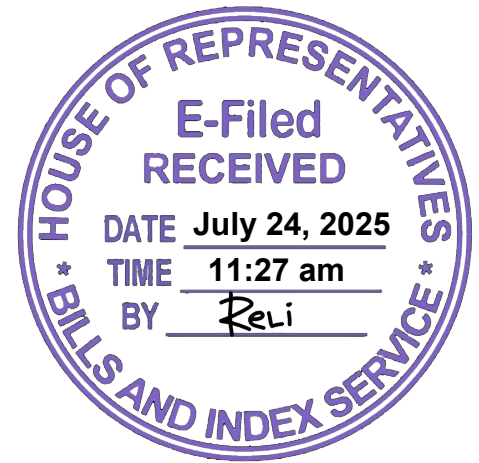


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH (20th) CONGRESS
____ REGULAR SESSION

House Bill No. **2250**



Introduced by
Rep. **ROBERT NAZAL**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK FOR BLUE ECONOMY, PROMOTING
STEWARDSHIP AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF COASTAL AND
MARINE ECOSYSTEMS AND RESOURCES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines' future is undeniably tied to the sea. With a coastline stretching over 37,000 kilometers, longer than that of China, the United States, or Japan, nearly six in ten Filipinos live within ten kilometers of the shore. Ocean-based industries already contribute more than ₱850 billion annually, or roughly four percent of the national GDP, and support the livelihoods of over two million registered fisherfolk, most of whom operate small municipal boats. Emerging research reveals that when the unpriced benefits of coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass beds are accounted for, the true annual value of our marine ecosystems may reach trillions of pesos, surpassing even the country's manufacturing output.

Yet this vast natural wealth is under siege. The Philippines remains one of the top global contributors to marine plastic pollution. Fish stocks are dwindling, and climate projections warn that rising sea levels may subject millions of Filipinos to chronic coastal flooding by the end of the century. Without urgent and strategic intervention, the mounting human and economic toll of degraded ecosystems and coastal disasters will erase hard-won development gains.

The proposed Blue Economy Act offers a forward-looking, science-driven solution. It mandates integrated marine spatial planning, ensuring that all coastal development aligns with ecological boundaries. It institutionalizes natural capital accounting in the national budgeting process so that the real value of marine resources, including reefs, mangroves, and fisheries, is reflected in public investment decisions. The bill also establishes Blue Economic Zones to attract private investment into sustainable ventures, including climate-resilient port infrastructure, offshore renewable energy, low-impact aquaculture, and ecosystem restoration. Enterprises that meet rigorous sustainability benchmarks will gain priority access to blue-bond financing and international climate funds.

Central to this reform is the creation of a National Blue Economy Authority equipped with a dedicated data and analytics bureau. This agency will coordinate enforcement against illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and will publish real-time data on fish catch, habitat health, and pollution levels. Furthermore, the measure requires all coastal infrastructure projects exceeding ₱1 billion to include ecosystem-based resilience strategies, such as mangrove or coral reef offsets. It also empowers the Philippine Ports Authority to implement a green-port tariff system, rewarding ships and terminals that comply with international environmental standards.

By approving this bill on third reading in the previous Congress, the Senate has already demonstrated rare cross-party unity. The House counterpart bill is poised to carry that momentum forward, unlocking access to fast-growing blue finance markets. As Senator Loren Legarda aptly stated, “The blue economy touches the very essence of our sustainable future.” And as nationalist statesman Lorenzo Tañada once declared, those who have less in life must have more in law. Enacting this measure will finally extend long-overdue legal protection and economic opportunity to coastal communities and the ecosystems that sustain them, anchoring the Philippines’ growth in stewardship rather than exploitation, and positioning the nation as a leader at the heart of the Coral Triangle.

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



Rep. ROBERT NAZAL
Representative

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

TWENTIETH (20th) CONGRESS
FIRST REGULAR SESSION

House Bill No. **2250**

Introduced by
Rep. ROBERT NAZAL

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK FOR BLUE ECONOMY, PROMOTING
STEWARDSHIP AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF COASTAL AND
MARINE ECOSYSTEMS AND RESOURCES

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 “Blue Economy Act of 2025”.

SECTION 2. DECLARATION OF POLICY.

