

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



House of Representatives

Introduced by Representative CARMELO G. LAZATIN, JR.

House Bill No. 2424

AN ACT
CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, DEFINING ITS
POWERS AND FUNCTIONS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Water is a vital resource that is essential to life, health, food security, sanitation, disaster resilience and overall national development. Given its critical importance, it is noted that the Philippines lacks a centralized body that is responsible for the coordinated management, development, and regulation of water resources of the Philippines.

At present, there are about 20 to 30 government agencies that have overlapping mandates in various sectors such as water supply, irrigation, hydropower, flood control, sanitation, watershed regulation and environmental protection.

In terms of water resources, the Philippines receives an estimated 2,300 mm to 4,000 mm or rainfall annually. It also has 421 principal river basins and over 59 major rivers. Yet, the country still experiences water shortages during the dry months. Moreover, some areas have water surplus while others rely on groundwater- extraction that causes subsidence and salt water intrusion.

Pollution from domestic, industrial and agricultural sources affects several bodies of water. Although generally we have abundant sources of water, sadly only a small portion of the river systems yield clean water that is suitable for public water supply.

As such, this bill aims to create a central agency to manage, develop, and regulate water resources, ensuring sustainable use and fair distribution for everyone.

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


CARMELO G. LAZATIN, JR.



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

HOUSE BILL NO. 2424

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AN ACT

**CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, DEFINING ITS
POWERS AND FUNCTIONS**

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

1 **SECTION 1. Title.** This Act shall be known as “An Act Creating the Department of Water
2 Resources, defining its powers and functions”.

3 **SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy-** It is hereby declared the policy of the State to ensure
4 protection, sustainability, equitable and efficient management and development of water resources
5 of the country. Cognizant to the importance of water in national development, ensuring food
6 security and public health, the State shall institutionalize a centralize system of water governance.

7 To this end, the State shall establish a Department of Water Resources that shall be
8 responsible in the coordination, protection, regulation and efficient management of all water-
9 related concerns aimed at achieving sustainability, efficiency and social equity.

10 **SECTION 3. Definition of terms.** - For purposes of this Act, the following terms are hereby
11 defined:

12 a. Department- shall refer to the Department of Water Resources.

13
14 b. Sanitation refers to sewage sanitation, and septage management.

15
16 c. Sanitation refers to sewage, sanitation, and septage management.

17
18 d. Sewerage refers to any system or network of sanitary pipelines, ditches, channels, or
19 conduits including pumping stations, lift stations, and force mains, service connections
20 including other constructions, devices, or appliances appurtenant thereof, which includes
21 the collection, sanitary piping transport, pumping and treatment of water-borne human or

1 animal waste removed from residences, buildings, Institutions, and industrial and
2 commercial establishments to point of sewage treatment plant disposal.

3
4 e. Sewage refers to water-carried waste in solution or suspension, including sanitary
5 waste (waste products of normal living), commercial waste, industrial waste, agricultural
6 waste, and surface runoff, conveyed by a sewerage system for treatment or disposal. For
7 purposes of this Act, the definition of septage shall be included in the use of sewage.

8
9 f. f) Septage refers to sludge produced on individual on-site wastewater disposal
10 systems, principally septic tanks and cesspools.

11 **SECTION 4. *The Department of Water Resources-*** there is hereby created a Department
12 of Water Resources which shall be hereinafter referred to as the Department.

13
14 **SECTION 5. *Mandate of the Department-*** The Department shall be responsible in
15 determining and mapping the country's water resources, and shall set policies and regulations on
16 how it is used, owned, appropriated equitably including its development and preservation.

17 It shall implement the provisions of PD 1067 or the Water Code of the Philippines.

18 It shall set regulations on septage system, pursuant to the provisions of Republic Act No.
19 9275 or the Clean Water Act of 2004. To this end, it shall engage national agencies, local
20 government units, civil society organizations, private organizations, individuals in formulating and
21 ensuring the implementation of a septage management plan across regions in the country.

