

TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
First Regular Session

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

House Bill No. 2480

Introduced by Hon. Antonio B. Legarda, Jr.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The ocean is Earth's life-support system. It regulates the climate, sustains biodiversity, and fuels the global economy. Covering over 70% of the planet's surface,¹ it absorbs 30% of carbon dioxide emissions and over 90% of excess atmospheric heat, making it the world's largest carbon sink. It also produces more than half the oxygen we breathe.²

Beyond climate regulation, the ocean is fundamental to global food security and economic stability. It provides 15% of all animal protein consumed globally and serves as the primary protein source for over 3 billion people.³ According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the estimated market value of marine and coastal resources—including emerging ocean industries—reaches US\$3 trillion

¹ Retrieved June 26, 2025, from <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/why-care-about-ocean.html>

² Retrieved June 26, 2025, from <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/climate-issues/ocean>

³ Retrieved June 26, 2025, from:

– <https://www.un.org/en/desa/5-reasons-you-should-care-about-our-ocean>

– <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/66538eba-9c85-4504-8438-c1cf0a0a3903/content/sofia/2024/executive-summary.html>

annually, representing 5% of global GDP and supporting the livelihoods of more than 3 billion people.⁴

As an archipelagic nation of 7,641 islands with over 36,000 kilometers of coastline, the Philippines is one of the most ocean-rich countries in Southeast Asia, with a maritime domain of approximately 2.2 million square kilometers.⁵ Situated at the heart of the Coral Triangle, the country is a global epicenter of marine biodiversity, home to 460 coral species, over 2,800 marine fish species, and expansive mangrove and seagrass ecosystems.⁶

From 2018 to 2022, the ocean economy contributed an average of ₱787 billion annually, equivalent to 4.05% of national GDP. In 2023, fisheries production alone was valued at ₱328.74 billion and supported over 2.2 million jobs, accounting for 5.27% of total employment.⁷

Despite this vast ecological and economic wealth, our marine ecosystems are under mounting pressure. Overfishing, marine pollution, plastic waste, coastal overdevelopment, and climate change are causing ecosystem collapse, threatening food security, biodiversity, and coastal livelihoods. The 2024 Ocean Health Index gave the Philippines a score of 59 out of 100, ranking 197th out of 220 countries and territories – well below the global average of 69.⁸ These signal severe ecological stress and governance gaps.

Given these escalating threats, a unified, science-based, and forward-looking governance framework is urgently needed. The Blue Economy Bill responds to this challenge by establishing a development paradigm that prioritizes long-term

⁴ Retrieved June 26, 2025, from:

– <https://www.un.org/en/desa/5-reasons-you-should-care-about-our-ocean>
– <https://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/SecretaryGeneral/Pages/Philippine-Maritime-.aspx>
– https://transactions.nast.ph/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2022_RVAzanza.pdf

⁵ Retrieved June 26, 2025, from <https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2025/01/27/2417103/pinas-may-7641-na-isl>,

⁶ Retrieved June 26, 2025, from:

– <https://www.thegef.org/news/coral-triangle-building-capacity-marine-protection-local-government-units-philippines>
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https://oneocean.org/flash/philippine_biodiversity.html#:~:text=In%201953%2C%20Herre%20recorded%201%2C815%20marine%20fish,reef%2Dassociated%2C%20169%20pelagic%2C%20and%20336%20deepwater%20species.

⁷ Retrieved June 26, 2025, from

https://web.senate.gov.ph/publications/SEPO/SEPO_Policy%20Brief_Blue%20Economy_final.pdf

⁸ Retrieved June 26, 2025, from <https://oceanhealthindex.org/regions/philippines/>

stewardship over short-term extraction, aligning ecological integrity with inclusive national growth.

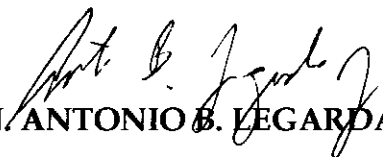
At its core, the bill creates a Blue Economy Council, which will coordinate national government agencies, local governments, coastal communities, civil society, and the private sector. Through the institutionalization of a National Marine Spatial Plan, it sets a roadmap for the coordinated use, protection, and sustainable management of marine and coastal resources.

