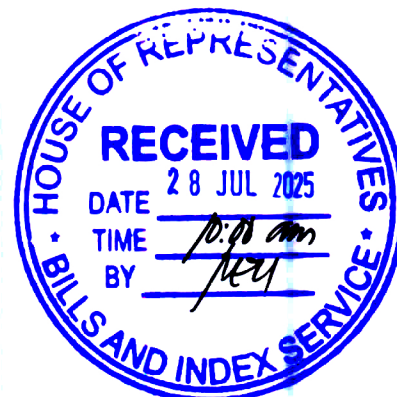


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **2375**



Introduced by **Representative RAYMOND ADRIAN E. SALCEDA**

AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE QUINALE DEVELOPMENT CONSORTIUM UNDER
THE TECHNICAL SUPERVISION OF THE RIVER BASIN CONTROL OFFICE OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES, AND
MANDATING REGULAR REPORTING TO THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Quinale River Basin spans multiple municipalities in the southwestern part of Albay, with headwaters originating in the upland areas of Libon and downstream tributaries crossing Oas and Polangui before draining into the Ragay Gulf. The river is a vital hydrological corridor, supporting agriculture, transportation, flood mitigation, and ecological systems across its approximately 850-square kilometer catchment area. It also indirectly influences adjacent areas in the provinces of Camarines Sur and Sorsogon.

Based on estimates from the Albay Provincial Planning and Development Office, the Quinale Basin supports more than 230,000 residents in its immediate influence zone and irrigates nearly 18,000 hectares of farmland, primarily rice and corn. However, the basin is also one of the most flood-prone areas in the region. According to the Office of Civil Defense Region V, recurrent overflow of the Quinale River has contributed to repeated displacements and infrastructure damage, particularly during the typhoon season.

To address the need for basin-wide coordination and shared development strategies, Administrative Order No. 83, series of 2003, was issued by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The AO formally created the Quinale Development Consortium (QDC) and mandated all relevant national government agencies to support its activities. It also authorized the release of ₱1 million from the Presidential Social Fund upon submission of a 12-month development program.

The original and continuing members of the QDC—Libon, Oas, and Polangui—are the three municipalities most centrally and directly affected by the Quinale River and its flood behavior.

These LGUs have engaged in coordinated efforts over the years, particularly in relation to flood control, disaster risk reduction, and localized infrastructure planning.

In light of increasing pressures on land use, conflicting permit issuances, and overlapping development programs within the basin, the need to institutionalize the QDC through legislation has become clear. Formal legislative status will allow:

1. Recognition of the QDC as a permanent inter-LGU coordination mechanism, consistent with the constitutional principle of local autonomy under Article X of the 1987 Constitution;
2. Placement of the QDC under the technical supervision of the River Basin Control Office (RBCO) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), ensuring alignment with national basin frameworks;
3. A mandate for regular reporting to the Office of the President, to elevate basin-wide issues that require executive coordination; and
4. An amendment of Administrative Order No. 83, s. 2003, to reflect these updates in institutional structure and accountability.

The bill further defines QDC functions to include joint land use planning, coordination of zoning and permitting actions, endorsement of basin-wide infrastructure and environmental projects, and harmonization of local disaster risk reduction strategies.

By institutionalizing the QDC, this measure strengthens cooperative governance, enables strategic integration with national agencies and planning bodies, and ensures that basin-wide development efforts are aligned, flood-resilient, and technically supported.

The immediate passage of this measure is respectfully sought.

RAYMOND ADRIAN E. SALCEDA



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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 “Quinale River Basin Governance Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote integrated, decentralized, and locally led governance of river basins and watersheds. Consistent with this policy, inter-local cooperation mechanisms that coordinate flood control, disaster risk reduction, and environmental management across political boundaries shall be recognized and supported.

SEC. 3. *Institutionalization of the Quinale Development Consortium (QDC.* – There is hereby institutionalized the Quinale Development Consortium (QDC) as a permanent inter-local coordination mechanism for the Quinale River Basin.

The initial members of the QDC shall be the municipalities of Libon, Oas, and Polangui in the Province of Albay.

The following local government units may accede to the QDC:
(a) Ligao City, Guinobatan, Pio Duran, and Jovellar in the Province of Albay;
(b) Buhi and Bato in the Province of Camarines Sur;
(c) Donsol in the Province of Sorsogon.

Other local government units may be admitted to the QDC upon invitation by existing members or upon expression of intent, subject to ratification by the governing body of the Consortium and the procedures provided in its internal charter.

SEC. 4. *Nature and functions.* – The Quinale Development Consortium (QDC) shall serve as a formal inter-local coordination mechanism among member local government units for the integrated management and governance of the Quinale River Basin and its tributaries. The QDC shall not be constituted as a government agency or juridical entity, or as an authority superseding its constituent local governments.

Specifically, the QDC shall:

- (a) Coordinate flood control, disaster risk reduction, and climate resilience planning across member territories;
- (b) Harmonize environmental management, reforestation, riverbank protection, and solid waste control efforts within the basin;
- (c) Facilitate joint land use planning, ensuring that comprehensive land use plans (CLUPs) and zoning ordinances of member LGUs are aligned with basin-level priorities, infrastructure needs, and risk reduction objectives;
- (d) Coordinate the issuance and alignment of local permits, zoning clearances, and environmental compliance requirements for development projects affecting the basin;
- (e) Serve as a platform for consolidating technical studies, feasibility assessments, and joint investment proposals across municipal boundaries;
- (f) Act as the convenor of basin-wide planning sessions involving national government agencies, regional development bodies, civil society organizations, and the private sector;
- (g) Endorse basin-wide projects for implementation through a member local government unit or a national government agency, as applicable.

All QDC-endorsed programs and initiatives shall be carried out through:

- (a) One or more member local government units; or
- (b) A national government agency (NGA) or government-owned or controlled corporation (GOCC), subject to applicable laws and regulations.

SEC. 5. *Technical Supervision by the River Basin Control Office.* – The QDC shall operate under the technical supervision of the River Basin Control Office (RBCO) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), which shall ensure that the activities of the QDC are aligned with national river basin management strategies and provide technical assistance as needed.

SEC. 6. *Reporting to the Office of the President.* – The QDC shall submit an annual report to the Office of the President, through the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Climate Change or such other office as the President may designate. The report shall include:

- (a) progress on basin-level development initiatives;
- (b) updates on risk management activities;

- (c) resource mobilization and expenditures; and
- (d) policy or programmatic recommendations requiring national support.

SEC. 7. *Governance Framework.* – The QDC shall adopt an internal charter to govern its operations. The charter shall provide for:

- (a) a Council of Mayors as the principal decision-making body;
- (b) a rotating chairmanship among member local government units;
- (c) rules for accession, withdrawal, and participation in joint initiatives; and
- (d) mechanisms for the ratification of joint programs or financial commitments by the respective Sangguniang Bayan or Sangguniang Panlungsod of each member local government unit.

SEC. 8. *Integration with Regional and National Planning.* – *The QDC shall coordinate its programs and plans with the Bicol Regional Development Council, the Bicol River Basin Development Program, and relevant agencies such as the DENR, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA).*

SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.* – The following laws, rules, and regulations are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly:

(a) Administrative Order No. 83, series of 2003, is hereby amended to conform with the provisions of this Act. All provisions of the said Administrative Order that are inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

(b) All other laws, decrees, executive orders, letters of instruction, administrative rules, or regulations inconsistent with this Act.

SEC. 10. *Implementing rules and regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, in consultation with the initial member local government units, shall issue implementing rules and model charter provisions for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 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.

SEC. 12. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,