It shall be the policy of the State to recognize, protect, and sustainably harness the full value of the Philippines’ coastal and marine ecosystems as a vital foundation for inclusive economic development, climate resilience, and intergenerational equity. Guided by the principles of ecological integrity, social justice, and science-based governance, the State shall promote a regenerative Blue Economy that aligns marine resource use and coastal development with the carrying capacity of ocean ecosystems.

To this end, the State commits itself to:

- A. Adopt the Blue Economy as a framework for the sustainable and safe use and development of marine wealth within our coastal and maritime domain, as a pillar of our national economy and patrimony;
- B. Exercise stewardship of our coasts and oceans, protect and conserve the health and resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems and habitats to promote the well-being, inclusive prosperity, and security of present and future generations, and expand areas under protection to meet the nation’s international obligations, especially in refugial habitats;

- C. Preserve our maritime heritage, recognize the economic, social, cultural, and historical value of our coasts and oceans, and foster public understanding and respect for the value of our coasts and oceans to build a strong foundation for social responsibility;
- D. Enrich scientific understanding of ocean, marine, and coastal ecosystems, the benefits we gain from these, their naturally changing extent and conditions, and the causes thereof, while also using the best available scientific knowledge to inform decisions affecting our coasts and oceans, and to enhance our capacity to respond and adapt to changing ocean environments;
- E. Exercise rights and jurisdiction, and enjoyment of freedom of the high seas, under applicable international laws;
- F. Strategically address the factors that adversely affect the oceans and the living and non-living resources that comprise our seas, turning threats into opportunities and preventing further harm to all water bodies, including land-based pollution, biodiversity loss, reclamation, and climate change;
- G. Ensure a whole-of-nation approach and a comprehensive and integrated framework for the stewardship of our coasts and oceans to facilitate cohesive action of the National Government, local authorities, academe, civil society organizations, indigenous peoples, local communities, and the private sector, to secure our people's safe access to, enjoyment of, and opportunities to invest in sustaining their benefits from our blue economy;
- H. Uphold marine science as a foundation of maritime governance, ensuring that all rules, policies, and plans governing the use of coastal and marine resources will be based on sound scientific understanding of the marine environment;
- I. Uphold the value of natural ecosystems and their irreplaceability, thereby explicitly excluding reclamation and other activities that remove, replace, or destroy coastal ecosystems as activities that advance a blue economy.

SECTION 3. DEFINITION OF TERMS.

As used in this Act:

- A. Aquaculture refers to fishery operations involving the cultivation and farming of fish and other aquatic species in freshwater, brackish, and marine environments.
- B. Aquasilviculture is a multi-purpose production system that integrates fish cultivation with mangrove reforestation, allowing for sustainable fish production while restoring coastal ecosystems.
- C. Blue Economy is an ocean-based economic model that utilizes green infrastructure,

innovative technologies, sustainable financing mechanisms, and proactive institutional arrangements. It aims to achieve dual goals: protecting ocean and coastal ecosystems while enhancing their contribution to sustainable development, improving human well-being, and minimizing environmental risks and ecological degradation.

- D. Coast refers to the interface where land meets the ocean. It includes shoreline environments and adjacent coastal waters, such as river deltas, coastal plains, wetlands, beaches, dunes, coral reefs, mangrove forests, lagoons, and other coastal features.
- E. Ecosystem Services are the benefits derived from the natural functions of ecosystems that support human life and biodiversity. These services are categorized into provisioning, regulating, supporting (maintaining), and cultural services.
- F. Environmental Sustainability refers to the responsible management of coastal, marine, and freshwater resources to prevent environmental degradation. It involves stewardship by both government and local communities to prevent, reduce, and control pollution in coastal, marine, and freshwater environments; mitigate the impacts of climate change; and conserve and protect biodiversity.
- G. Fishing refers to the harvesting of aquatic species using passive or active gear for commercial purposes beyond subsistence or recreational fishing. It is classified into:
 - 1. *Small-scale commercial fishing*: using vessels between 3.1 and 20 gross tons (GT);
 - 2. *Medium-scale commercial fishing*: using active gear and vessels between 20.1 and 150 GT; and
 - 3. *Large-scale commercial fishing*: using active gear and vessels exceeding 150 GT.
- H. Integrated Marine and Coastal Area Management (IMCAM) is a coordinated, participatory approach to the sustainable management of marine and coastal resources. It promotes informed decision-making to mitigate the adverse effects of human activities, protect habitats, reduce stakeholder conflicts, and enhance inclusive growth. It contributes to climate resilience, food, water, and energy security, and overall societal well-being.
- I. Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs) are government entities established through law, executive order, or decree, tasked with promoting investments, managing tax and non-tax incentives, and regulating operations within designated economic zones and freeports.

