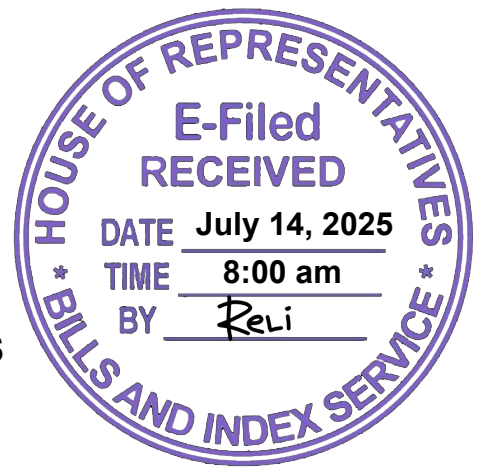


TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
H. No. 1791

Introduced by **Representative Binky April M. Tupas**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A CENTRAL MULTI-SPECIES FRESHWATER
HATCHERY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BAROTAC VIEJO,
PROVINCE OF ILOILO, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Barotac Viejo is a first-class municipality in the Province of Iloilo. It is in the northern part of the province, facing the strait of Guimaras and island of Negros. It is bounded on the north by San Rafael, on the west by Banate, on the south by the Visayan Sea, and on the east by Ajuy. It is 57 kilometers (35 mi) from Iloilo City. It has land area of 185.78 square kilometers or 71.73 square miles which constitutes 3.72% of Iloilo's total area. Its population as determined by the 2020 Census was 48,614. This represented 2.37% of the total population of Iloilo province, or 0.61% of the overall population of the Western Visayas region.

Barotac Viejo has 26 barangays which consists of 18 inland barangays and 8 coastal barangays. Based on the Municipal Fisherfolk Registration System of BFAR or FishR, there are 4,018 registered municipal fisherfolk in the municipality.

Barotac Viejo has natural bodies of waters, two of which are the Barotac Viejo River (7 km) and the Barotac Cayo River (5 km). It also has several creeks and springs. The Barotac Viejo River is the longest and widest river passing through the heart of the town. It has never been dry and sometimes overflow its banks on rainy days. The river is utilized for bathing, laundry and for aquaculture purposes.

The Barotac Viejo Small Reservoir Irrigation Project, a Php 993.3-million project, was inaugurated on April 16, 2019 at Nueva Invention Village, Barotac Viejo, Iloilo. Its water sources come from Barotac Viejo River and the construction of zoned earth fill dam with its appurtenant structures provide timely and reliable irrigation service to 2,050 hectares of agricultural lands in the villages of California, La Fortuna, Natividad, Sto. Domingo, Bugnay, San Miguel, San Antonio, San Geronimo, San Lucas, Vista Alegre, and Dela Peña in the Municipality of Barotac Viejo, and Merced, Carmelo, Talokgangan, Bariga Magdalo, and Libertad in the Municipality of Banate.

The project enabled the generation of 265 hectares of newly-irrigable areas, 459 hectares of rehabilitated areas, and 1,326 hectares of restored areas, benefitting 1,171 farmers and their families. It is also expected to provide other incidental benefits such as flood control, watershed management, fish culture, agro-tourism and rice-fish culture.

The Department of Agriculture - Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resource (DA-BFAR) 6 strongly supports the Establishment of a Central Multi-Species Freshwater Hatchery in Barotac Viejo, Iloilo. With the presence of ample supply of freshwater from Barotac Viejo SRIP, it will fully support the production of sustainable supply of seed stocks, benefitting the fisherfolk in Barotac Viejo and freshwater aquaculture sector of the whole region.

The establishment of the hatchery will benefit 32,089 registered fisherfolk in Northern Iloilo that contributes 66% of the fish production from aquaculture and capture fisheries.

Production from this central multi-species freshwater hatchery will answer the large gap between supply and demand of seed stocks and production for tilapia, catfish, and giant freshwater prawn of the province and of the region.

This Bill seeks to institutionalize the hatchery and secure its funding through the General Appropriations Act. The project aligns with national goals on food security, rural development, and sustainable fisheries.

For these reasons, the approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


BINKY APRIL M. TUPAS

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

SECTION 1. There shall be established, under the supervision of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of the Department of Agriculture (DA-BFAR), a central multi-species freshwater hatchery in the Municipality of Barotac Viejo, Province of Iloilo.

SEC. 2. Prior to the establishment of the multi-species marine hatchery, the DA-BFAR shall conduct a full-scale feasibility study in support of its construction to comply with the requirements of the Department of Budget and Management.

The DA-BFAR shall, within three (3) years after the establishment of the central multi-species freshwater hatchery, transfer the management of the same to the Northern Iloilo State University (NISU) through a Memorandum of Agreement. The DA-BFAR shall implement a training and phasing-in program for NISU personnel and the local government personnel of the Municipality of Barotac Viejo on the management and operation of the central multi-species freshwater hatchery.

The DA-BFAR and the NISU shall conduct continuing research and experimentation on the breeding and production of freshwater species, especially as they apply to local conditions, to discover new methods and technology that shall benefit the fisheries industry.

SEC. 3. The Secretary of Agriculture shall include in the Department's programs the establishment of the central multi-species freshwater hatchery in the Municipality of Barotac Viejo, Province of Iloilo, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. The NISU shall set aside funds from any available revenue in an amount deemed appropriate for the operationalization of the hatchery.

SEC. 4. Within sixty (60) days from the approval of this Act, the Department of Agriculture and the NISU shall issue the rules and regulations on the establishment, supervision, monitoring, and the eventual transfer of the management of the central multi-species freshwater hatchery to the NISU.

SEC. 5. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,