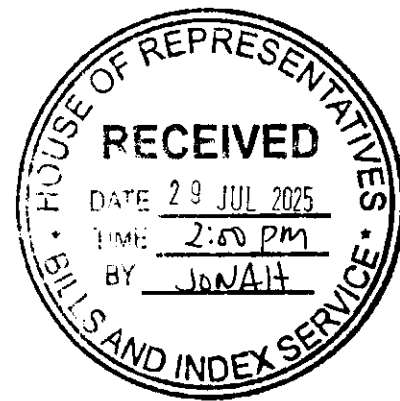


TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

House Bill No. 2472

Introduced by Hon. Antonio B. Legarda, Jr.

AN ACT

ESTABLISHING THE ANTIQUE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT AND SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Access to safe and reliable water remains a persistent challenge in the Province of Antique. Despite national figures showing that 97.6% of Filipinos have access to safely managed drinking water, many areas in Antique continue to experience critical supply issues due to limited infrastructure, outdated systems, and fragmented service coverage. Water districts serve only a portion of barangays, and the high cost of constructing even a single pumping station—estimated at ₱10 million—often exceeds local financing capabilities.

This situation is particularly troubling when viewed against the backdrop of Antique's location within Region VI (Western Visayas)—a region with one of the highest water resource potentials in the country. According to the Philippine Water Supply and Sanitation Master Plan (PWSSMP), Western Visayas ranks third among 12 water resource regions, with an estimated 15,344 million cubic meters (MCM) of water available annually, accounting for 10.5% of the national total. However, this abundance has not translated into equitable access for Antique, where recurring water shortages, low service coverage, and infrastructure gaps persist. This reflects a broader challenge: while the region is water-rich, intra-regional disparities in infrastructure and service delivery continue to marginalize provinces like Antique.

Moreover, data from the 2020 regional analysis of water sources reveals that in Region VI, approximately 17% of families rely on unsafe water sources—a figure significantly higher than the national average of 12%. This means that nearly 1 in every 6 households in the region may be exposed to water that does not meet safety standards, further underscoring the urgency of targeted infrastructure investment in provinces like Antique.

This bill seeks to establish the Antique Water Infrastructure Support and Sustainability Program (AWSEP), a focused intervention providing a ₱1 billion special purpose fund to finance the construction, rehabilitation, and expansion of water systems across all municipalities in the province. Unlike nationwide programs that often adopt a generalized approach, this proposed legislation is deliberately local in scope. It seeks to develop Antique as a model province for implementing dedicated support funds that are context-sensitive and responsive to the province's geologic, hydrologic, and institutional conditions.

The program introduces several key design elements to ensure effectiveness, accountability, and replicability:

1. Water infrastructure planning shall be based on watershed and basin-level assessments, not political boundaries, to promote inter-LGU collaboration and long-term sustainability.
2. Project selection shall be guided by existing national and local master plans and feasibility studies to ensure technical soundness.
3. Procurement flexibility will be provided through various modes—including the National Government Procurement Act (NGPA), Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), Official Development Assistance (ODA), and hybrid modalities—depending on project needs and viability.
4. Fast-tracking provisions will be adopted: projects under the program shall be exempt from Investment Coordination Committee (ICC) approval requirements.

To ensure transparency and measurable impact, up to ten percent (10%) of the fund shall be allocated for monitoring and evaluation (M&E), audit-related expenses, and manpower support, unless justified otherwise in the implementing rules and regulations. The Provincial Government of Antique, in coordination with local water

districts, shall prepare and submit annual reports detailing project implementation, fund utilization, and M&E outcomes. Oversight shall be provided by the Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev) and the Commission on Audit (COA).

The program also mandates the establishment of Barangay Water Supply Monitoring Committees for the first five (5) years, after which responsibility shall transition to the relevant water districts to institutionalize water governance and strengthen community participation.

This bill is a pioneering legislative initiative that seeks to correct the mismatch between water resource potential and access through a replicable model for localized water infrastructure support. By concentrating efforts in one province, the government can test, refine, and eventually scale a targeted and evidence-based approach to water sector investment. Its passage is earnestly sought.

In line with the policy espoused by its original proponent, Senator Loren Legarda, this bill is being introduced as a counterpart measure. In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this measure is earnestly sought.


HON. ANTONIO B. LEGARDA, JR.

1 TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE)
2 REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
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14 **AN ACT**
15 **ESTABLISHING THE ANTIQUE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT AND**
16 **SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND**
17 **FOR OTHER PURPOSES**
18

19 *Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress*
20 *assembled:*
21

22 Section 1. *Short Title.* This Act shall be known as the "Antique Water
23 Infrastructure Support and Sustainability Act."