The bill further:

1. Mainstreams ecosystem-based management and natural capital accounting;
2. Promotes sustainable fisheries, marine renewables, aquaculture, ecotourism, and circular economy models;
3. Strengthens protection of endangered species, marine protected areas, and critical habitats;
4. Empowers local governments as frontline stewards of marine resources;
5. Enhances inter-agency coordination to reduce policy fragmentation;
6. Supports blue finance, marine research, and capacity-building for adaptive governance.

The Blue Economy Bill is a nation-building agenda. It recognizes that our seas are not merely zones for extraction, but living ecosystems that sustain our identity, economy, and future. Enacting this measure is not only a strategic policy response—it is a moral commitment to intergenerational equity, ensuring that the bounty of our oceans continues to support all Filipinos, now and for generations to come.

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.

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MARINE ECOSYSTEMS AND RESOURCES

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in session
assembled:*

CHAPTER I
GENERAL PROVISION

SECTION. 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Blue Economy Act".

Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It shall be the policy of the State to:

- (a) Adopt blue economy as a framework for 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

- 1 public understanding and respect of the value of our coasts and oceans
2 to build a strong foundation for social responsibility;
- 3 (d) Enrich scientific understanding of ocean, marine, and coastal
4 ecosystems, the benefits we gain from these, their naturally changing
5 extent and conditions and the causes thereof; and use the best available
6 scientific knowledge to inform decisions affecting our coasts and
7 oceans, and to enhance our capacity to respond and adapt to changing
8 ocean environments;
- 9 (e) Exercise rights and jurisdiction, and enjoyment of freedom of the high
10 seas, in accordance with applicable international laws;
- 11 (f) Strategically address the factors that adversely affect the oceans and
12 the living and non-living resources that comprise our seas, turning
13 threats into opportunities and preventing further harm to all water
14 bodies including land-based pollution, biodiversity loss, reclamation,
15 and climate change;
- 16 (g) Ensure a whole-of-nation approach and a comprehensive and
17 integrated framework for the stewardship of our coasts and oceans to
18 facilitate cohesive action of the National Government, local authorities,
19 academe, civil society organizations, indigenous peoples, local
20 communities, and the private sector, to secure our people's safe access
21 to, enjoyment of, and opportunities to invest in sustaining their
22 benefits from our blue economy;
- 23 (h) Uphold marine science as a foundation of maritime governance,
24 ensuring that all rules, policies, and plans governing the use of coastal
25 and marine resources will be based on sound scientific understanding
26 of the marine environment; and
- 27 (i) Uphold the value of natural ecosystems and their irreplaceability,
28 thereby explicitly excluding reclamation and other activities that
29 remove, replace, or destroy coastal ecosystems as activities that
30 advance a blue economy.

1 Sec. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

- 2 (a) *Aquaculture* refers to fishery operations involving all forms of raising
3 and culturing fish and other fishery species in fresh, brackish, and
4 marine water areas;
- 5 (b) *Aquasilviculture* refers to a multi-purpose production system that
6 allows the production of fish in a mangrove reforestation project;
- 7 (c) *Blue economy* refers to the practical ocean-based economic model using
8 green infrastructure and technologies, innovative financing
9 mechanisms, and proactive institutional arrangements for meeting the
10 twin goals of protecting our oceans and coasts and enhancing its
11 potential contribution to sustainable development, including
12 improving human well-being, and reducing environmental risks and
13 ecological scarcities;
- 14 (d) *Coast* refers to the interface where the land meets the ocean,
15 encompassing shoreline environments as well as adjacent coastal
16 waters. Its components can include river deltas, coastal plains,
17 wetlands, beaches and dunes, reefs, mangroves forests, lagoons, and
18 other coastal features;
- 19 (e) *Ecosystem services* refer to the benefits supplied by the functions of
20 ecosystems and received by humanity and all elements of living
21 systems, which support life systems on the planet. Ecosystem services
22 consist of provisioning, regulating, maintenance, and cultural services;
- 23 (f) *Environmental sustainability* refers to the responsible use of coastal,
24 marine, and freshwater resources that protects the marine ecosystem
25 from harmful effects and degradation. Environmental sustainability
26 includes stewardship by the government and local communities to
- 27 (1) prevent, reduce, and control pollution of the coastal,
28 freshwater, and marine environment;
- 29 (2) mitigate the impacts of climate change; and
- 30 (3) protect biodiversity;

