

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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2381



Introduced by Representative Raymond Adrian E. Salceda

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING AN INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL AND FISHERIES PORT
IN THE PROVINCE OF ALBAY, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines imports and exports over **1.1 million metric tons of fishery products annually**, valued at more than **₱60 billion** as of 2023, according to data from the Philippine Statistics Authority and the Bureau of Customs. Despite this robust trade volume, only two ports—**Navotas** in Luzon and **General Santos** in Mindanao—serve as designated international ports of entry for commercial fish shipments. The Department of Agriculture (DA), under Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., has formally disclosed its plan to establish a third such port in **Albay**, to serve Southern Luzon, Eastern Visayas, and adjacent maritime areas.

This proposed International Agricultural and Fisheries Port aligns with the DA's strategy to **regionalize international logistics hubs** and improve **cold chain infrastructure**, thereby reducing food waste, import delays, and domestic supply instability. Secretary Tiu Laurel has further clarified that the planned facility in Albay will not only handle fishery cargo but will also accommodate outbound and inbound trade in **high-value agricultural commodities**, many of which are perishable and require internationally compliant inspection, storage, and handling systems.

The **Province of Albay** is a strategic site for such a port. It has deep coastal waters, multiple port candidates (including Legazpi and Tabaco), a well-developed airport in Daraga, and highway access through the Maharlika and Andaya corridors. Albay also lies at the convergence of maritime routes between **Southern Luzon and Eastern Visayas**, and sits across the channel from **Masbate and Samar fishing grounds**.

As of 2022, **Region V (Bicol)** contributed **4.9 percent** of the country's total fisheries production—amounting to **192,823 metric tons** of fish and aquatic products. Meanwhile, agriculture remains a dominant sector in Albay, with the province hosting active production

zones for abaca, coconut, pili, and vegetables—commodities that face significant spoilage and price losses due to lack of modern logistics hubs.

The establishment of a **direct international port of entry in Albay** would **cut travel time for fresh exports by up to 36 hours**, allow for more **cost-efficient regulatory inspections**, and **unlock broader export opportunities** for smallholder producers.

This measure mandates the Philippine Fisheries Development Authority (PFDA) to lead the development of the Albay International Agricultural and Fisheries Port. It enables coordinated planning with the DA, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), Bureau of Customs (BOC), and other regulatory agencies, including Quarantine and Immigration, to ensure full international operations.

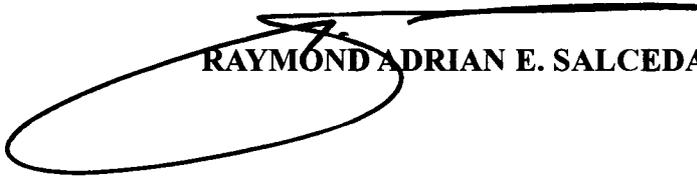
The project is technically feasible. Albay hosts multiple viable shoreline sites for a deepwater port; the province already operates ports for general cargo, and initial expressions of support from the DA and PFDA confirm institutional momentum. The Department of Transportation may also assist in aligning the project with the National Logistics Master Plan and Maritime Industry Development Program.

Beyond logistics efficiency, the port's multiplier effects include:

- Enhanced **farmgate prices** for coastal and upland producers
- Reduction in **post-harvest losses**
- Creation of cold chain, warehousing, and value-added service jobs
- Improved food safety compliance for export markets
- Decongestion of Metro Manila ports and roadways
- Higher share of value retained within the region
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This bill thus seeks to establish the Albay International Agricultural and Fisheries Port through an act of Congress, enabling long-term infrastructure planning, inter-agency harmonization, and the mobilization of national and external funding sources such as official development assistance and public-private partnerships.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly 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 “Albay International Agricultural and Fisheries Port Act.”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to promote agricultural modernization and market access by supporting the development of internationally capable agricultural and fisheries infrastructure. The State shall pursue investments that enable the efficient import and export of perishable and high-value food commodities, consistent with global standards in logistics and food safety.

SEC. 3. Establishment of Port. – There is hereby established an International Agricultural and Fisheries Port in the Barangay Pantao, Municipality of Libon, Province of Albay to serve as a gateway for the entry and exit of agricultural and fishery products for domestic and international trade. The specific location shall be determined by the Department of Agriculture (DA), in coordination with the Philippine Fisheries Development Authority (PFDA), the Department of Transportation (DOTr), and relevant local government units, based on technical, geographic, environmental, and economic feasibility.

SEC. 4. Functions. – The Albay International Agricultural and Fisheries Port shall:

- (a) Serve as a port of entry for local and foreign vessels carrying agricultural and fisheries cargo;
- (b) Host customs, immigration, and quarantine functions necessary for international trade;

- (c) Provide cold storage, ice plants, processing and packaging facilities, and related infrastructure;
- (d) Facilitate compliance with international sanitary and phytosanitary standards; and
- (e) Act as a logistics node for Southern Luzon and Eastern Visayas.

SEC. 5. Implementing Agency. – The PFDA shall be the lead implementing agency. It shall undertake feasibility studies, master planning, infrastructure development, and operational management of the port, in coordination with the Bureau of Customs (BOC), the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), and other relevant agencies.

SEC. 6. Appropriations. – The amount necessary to implement this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. The DA and PFDA are likewise authorized to access official development assistance (ODA), pursue public-private partnerships (PPP), and utilize other applicable funding sources.

SEC. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the PFDA, in coordination with the DA and other relevant agencies, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 8. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder shall not be affected and shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 9. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 10. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.