22
23 **SECTION 6. *Objectives of the Department-*** The Department shall:

- 24 a) Develop a water demand management policy to ensure sustainable use of water
25 resources;
26 b) Promote water conservation, encourage reusing and recycling of water and treated
27 wastewater, set appropriate pricing to prevent wasteful use. Likewise, implement
28 system to harness, store and treat rainwater, floodwater and runoff as reserve supply
29 for the future;
30 c) Ensure the protection of water resources through coordination with the Local
31 Government Units to prevent pollution and focus on the restoration of rivers;
32 d) Develop standardized pricing structure for water use, septage and sewerage
33 services, consumer prices and/or rates.
34 e) Ensure the identification, mapping and monitoring of all water sources be it surface
35 water, groundwater, rainwater and even flood water for proper management.
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37 **SECTION 7. *Powers and Functions of the Department-*** The Department shall have the
38 following functions:

1 I. Policymaking and Planning

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- 3 a) Endorse the Integrated Water Resources Management as framework for water
- 4 management policymaking and planning;
- 5
- 6 b) Formulate policies to mitigate issues concerning water sanitation, food security,
- 7 environment, flood control as well as climate change;
- 8
- 9 c) Formulation of basin –wide plans based on surveyed and recorded river basins to
- 10 provide guidelines for the proper storage and management of water;
- 11
- 12 d) Determine priority infrastructure development for each river basin that would cover
- 13 areas such as water supply, sanitation, irrigation, flood control, urban drainage,
- 14 drought risk reduction and management of storm water;
- 15
- 16 e) Ensure that the most appropriate technology, quality and highest efficiency are
- 17 considered when planning for any water infrastructure.
- 18

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20 II. Resource Allocation and Regulation

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- 22 a) Manage water resources appropriately for optimal distribution and use. Improve and
- 23 maintain safe water quality, intensify conservation efforts for watersheds and address
- 24 water pollution concerns;
- 25 b) Enforce rules and regulations for the proper use, development and management of
- 26 water resource that would include setting clear water procedures, rules for operating
- 27 current and future water infrastructure, standards for data collection. Establish penalties
- 28 for violators.
- 29 c) Impose fees and charges relative to the development, conservation and protection of
- 30 water resources such as Polluter’s fee based on the net waste load as provided in Section
- 31 13 of the Republic Act No. 9275;
- 32

33 III. Coordination

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- 35 a) Coordinate data gathering activities, researches and special studies with other
- 36 government agencies;
- 37 b) Coordinate with concerned government agencies involved in flood control, flood risk
- 38 management and drought risk management;
- 39

40 **SECTION 8** *Composition-* The Department shall be composed of the Office of the Secretary,

41 bureaus and services and regional offices. Under the Office of the Secretary would be the Offices

42 of the Department Secretary, Undersecretaries Offices of the Assistant Secretaries and their

43 immediate support staff.

SECTION 9 Secretary of the Department of Water Resources- The Secretary of the Department of Water Resources shall be appointed by the President. The Secretary of Water Resources shall:

- a) Establish policies and standards of operations based on the President's guidelines;
- b) Advise the President on the status of water supply and management in the country;
- c) Exercise provision and control over all bureaus and offices under the Department;
- d) Represent the Department in all Contracts, awards and agreements;
- e) Designate and appoint employees of the Department in accordance with the rules and regulations of the civil service except the Undersecretaries, Assistant Secretaries, Regional and Assistant Directors;
- f) Perform such other duties and responsibilities as may be provided by law.

SECTION 10. *Undersecretaries and Assistant Secretaries*- The Secretary shall be assisted by Three (3) Undersecretaries and three (3) Assistant Secretaries which shall be appointed by the President upon the recommendation of the Secretary.

They shall have powers and functions as provided for in the Chapter 2, Book IV of the Administrative Code of 1987.

SECTION 11 . *Qualifications*- appointed Secretary, Undersecretary and Assistant Secretary must be a citizen of the Philippines, of good moral character, of proven integrity , competence and expertise in water management.

SECTION 12. *Department Bureaus and Services and Regional Offices*- The Department shall establish the Bureaus and Services such as:

- a) Policy and Planning Bureau;
- (b) Decision Support System Bureau;
- (c) Bureau of Technical Services;
- d) Legal and Legislative Research Service;
- (e) Internal Audit Service;
- (f) Public Affairs Service;
- (g) Administrative and Human Resources Service;
- (h) Flood Control and Drainage Coordination Service
- (i) Comptrollership and Financial Management Service; and

1 (j) Local Water Service Providers Bureau.

2 These shall be headed by a Director who shall be responsible for the efficient and effective
3 performance of functions of the bureau, Service or Office.

4
5 **SECTION 13. *Appropriations.*** - The funds needed for the initial implementation of this Act shall
6 be sourced from the current year's appropriations of the agencies, entities, divisions, sections or units
7 absorbed or transferred to the Department. The funding required shall be included in the annual General
8 Appropriations Act, in the succeeding years.

9
10 **SECTION 14 *Effectivity.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the
11 Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,