24 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
25 promote equitable access to clean and sustainable water, enhance water security and
26 resilience against drought, and support the delivery of safe water services in
27 underserved areas, especially in the Province of Antique. Toward this end, the State
28 recognizes the need to adopt innovative funding mechanisms that respond to
29 persistent and recurring development challenges, enabling the design of solutions that
30 are tailor-fit to the specific geographic, environmental, and institutional contexts of
31 localities.

32 Sec. 3. *Coverage.* This Act shall apply to all local government units in the
33 Province of Antique, including all municipalities and their constituent barangays.

34 Sec. 4. *Establishment of the Antique Water Supply Enhancement Program (AWSEP).*
35 There is hereby established the Antique Water Supply Enhancement Program
36 (AWSEP), which shall finance and implement the construction, rehabilitation, and
37 expansion of water infrastructure, including but not limited to:

38 (a) Pumping stations;

- (b) Solar-powered water supply systems;
- (c) Water filtration and treatment facilities;
- (d) Groundwater recharge and rainwater harvesting systems;
- (e) Drought-resilient supply innovations; and
- (f) Transmission, distribution, and storage infrastructure.

Priority shall be given to water infrastructure projects identified in existing national and local master plans, investment programs, and feasibility studies. At all times, planning and project implementation shall account for geologic, watershed, and basin considerations, and not be solely based on political or administrative boundaries. Inter-LGU provision, joint undertakings, and infrastructure linkages shall be encouraged where appropriate.

Sec. 5. Implementing Agencies. The Provincial Government of Antique shall serve as the lead implementing agency of the AWSEP. All concerned municipal local government units shall likewise serve as co-implementing agencies within their respective jurisdictions, in coordination with the Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA), National Water Resources Board (NWRB), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the relevant water districts, and other related water agencies.

The Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev) and the Commission on Audit (COA) shall serve as oversight bodies for the implementation of this Act.

Sec. 6. Equitable Access and Non-Discrimination. — All programs, projects, and activities under this Act shall be implemented in a manner that ensures fair and equitable access to all municipalities and barangays in the Province of Antique, with priority given to areas with the greatest service gaps and technical need. The allocation of funds and selection of project sites shall be guided by objective, transparent, and data-driven criteria, and shall not be influenced by political affiliation, partisan interest, or changes in local leadership.

The program shall be designed to transcend political cycles and ensure continuity of service delivery regardless of electoral outcomes, in adherence to the principles of good governance, social justice, and the universal right to water.

Sec. 7. Barangay Water Supply Monitoring Committees. Each barangay within the covered municipalities shall establish a Barangay Water Supply Monitoring

1 Committee to assist in reporting supply disruptions, ensuring water quality, and
2 coordinating with local water providers. This committee shall operate for a period of
3 five (5) years from the effectivity of this Act, after which the responsibility for
4 monitoring and coordination shall be transferred to the concerned water district in the
5 area.

6 Sec. 8. *Appropriations.* The amount of One Billion Pesos (Php 1,000,000,000.00)
7 is hereby appropriated as the initial infusion for the implementation of this Act. The
8 fund shall be established as a Special Purpose Fund in the annual General
9 Appropriations Act (GAA).

10 The Provincial Government of Antique and its component LGUs shall likewise
11 allocate local counterpart funds annually. Other sources such as official development
12 assistance (ODA), corporate social responsibility (CSR) contributions, and private
13 sector support shall be encouraged.

14 A maximum of ten percent (10%) of the fund shall be allocated for monitoring
15 and evaluation (M&E), audit-related expenses, staffing, and manpower support. The
16 fund may likewise be used to finance relevant studies, research, and technical
17 assistance, particularly in pursuit of long-term water sustainability for the province.

18 Sec. 9. *Water Emergency and Drought Response Plan.* All water districts in Antique
19 shall prepare and maintain a Water Emergency and Drought Response Plan, to be
20 reviewed annually by the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office
21 (PDRRMO).

22 Sec. 10. *Reporting.* The Provincial Government of Antique shall prepare and
23 submit an annual report on the status of water infrastructure and services in the
24 province. The report shall include updates on the implementation of the program,
25 fund utilization, and monitoring and evaluation outcomes. This report shall be
26 prepared in coordination with the concerned water districts and submitted to
27 DEPED, COA, and Congress.

28 Sec. 11. *Procurement Modalities.* Procurement of goods, infrastructure, and
29 services under this Act shall be governed by the National Government Procurement
30 Act (NGPA), and may likewise be undertaken through Public-Private Partnership
31 (PPP) arrangements, official development assistance (ODA), or hybrid modalities as
32 may be deemed appropriate. For purposes of expediting implementation, projects

1 under this Act shall be exempt from Investment Coordination Committee (ICC)
2 approval requirements.

3 Sec. 12. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is declared
4 unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall
5 remain in full force and effect.

6 Sec. 13. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, executive orders, rules, and regulations
7 inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

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11 Approved,
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