- J. Land-based Pollution encompasses waste and runoff from municipal, industrial, and agricultural sources. This includes sewage, wastewater, persistent organic pollutants (e.g., pesticides), heavy metals, oils, nutrients, sediments, and plastic waste, which enter coastal waters either directly or via rivers.
- K. Marine Resources refer to the vast array of living and non-living components found in marine ecosystems, including those within oceans, seas, and coastal areas.
- L. Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is a public process that analyzes and allocates the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas. Its goal is to balance development needs with ecosystem protection, achieving social, environmental, and economic objectives through informed, coordinated planning.
- M. Maritime Zones include the internal waters, archipelagic waters, territorial sea, contiguous zone, exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and continental shelf of the Philippine archipelago; and other maritime zones over which the Philippines exercises sovereignty or jurisdiction, following the 1987 Constitution and international law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 1982.
- N. Ocean Accounting is a statistical framework for regularly measuring and integrating economic, environmental, and social data related to ocean resources. It supports evidence-based decision-making through standardized accounts and key indicators.
- O. Ocean-based Activities are operations conducted at sea, including but not limited to fisheries, aquaculture, offshore oil and gas extraction, ocean energy production, seabed mining, desalination, shipping, shipbuilding and repair, port operations, marine tourism, marine construction, maritime law enforcement, and related technical services.
- P. Ocean-related Activities involve the use of marine products or services in industries such as seafood processing, marine biotechnology, salt production, and the development of products and services supporting ocean-based operations.
- Q. Ocean Literacy is the understanding of how the ocean affects human life and how human activities, in turn, impact the ocean. It includes knowledge of the interrelationship between the ocean and climate systems and their influence on water, ecosystems, and society.
- R. Reclamation refers to any activity (authorized or unauthorized) that deposits fill material into a marine or coastal area to create new land. Such projects permanently alter marine habitats and disrupt natural hydrological systems, whether for public infrastructure or private development.

- S. Subsistence Fishing is the practice of fishing primarily for personal consumption or for cultural and ceremonial purposes, rather than for commercial trade.

SECTION 4. SCOPE OF APPLICATION.

For this Act, the Philippines shall, in accordance with international law, exercise sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction, as applicable, over its internal waters, archipelagic waters, territorial sea, contiguous zone, exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and continental shelf, collectively referred to herein as the “coastal and marine zones.” This includes the seabed, subsoil, and all maritime features within these zones, whether currently recognized or discovered in the future.

CHAPTER III THE BLUE ECONOMY COUNCIL

SECTION 5. BLUE ECONOMY COUNCIL.

The Blue Economy Council, herein referred to as the Council, is hereby established to formulate an integrated strategy to strengthen, grow, and sustain the Philippines’ “Blue Economy”. It will also integrate marine and coastal area management and ecosystem-based management of coastal and marine resources.

SECTION 6. COMPOSITION.

The Council shall be composed of the following:

- A. The Executive Secretary as chairperson;
- B. The Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources as co-vice chairperson;
- C. The Secretary of Socio-Economic Planning as co-vice chairperson;
- D. The Secretary of National Defense;
- E. The Secretary of Foreign Affairs;
- F. The Secretary of Justice;
- G. The Secretary of the Interior and Local Government;
- H. The Secretary of Agriculture;
- I. The Secretary of Tourism;
- J. The Secretary of Transportation;
- K. The Secretary of Trade and Industry;
- L. The Secretary of Energy;
- M. The Secretary of Science and Technology;
- N. The Secretary of Finance; and
- O. The Secretary of Public Works and Highways

The heads of departments may designate an Undersecretary whose portfolio directly or primarily concerns the development or management of coastal and marine resources and ecosystems. When applicable, such Undersecretary shall serve in a permanent capacity, and their actions shall be deemed those of their principal. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

SECTION 7. POWERS AND FUNCTIONS.