- 1 (g) *Fishing* refers to the taking of fishery species by passive or active gear
2 for trade, business, and profit beyond subsistence or sports fishing, to
3 be further classified as:
- 4 (1) Small-scale commercial fishing – fishing with passive or active
5 gear utilizing fishing vessels of 3.1 gross tons (gt) up to 20 gt;
6 (2) Medium-scale commercial fishing – fishing utilizing active gears
7 and vessels of 20.1 gt up to 150 gt; and
8 (3) Large commercial fishing – fishing utilizing active gears and
9 vessels of more than 150 gt.
- 10 (h) *Integrated marine and coastal area management* refers to coordinated and
11 sustainable management of coastal and marine resources, and a
12 participatory process for planning and decision-making to prevent,
13 control, or mitigate adverse impacts of human activities to the marine
14 and coastal environment, biodiversity, and climate, and to contribute
15 to the restoration of degraded coastal areas, protection of habitats, and
16 reduction of conflicts among various stakeholders in order to pursue
17 sustainable and inclusive growth, support jobs and livelihood, and
18 enhance food, energy and water security, climate resilience, and well-
19 being;
- 20 (i) *Investment promotion agencies* refer to government entities created by
21 law, executive order, decree, or other issuance, in charge of promoting
22 investments, granting and administering tax and non-tax incentives,
23 or overseeing the operations of the different economic zones and
24 freeports in accordance with their respective special laws;
- 25 (j) *Land-based pollution* refers to municipal, industrial, and agricultural
26 wastes and run-off, including, but not limited to, sewage and waste
27 water, persistent organic pollutants (including pesticides), heavy
28 metals, oils, nutrients, sediments, and plastic wastes, whether brought
29 by rivers or discharged directly into coastal waters;
- 30 (k) *Marine resources* refer to the diverse range of living and non-living
31 components found within marine ecosystems, including oceans, seas,
32 and coastal areas;

- 1 (l) *Marine spatial planning* refers to the public process of analyzing and
2 allocating the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in
3 marine areas to achieve ecological, economic, and social objectives. It
4 is a practical way to create and establish a more rational organization
5 of marine space and its uses to balance the demand for development
6 with the need to protect marine ecosystems, and to achieve social and
7 economic objectives in an open and planned way;
- 8 (m) *Maritime zones* refer to (1) the maritime zones of the Philippine
9 archipelago comprising of internal waters, archipelagic waters,
10 territorial sea, contiguous zone, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and
11 continental shelf; and (2) the respective maritime zones, as
12 appropriate, of all other territories over which the Philippines has
13 sovereignty or jurisdiction, in accordance with the 1987 Constitution
14 and international law, particularly the 1982 United Nations
15 Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS);
- 16 (n) *Ocean accounting* refers to a statistical framework that guides the
17 compilation and integration of a series of standardized and regular
18 measurements of stocks and flows of ocean economic, societal, and
19 environmental components through specific accounting table groups
20 and comprehensive indicators critical for informed and evidence-
21 based decisions;
- 22 (o) *Ocean-based activities* refer to activities that are undertaken in the ocean,
23 such as those relating to fisheries and aquaculture, exploration,
24 drilling and production of offshore oil, gas, and ocean energy, mining,
25 desalination, shipping and marine transportation, shipbuilding and
26 repair, port operations, marine tourism including management of
27 tourist resorts, communication, marine construction, maritime
28 insurance and law enforcement, or maritime technical services;
- 29 (p) *Ocean-related activities* refer to activities that use products from the
30 ocean such as seafood processing, marine biotechnology, chemicals
31 and salt production, and produce products and services for the ocean
32 and for ocean based activities;

