will include representatives of the SUCs of agriculture and fisheries.

6 **SEC. 17. *Structure of the Provincial Extension Services.*** - The provincial agriculture
7 and fisheries extension services shall organize and structure its services based on the
8 agricultural and extension needs of the province and on the standards set by the PAFEA. The
9 technical positions of the PAFEA and the Provincial Extension Services shall be rationalized
10 to provide the required number of positions for agriculturists, communication and curriculum
11 specialists, economists, agricultural engineers, fishery technologists, and veterinarians.

12 **SEC. 18. *LGU Livestock Production Services.*** - In recognition of the need to provide
13 an integrated extension approach to total farm development, the LGU livestock production
14 Services shall be part and parcel of the Provincial Agricultural Office (PAO). In cases where
15 these functions were transferred to the Provincial Veterinary Services, they shall be returned
16 and integrated into the rest of the PAO services.

17 **SEC. 19. *Strategic Plan in Agriculture & Fisheries.*** - To provide coherence of all
18 government plans in agriculture and fisheries and to achieve efficiency in the use of resources,
19 all provincial governments are required to develop a five-year strategic plan in agriculture and
20 fisheries based on the framework and principles provided by the Department of Agriculture
21 (DA). The Strategic Plan shall serve as the basis for the DA to provide short-term and long-
22 term assistance. The yearly program of work and budget shall be derived from the strategic
23 plan.

24 **ARTICLE IV**

25 **Funding for Extension Services**

26 **SEC. 20. *Initial Appropriation.*** - For the first year of implementation of this Act, the
27 amount of five billion pesos (PHP 5,000,000,000.00) shall be appropriated out of the total
28 budget of the Department of Agriculture (DA) for personal services, grants-in-aid to the LGUs,
29 operation and capital outlay requirements of the Philippine Agriculture and Fisheries Extension
30 Agency (PAFEA).

31 The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) is hereby mandated to include
32 annually in the President's program of expenditures for submission to Congress and release an
33 amount not less than five billion pesos (PHP 5,000,000,000.00) or one percent of the gross

1 value added in agriculture and fisheries, whichever is higher, for the implementation of this
2 Act.

3 The PAFEA is authorized to utilize part of its yearly appropriation to set up or upgrade
4 necessary facilities to improve the provision of national extension services.

5 All assets, resources both human and financial of Agriculture Training Institute (ATI),
6 shall be transferred to the PAFEA.

7 All revenues generated out of the use of services, facilities and equipment shall be
8 utilized by the Agency to augment its maintenance and operating expenditures subject to the
9 approval of the Governing Board.

10 **ARTICLE IV**

11 **Final Provisions**

12 **SEC. 21. Oversight Committee.** - The Congressional Oversight Committee for
13 Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization shall oversee the implementation of this Act for a
14 period not exceeding five (5) years from its effectivity.

15 **SEC. 22. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** -Within ninety (90) days from the
16 effectivity of this Act, the implementing rules and regulations shall be formulated by the
17 Department of Agriculture in coordination with the members of the Congressional Oversight
18 Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization. The said rules and regulations shall
19 be submitted by the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA) to the Committee of
20 Agriculture of both Houses of Congress.

21 **SEC. 23. Repealing Clause.** - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations,
22 issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended
23 accordingly.

24 **SEC. 24. Separability Clause.** - If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or
25 unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid and subsisting.

26 **SEC. 25. Effectivity Clause.** - This Act shall take effect thirty (30) days from the date of
27 its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least in two (2) national newspapers of general
28 circulation

Approved,