The Council shall be responsible for formulating a clear, coherent, and comprehensive policy framework and strategic action plan on the Blue Economy. It shall implement the following:

- A. Develop the country's policy framework and strategic vision for the growth and sustainable development of the country's blue economy;
- B. Institutionalize an integrated marine and coastal management;
- C. Enhance the country's ecosystem-based management of coastal and marine resources;
- D. Align Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) plans, fisheries management plans, coastal resource management plans, climate action plans, and marine spatial plans to determine zones, and designate allowed, regulated, and restricted activities;
- E. Strengthen economic and environmental regulations within our coastal and marine areas to preserve the value and sustainability of ocean resources and protect them from threats;
- F. Identify climate-resilient and environmentally sound investments, infrastructure, and technologies;
- G. Ensure an enabling environment for the growth and development of sustainable investment and finance;
- H. Identify priority blue economy sectors;
- I. Institutionalize regular coastal and ocean monitoring and accounting;
- J. Coordinate the development of marine spatial plans;
- K. Coordinate with various sectors and agencies to promote policy and program coherence;
- L. Coordinate and cooperate with the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) to ensure that the framework shall be in harmony and not overlap with the maritime industry development plan;
- M. Coordinate with the Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee to Facilitate the Ratification and Accession to and Implementation of Maritime Conventions (ICCFRAIMC) and ensure that it will aid in the implementation thereof;
- N. Conduct, support, fund, engage, collaborate, and/or coordinate research and development in the blue economy;

- O. Develop, expand, and strengthen investments in capacity building and skills enhancement programs for the blue economy, and encourage such to be featured in the work plans of governments, the private sector, and civil society organizations;
- P. Review, update, and disseminate the policy framework and strategic action plan on blue economy;
- Q. Perform other functions as may be necessary for the implementation of this Act.

SECTION 8. SECRETARIAT.

A Secretariat to the Council shall be established within the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), to be headed by an Executive Director III (Salary Grade 28), who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines. The Secretariat shall be under the control and supervision of the NEDA Director General.

The Executive Director III must possess at least seven (7) years of relevant experience and expertise in one or more of the following fields: marine science and research, blue economy, ecosystem-based management of coastal and marine resources, environmental economics, environmental accounting, or financial analysis.

The initial staffing structure and personnel complement of the Secretariat shall be submitted by NEDA to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) for funding approval. Within one (1) month from the effectivity of this Act, NEDA shall constitute an interim Secretariat through the temporary detail of personnel from its member agencies.

The Secretariat shall perform the following functions:

- A. Provide technical and administrative support to the Council, including the drafting of strategies, policy priorities, and other documents for the Council's review and adoption;
- B. Consult with subject matter experts to inform policymaking and priority setting on the blue economy and the ecosystem-based management of coastal and marine resources;
- C. Coordinate with government agencies, the private sector, the academic and scientific community, civil society organizations, indigenous peoples, local communities, and the general public;
- D. Design and implement a national blue economy development program and promote its mainstreaming across the government bureaucracy;
- E. Formulate policy and program recommendations for the Council's consideration;
- F. Perform such other functions as may be assigned by the Council.

SECTION 9. SUPPORTING AGENCIES.

The following agencies shall provide material or technical support to the Council, as may be necessary:

- A. Climate Change Commission (CCC);
- B. Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP);
- C. Board of Investments (BOI);
- D. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC);
- E. Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA);
- F. National Mapping and Resources Information Authority (NAMRIA);
- G. Environmental Management Bureau (EMB);
- H. Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB);
- I. Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR);
- J. National Fisheries Research and Development Institute (NFRDI);
- K. Philippine Fisheries Development Authority (PFDA);
- L. Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF);
- M. MARINA;
- N. Philippine Ports Authority (PPA);
- O. Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD);
- P. Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA);
- Q. Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA);
- R. Philippine Coast Guard (PCG);
- S. Philippine National Police - Maritime Group (PNP-MG);
- T. Philippine Navy (PN);
- U. National Museum - Maritime and Underwater Cultural Heritage Division (NM-MUCHD);
- V. Commission on Higher Education (CHED);
- W. Relevant institutions and components of the University of the Philippines (UP);
- X. Investment promotion agencies.

To ensure the efficient and effective discharge of its responsibilities, the Council may create working groups and call upon other departments, bureaus, offices, instrumentalities of the Government, as well as academic and research institutions engaged in marine science and ocean-based or ocean-related activities, to participate therein, as it may deem necessary.