- (q) *Ocean literacy* refers to an understanding of the ocean's influence on humans, and human influence on the ocean, as well as the linkage of ocean and climate and its effect on humans, water, and ecosystems;
- (r) *Reclamation* refers to any project, permitted or otherwise, that dumps fill materials from another place into a coastal or marine area to form new land, thereby completely obliterating the marine habitat and changing the hydrology of the area, whether pursued for public or private purposes; and
- (s) *Subsistence fishing* refers to fishing for personal consumption or traditional/ceremonial purposes.

Sec. 4. *Scope of Application.* – For purposes of this Act, the Philippines shall, in accordance with international law, exercise sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction, as appropriate, in internal waters, archipelagic waters, the territorial sea, contiguous zone, EEZ, and continental shelf, herein collectively referred to as “coastal and marine zones”, including its seabed and subsoil, and any and all maritime features within the maritime zones now known or to be known in the future.

CHAPTER II

BLUE ECONOMY COUNCIL

Sec. 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, integrated marine and coastal area management, and ecosystem-based management of coastal and marine resources.

Sec. 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 Economy, Planning, and Development as co-vice chairperson;
- (d) The Secretary of National Defense as member;
- (e) The Secretary of Foreign Affairs as member;

- (f) The Secretary of Justice as member;
- (g) The Secretary of the Interior and Local Government as member;
- (h) The Secretary of Agriculture as member;
- (i) The Secretary of Tourism as member;
- (j) The Secretary of Transportation as member;
- (k) The Secretary of Trade and Industry as member;
- (l) The Secretary of Energy as member;
- (m) The Secretary of Science and Technology as member;
- (n) The Secretary of Finance as member; and
- (o) The Secretary of Public Works and Highways as member.

The Department Secretaries may designate an Undersecretary, whose portfolio covers matters directly or principally relating to the development or management of coastal and marine resources and ecosystems, if applicable, to sit in a permanent capacity, and whose acts shall be considered the acts of his or her principal. Majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

Sec. 7. Mandates, Powers, and Functions of the Blue Economy Council. – The Council shall be responsible for formulating a clear, coherent, and comprehensive policy framework and strategic action plan on blue economy. It shall:

- (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 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; and
- (q) Perform other functions as may be necessary for the implementation of this Act.

Sec. 8. *Secretariat.* – A Secretariat to the Council shall be established within the Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev), 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 DEPDev Secretary. The Executive Director III shall have at least seven (7) years of experience and practice in the fields of marine science and research, blue economy and ecosystem-based management of coastal and marine resources, environmental economics, environmental accounts, and financial analysis.

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

6 The Secretariat shall have the following functions:
7

- 8 (a) Provide secretariat support to the Council, including the preparation
9 of draft strategies, priorities, and other outputs to be adopted by the
10 Council;
- 11 (b) Consult with experts who can offer insights on blue economy and
12 ecosystem-based management of coastal and marine resources
13 policymaking and priority setting;
- 14 (c) Coordinate with various agencies of the government, private sector,
15 academe, scientific community, civil society organizations, indigenous
16 peoples, local communities, and the public;
- 17 (d) Design and implement a blue economy development program and
18 promote its use and adoption in the government bureaucracy;
- 19 (e) Develop recommendations for consideration by the Council; and
- 20 (f) Perform other functions as may be directed by the Council.

21 Sec. 9. *Support Agencies.* - The following agencies shall provide material or
22 technical support to the Council, as may be necessary:

- 23 (a) Climate Change Commission (CCC);
- 24 (b) Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP);
- 25 (c) Board of Investments (BOI);
- 26 (d) Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC);
- 27 (e) Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA);
- 28 (f) National Mapping and Resources Information Authority (NAMRIA);
- 29 (g) Environmental Management Bureau (EMB);
- 30 (h) Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB);
- 31 (i) Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR);
- 32 (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); and
(x) Investment promotion agencies.