CHAPTER III THE BLUE ECONOMY FRAMEWORK

SECTION 10. POLICY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK ON BLUE ECONOMY.

Within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, the Council shall formulate a policy framework on Blue Economy, herein referred to as the Framework. The Framework is a development model that aims to help the country define a roadmap for a diversified and

sustainable ocean economy in a manner that provides long-term economic as well as social benefits while building resilience to climate change, without compromising the safety of our marine ecosystems. The Framework shall be subject to mandatory review and modification every five (5) years.

SECTION 11. COMPONENTS OF THE POLICY FRAMEWORK ON BLUE ECONOMY.

The framework shall include the following components:

- A. Comprehensive review of all existing policies, plans, programs, projects, rules, and regulations concerning ocean-based and ocean-related activities;
- B. Ensuring full adherence to international maritime laws and conventions;
- C. Analysis of current and emerging trends—including demographic shifts, consumption patterns, trade, energy use, technological advances, environmental quality, and climate change—highlighting interactions between the economy and the environment, as well as identifying existing and future threats to coastal and marine ecosystems and estimating potential damages;
- D. Implementation of environmental-economic accounting for coastal and marine assets, including both living and non-living resources, as well as ecosystem services. This shall include assessments of environmental degradation and damage from major pollution events such as oil spills; and
- E. Adoption of an Integrated Marine and Coastal Area Management (IMCAM) framework to address human-induced impacts on marine biodiversity and promote its conservation and sustainable use;

The national IMCAM framework shall include the following elements:

- 1. Capacity-building for stakeholders at national and local levels to strengthen legal frameworks, institutionalize participatory processes, and promote ecosystem-based, multidisciplinary, and multisectoral coastal and marine resource management;
- 2. Protection of marine and coastal ecosystems from threats such as destruction or alteration of habitats, particularly coral reefs, seagrass beds, and breeding grounds; marine and land-based pollution; mismanagement of watersheds and improper coastal land use; illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, including by-catch of threatened species; and
- 3. Establishment of systems and guidelines for research, monitoring, evaluation, and valuation of coastal and marine ecosystems, with measurable indicators of both natural and anthropogenic impacts;

- F. Identification of priority strategic and sustainable ocean-based and ocean-related economic activities, including:
1. Fisheries (with preference for subsistence fisheries, pursuant to Section 7, Article XIII of the Constitution), seafood processing, and R&D;
 2. Aquaculture, mariculture, and aquasilviculture;
 3. Marine and coastal tourism;
 4. Shipping, logistics, and maritime transportation;
 5. Shipbuilding and ship repair;
 6. Marine renewable energy generation;
 7. Installation of submarine cables and pipelines;
 8. Marine biotechnology, bioremediation, and bioprospecting;
 9. Desalination;
 10. Preservation of underwater cultural heritage and maritime archaeology;
- G. Development of a national guiding framework for IMCAM;
- H. Establishment of a blue finance framework to guide investments in sustainable marine activities;
- I. Formulation of a research and development agenda to promote innovation in pollution control, remediation, water reuse, and related environmental industries;
- J. Promotion of ocean literacy and social responsibility to foster public engagement in protecting marine and coastal ecosystems;
- K. Enhancement of institutional capacity among relevant agencies for the effective enforcement of marine-related laws and regulations;
- L. Setting of measurable goals, targets, and indicators for the growth, resilience, and sustainability of ocean-based and ocean-related sectors, including contributions to GDP, job creation, and livelihoods;
- M. Expansion and effective management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to conserve biodiversity and restore degraded ecosystems;
- N. Mainstreaming of circular economy and resource-efficiency principles into blue economy initiatives to address marine litter and microplastics;
- O. Integration of Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (CCAM) strategies to operationalize the Philippines' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs); and
- P. Strengthening of management capacities at both national and local levels, including among sectoral stakeholders, to enhance the protection and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems, and such other components as may be determined by the Council.

CHAPTER IV OCEAN ACCOUNTING

SECTION 12. OCEAN ACCOUNTING.

The PSA shall undertake environmental-economic accounting of the ocean, maritime ecosystems, and resources, based on the United Nations System of Environmental-Economic Accounting and in corresponding with Republic Act No. 11995, otherwise known as the “Philippine Ecosystem and Natural Capital Accounting System (PENCAS) Act”. Members of the Council and heads of support agencies shall contribute data and submit reports on environmental-economic accounts relating to their mandates, including damage estimation and sea level rise projections.