In order to ensure the efficient and effective discharge of its responsibilities, the Council may create working groups and call upon other departments, bureaus, offices, and instrumentalities of the Government, and 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

Sec. 10. *Policy Development Framework on Blue Economy.* - The Council shall, within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, 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 and social benefits

1 while building resilience to climate change and without compromising the safety of
2 our marine ecosystems. The Framework shall be subject to mandatory review and
3 modification every five (5) years.

4 Sec. 11. *Components of the Policy Framework on Blue Economy.* – The Framework
5 shall include the following components:

- 6 (a) Review of all existing policies, plans, programs, projects, rules, and
7 regulations on ocean-based and ocean related activities;
- 8 (b) Adherence to international maritime laws;
- 9 (c) Analysis of current and emerging trends and changes in demography,
10 consumption, trade, energy, technology, environmental quality, and
11 climate that show the interaction between the economy and the
12 environment, present and future threats and pressures on coastal and
13 marine environments, and damage estimation;
- 14 (d) Environmental-economic accounting of coastal and marine assets,
15 living and non-living resources, and ecosystem services from coastal
16 and marine environments, including assessment of losses due to
17 degradation or major pollution events such as oil spills;
- 18 (e) The Integrated Marine and Coastal Area Management (IMCAM)
19 framework to address human impact on marine and coastal biological
20 diversity, and promote the conservation and sustainable use of this
21 biodiversity. The national IMCAM framework shall consider the
22 following elements:
 - 23 (1) Capacity-building for stakeholders, at both national and local
24 levels, to apply relevant policy instruments to address legal
25 issues, institutionalize participatory processes, and develop
26 strategies to promote multidisciplinary and multisectoral
27 ecosystem-based management of coastal and marine
28 environments;
 - 29 (2) Protection of coastal and marine environments from negative
30 impacts, such as:

- (i) Alteration and destruction of coastal and marine habitats, particularly areas important for reproduction, coral reef systems, sea grass areas, and the sea bed;
 - (ii) Marine and land-based pollution;
 - (iii) Improper coastal land use, and the mismanagement of watersheds;
 - (iv) Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, by-catch especially of threatened species; and
- (3) Establishment of mechanisms and guidelines for research, monitoring, assessment, and valuation of coastal and marine ecosystems and resources, including indicators to measure natural and human-induced impacts;
- (f) Priority strategic and sustainable ocean-based and ocean-related economic activities, which may include:
 - (1) Fisheries, including commercial fishing, seafood processing, and commercial research and development, with preference to subsistence fisheries, as mandated under Section 7, Article XIII of the Constitution;
 - (2) Aquaculture, mariculture, and aquasilviculture;
 - (3) Marine and coastal tourism;
 - (4) Shipping, logistics, and maritime transport;
 - (5) Shipbuilding and ship repair;
 - (6) Production of renewable energy from marine sources;
 - (7) Installation of submarine cables and pipelines;
 - (8) Bioremediation, marine biotechnology, and bioprospecting;
 - (9) Desalination; and
 - (10) Underwater cultural heritage and maritime archaeology;
- (g) Guiding framework for IMCAM;
- (h) Guiding framework for blue finance;
- (i) Priority research and development agenda that maximizes opportunities created for pollution control, remediation, used water economics, and other industries that address threats;

- 1 (j) Promotion of ocean literacy and social responsibility towards the
2 protection of coastal and marine environments;
- 3 (k) Enhancement of the capability of the relevant agencies to enforce laws,
4 rules, and regulations to protect our marine wealth;
- 5 (l) Goals, targets, and indicators for growth, resilience, and sustainability
6 of priority strategic and sustainable coastal, ocean-based and ocean-
7 related activities, including their contribution to gross domestic
8 product, job creation, and livelihood;
- 9 (m) Scaling up the expansion and management of marine protected areas
10 (MPAs) through the protection and conservation of coastal and marine
11 ecosystems and resources;
- 12 (n) Mainstreaming of circular and resource efficiency approaches on the
13 blue economy framework to address the longstanding problem on
14 marine litter and microplastics;
- 15 (o) Integration of Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (CCAM)
16 strategies to help operationalize the country's Nationally Determined
17 Contributions (NDC); and
- 18 (p) Strengthening of management capacities of national and local
19 governments, including relevant sectors, to enhance the protection of
20 coastal and marine ecosystems and such other components as may be
21 determined by the Council.

22
23 **CHAPTER IV**
24 **OCEAN ACCOUNTING**
25

26 Sec. 12. *Ocean Accounting.* – The PSA shall undertake environmental-economic
27 accounting of the ocean, maritime ecosystems, and resources, based on the United
28 Nations System of Environmental-Economic Accounting and in accordance with
29 Republic Act No. 11995, otherwise known as the “Philippine Ecosystem and Natural
30 Capital Accounting System (PENCAS) Act”. Members of the Council and heads of
31 support agencies shall contribute data and submit reports on environmental-

1 economic accounts relating to their mandates including damage estimation and sea
2 level rise projections.

3 4 **CHAPTER V** 5 **DEVELOPMENT PLANNING** 6

7 Sec. 13. *Marine Spatial Planning.* – The Council shall undertake a nationwide
8 Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) with the participation of key stakeholders to identify
9 the spatial and temporal distribution of priority activities, uses and interactions
10 thereof in maritime zones, to reduce conflict among uses; facilitate complementary
11 uses; mitigate environmental impacts; prevent marine dead zones; rehabilitate dead
12 zones or non-attainment areas, if any; reduce wastage and ensure efficiency in marine
13 supply chains; preserve ecosystem services with the national MSP providing the
14 guiding principles and overarching delineations, and identifying the spatial and
15 temporal distribution of allowed, restricted, and regulated human activities and
16 priority uses and the interactions thereof in the coastal and marine zones; and
17 encourage and support the development of regional and local MSPs, which can
18 provide a level of granularity that can be linked to actionable investments, regulations
19 and enforcement, coastal and marine resource management and conservation
20 measures, and reduction of risks from climate change and natural disasters.

21 Sec. 14. *Blue Economic Zones.* – Investment promotion agencies shall encourage
22 the establishment of blue economic zones (BEZs) and the transformation of existing
23 special economic zones into BEZs. Registered business enterprises engaged in ocean-
24 based or ocean related activities as listed under the Strategic Investment Priority Plan
25 (SIPP) shall enjoy the privileges, benefits, advantages, or exemptions granted to
26 economic zones and freeports in accordance with their respective special laws,
27 Republic Act No. 11534 or the “Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises
28 Act (CREATE)”, and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

29 In addition, registered business enterprises operating within BEZs may also
30 qualify for financing under Republic Act No. 11293 or the “Philippine Innovation
31 Act”, as applicable.

1 Sec. 15. *Promotion of Sustainable Livelihoods and Employment.* – The Council shall,
2 in consultation with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the
3 Department of Agriculture-BFAR, and other concerned agencies and stakeholders,
4 develop a policy to ensure the enhancement and sustainability of municipal fisheries
5 as well as the promotion and generation of sustainable livelihood in the blue economy
6 towards the creation of more employment and equal opportunities for all, and to
7 strengthen investments in capacity building and skills enhancement programs, in
8 accordance with Republic Act No. 10771 or the “Philippine Green Jobs Act of 2016”.
9

10 **CHAPTER VI** 11 **BLUE FINANCE** 12

13 Sec. 16. *Role of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.* – In the exercise of its regulatory
14 powers over financial institutions, the BSP shall provide an enabling regulatory
15 environment to promote the development of the country’s blue economy, in line with
16 its sustainable finance framework and considering international standards and best
17 practices.

18 Sec. 17. *Role of Securities and Exchange Commission.* – The SEC shall encourage
19 the issuance of blue bonds, the proceeds of which will be exclusively applied to
20 finance or refinance, in part or in full, eligible blue Programs, Activities, and Projects
21 (PAPs) in accordance with SEC guidelines, and ASEAN Green Bonds Standards and
22 Green Bonds Principles, as developed and may be revised from time to time by the
23 SEC, the ASEAN Capital Markets Forum and the International Capital Market
24 Association. All designated blue PAPs must provide clear benefits to ocean health and
25 the blue economy and must contribute substantially to United Nations Sustainable
26 Development Goals 6 and 14, which shall be assessed together with compliance with
27 environmental laws and standards, and, where feasible, quantified by the corporation
28 that will issue the blue bonds.