SECTION 13. MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING.

The Council shall lead the implementation of a nationwide Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) initiative, in close coordination with key stakeholders. This process shall identify the spatial and temporal distribution of priority activities, allowable uses, and their interactions within maritime zones to:

- A. Minimize conflicts among competing uses;
- B. Promote complementary and synergistic uses;
- C. Mitigate environmental impacts and prevent the creation of marine dead zones;
- D. Rehabilitate existing dead zones or non-attainment areas, if present;
- E. Reduce inefficiencies and wastage in marine supply chains; and
- F. Safeguard ecosystem services.

The national MSP shall serve as the overarching framework that sets guiding principles, delineates spatial and temporal zones, and classifies human activities within coastal and marine areas as allowed, restricted, or regulated based on ecological, social, and economic considerations.

Furthermore, the Council shall encourage and support the formulation of regional and local MSPs that provide more detailed and context-specific planning. These localized plans shall enable actionable investments, targeted regulations and enforcement, effective marine and coastal resource management, and climate and disaster risk reduction strategies.

SECTION 14. BLUE ECONOMIC ZONES.

Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs) shall actively promote the establishment of Blue Economic Zones (BEZs) and facilitate the transformation of existing special economic zones into BEZs.

Registered business enterprises engaged in ocean-based or ocean-related activities, as identified under the Strategic Investment Priority Plan (SIPP), shall be entitled to the privileges, incentives, and exemptions granted to enterprises operating within economic

zones and freeports, in accordance with their respective enabling laws, Republic Act No. 11534 or the “Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises (CREATE) Act,” and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

Moreover, eligible registered business enterprises operating within BEZs may also qualify for financing and support under Republic Act No. 11293, otherwise known as the “Philippine Innovation Act,” subject to the applicable provisions thereof.

SECTION 15. PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS AND EMPLOYMENT

The Council shall, in consultation with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Department of Agriculture-BFAR, and other concerned agencies and stakeholders, develop a policy to ensure the enhancement and sustainability of municipal fisheries as well as the promotion and generation of sustainable livelihood in the blue economy towards the creation of more employment and equal opportunities for all, and to strengthen investments in capacity building and skills enhancement programs, following Republic Act No. 10771 or the “Philippine Green Jobs Act of 2016”.

SECTION 16. ROLE OF BANGKO SENTRAL IN THE PHILIPPINES.

In the exercise of its regulatory powers over financial institutions, the BSP shall provide an enabling regulatory environment to promote the development of the country’s Blue Economy, in line with its sustainable finance framework and considering international standards and best practices.

SECTION 17. ROLE OF SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION.

The SEC shall encourage the issuance of blue bonds, the proceeds of which will be exclusively applied to finance or refinance, in part or full, eligible blue Programs, Activities, and Projects (PAPs) following SEC guidelines, and ASEAN Green Bonds Standards and Green Bonds Principles, as developed and may be revised from time to time by the SEC, the ASEAN Capital Markets Forum and the International Capital Market Association. All designated blue PAPs must provide clear benefits to ocean health and the blue economy and must contribute substantially to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 6 and 14, which shall be assessed together with compliance with environmental laws and standards, and, where feasible, quantified by the corporation that will issue the blue bonds. The eligibility of these blue PAPs shall be subject to the guidelines to be issued by the SEC.

SECTION 18. ROLE OF GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

The Land Bank of the Philippines and the Development Bank of the Philippines shall provide credit to enterprises engaged in strategic and sustainable ocean-based or ocean-related activities.

SECTION 19. PROTECTION OF ENDANGERED SPECIES.

The Council shall monitor, coordinate, and ensure the conservation, protection, and rehabilitation of rare, threatened, and endangered aquatic species as it may determine, including their habitats and migratory routes, in coordination with BFAR and following existing laws, rules, and regulations.

It shall recommend to the President and Congress the designation of coastal and marine areas as protected areas under Republic Act No. 11038 or the “Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 2018”, or sanctuaries of local conservation areas under Republic Act No. 8550 or “The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998”, as amended, and Republic Act No. 7160 or the “Local Government Code of 1991”, as amended, and in compliance with the relevant provisions of international treaties and agreements, such as the UNCLOS, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

SECTION 20. POLICY COORDINATION.