29 The eligibility of these blue PAPs shall be subject to the guidelines to be issued
30 by the SEC.

31 Sec. 18. *Role of Government Financial Institutions.* – The Land Bank of the
32 Philippines and the Development Bank of the Philippines shall provide credit to

enterprises engaged in strategic and sustainable ocean-based or ocean related activities.

CHAPTER VII

PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF COASTAL AND MARINE RESOURCES

Sec. 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 in accordance with 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.

Sec. 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 vehicle monitoring system. Further, the Council shall act as the coordinating and monitoring arm of the government in ensuring other government agencies’ compliance with these laws.

CHAPTER VIII

ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

1 Sec. 21. *Role of Local Government Units (LGUs).* – Cities and municipalities shall
2 continue to exercise jurisdiction over municipal waters, pursuant to Republic Act No.
3 7160, as amended, and Republic Act No. 8550, as amended. Consistent with this
4 mandate, LGUs in coastal and marine areas shall act as the frontline agencies in the
5 formulation, planning, and implementation of the IMCAM framework in their
6 respective jurisdictions. The LGUs shall develop their local Marine Spatial Plan in
7 accordance with the National Maritime Spatial Plan, and integrate them in their
8 Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Comprehensive Development Plan, and Annual
9 Investment Plan, ICM or Coastal Resource Management Plan, Climate Change Action
10 Plan, and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan, and opportunities such as
11 the National Sewage and Septage Management Plan and the funds under the Republic
12 Act No. 9275 or the “Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004”.

13 Sec. 22. *Inter-LGU Cooperation.* – Consistent with the provisions of Republic Act
14 No. 7160, as amended, LGUs may group themselves and consolidate or coordinate
15 their efforts, services, and resources for the accomplishment of the objectives of this
16 Act.

17 Sec. 23. *Local Government Power to Undertake Reclamation.* – Notwithstanding the
18 provisions of Presidential Decree No. 1899 and Republic Act No. 7160, as amended,
19 there shall be a presumption against the power of the local governments to reclaim
20 land from the foreshore, or oceans and coasts unless such reclamation is planned for
21 the purposes as defined under Presidential Decree No. 1899. Such presumption can
22 only be overturned if:

- 23 (a) There is an overriding public need and the reclaimed land is not for
24 private or exclusive development;
- 25 (b) The public need is cogent and convincing;
- 26 (c) There is no other means to meet the public need, other alternatives
27 having been analyzed in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
28 as required under Presidential Decree No. 1151;
- 29 (d) No private sale of lands is included unless it is to fund the project with
30 an overriding public need and buyers are required to continuously and
31 regularly pay to the municipality the ecosystem services from the
32 marine ecosystem lost to the reclamation; and

(e) Adjacent LGUs express no objection to the project. SEC. 24. Ecosystem Services. – The LGUs that satisfy the acceptability requirements in the foregoing section 19 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

Sec. 24. *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.

Sec. 25. *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.

Sec. 26. *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.

Sec. 27. *Construction.* – In the implementation of this Act, any conflict with the Republic Act No. 8550, as amended, shall be resolved in favor of the latter, to ensure

1 the ecological and environmental safeguards therein and with a presumption in favor
2 of subsistence fisherfolk.

3 Sec. 28. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is declared
4 unconstitutional, the remainder thereof not otherwise affected shall remain in full
5 force and effect.

6 Sec. 29. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders,
7 letters of instruction, proclamations, or administrative regulations that are
8 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified
9 accordingly: Provided, that any inconsistency with Republic Act No. 8550, as
10 amended, shall be construed in favor of the said law unless there is a cogent ecological
11 rationale for resolving the inconsistency in favor of this Act.

12 Sec. 31. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its
13 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

14 Approved,