The Council shall harmonize the rules and regulations of all agencies responsible for the implementation and enforcement of laws to prevent and eliminate illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing under Republic Act No. 8550, as amended, setting strategic and measurable targets and ensuring the best use of technology, such as a vehicle monitoring system. Furthermore, the Council shall act as the coordinating and monitoring arm of the government in ensuring other government agencies’ compliance with these laws.

SECTION 21. ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS (LGUs).

Cities and municipalities shall retain jurisdiction over municipal waters in accordance with Republic Act No. 7160, as amended, and Republic Act No. 8550, as amended. In line with this mandate, local government units (LGUs) located in coastal and marine areas shall serve as frontline agencies in the formulation, planning, and implementation of the Integrated Marine and Coastal Area Management (IMCAM) framework within their respective jurisdictions.

LGUs shall develop local Marine Spatial Plans aligned with the National Marine Spatial Plan, and shall integrate these into the following plans and instruments:

- A. Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP);
- B. Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP);
- C. Annual Investment Plan (AIP);
- D. Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) or Coastal Resource Management (CRM) Plan;
- E. Local Climate Change Action Plan (LCCAP); and
- F. Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (LDRRMP).

LGUs shall also maximize opportunities under national initiatives, including the National Sewerage and Septage Management Plan and funding support available through Republic Act No. 9275, or the “Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004.”

SECTION 22. INTER-LGU COOPERATION.

Consistent with the provisions of Republic Act No. 7160, as amended, LGUs may group themselves and consolidate or coordinate their efforts, services, and resources for the accomplishment of the objectives of this Act.

SECTION 23. LOCAL GOVERNMENT POWER TO UNDERTAKE RECLAMATION.

Notwithstanding the provisions of Presidential Decree No. 1899 and Republic Act No. 7160, as amended, there shall be a presumption against the power of the local governments to reclaim land from the foreshore, or oceans and coasts, unless such reclamation is planned for the purposes as defined under Presidential Decree No. 1899. Such presumption can only be overturned if:

- A. There is an overriding public need, and the reclaimed land is not for private or exclusive development;
- B. The public need is cogent and convincing;
- C. There is no other means to meet the public need, other alternatives having been analyzed in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as required under Presidential Decree No. 1151;
- D. No private sale of lands is included unless it is to fund the project with an overriding public need, and buyers are required to continuously and regularly pay to the municipality the ecosystem services from the marine ecosystem lost to the reclamation;
- E. Adjacent LGUs express no objection to the project.

SECTION 24. ECOSYSTEM SERVICES.

The LGUs that satisfy the acceptability requirements in the foregoing section shall pass the necessary ordinances and cause the necessary annotations to the titles of all lands privately acquired to ensure collection of the payments required under Section 23(d) of this Act.

CHAPTER IX FINAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 25. JOINT CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.

There shall be a Joint Congressional Oversight Committee on Blue Economy (JCOC-BE). The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall designate five (5) Senators and five (5) Members of the House of Representatives, respectively, as members of the JCOC-BE: Provided, That the minority in the Senate and the House of Representatives shall each have at least one (1) seat in

the JCOC-BE. The JCOC-BE shall be jointly chaired by the Chairpersons of the Senate Committee on Economic Affairs and the House Committee on Economic Affairs. The JCOC-BE shall conduct a semi-annual hearing to oversee, monitor, and evaluate the implementation of this Act and identify other necessary legislation.

SECTION 26. APPROPRIATIONS.

The initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the departments or agencies concerned. Thereafter, the amount necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the respective budgets of the concerned departments and agencies in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 27. IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS.

Within sixty (60) days from the approval of this Act, the Council shall issue the implementing rules and regulations: Provided, that failure to issue rules and regulations shall not in any manner affect the executory nature of the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 28. CONSTRUCTION.

In the implementation of this Act, any conflict with Republic Act No. 8550, as amended, shall be resolved in favor of the latter, to ensure the ecological and environmental safeguards therein and with a presumption in favor of subsistence fisherfolk.

SECTION 29. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE.

If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder thereof not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 30. REPEALING CLAUSE.

All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, letters of instruction, proclamations, or administrative regulations that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly: Provided, That any inconsistency with Republic Act No. 8550, as amended, shall be construed in favor of the said law unless there is a cogent ecological rationale for resolving the inconsistency in favor of this Act.

SECTION 31. EFFECTIVITY.

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

Approved,