



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



House Bill No. 4201

Introduced by CIBAC Party-List Representative
EDUARDO “BRO. EDDIE” C. VILLANUEVA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The fisheries sector plays a vital role in sustaining the economy and ensuring food security for millions of Filipinos. In 2023, the sector produced 4.26 million metric tons of fish and aquatic products valued at ₱328.74 billion.¹ According to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), over 2.29 million Filipinos were employed in fishing and aquaculture activities during the same year.²

Despite their indispensable contribution, fisherfolk remain among the poorest in the country. In 2023, 27.4% of fisherfolk lived below the poverty line—nearly twice the national poverty rate of 15.5%—placing them among the most disadvantaged sectors alongside farmers and indigenous peoples.^{3,4} Their average daily income stands at only ₱343.38, underscoring the urgent need for targeted state intervention.⁵

A major driver of their economic hardship is the high cost of fuel, which can account for up to 80% of fishing operation expenses.⁶ In early 2025, diesel prices rose by ₱4.80 per liter, increasing daily fuel expenses of small-scale operators by an estimated ₱144.00, or ₱4,320 per month.⁷ These rising costs threaten not only the

¹ BFAR. 2023 Philippine Fisheries Profile. Published in October 2024. Available at <https://www.bfar.da.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2023-Philippine-Fisheries-Profile.pdf> (Accessed on 05 July 2025).

² *Ibid.*

³ PSA. 2023 Full Year Official Poverty Statistics of the Philippines. Published in August 2024. Available at https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/phdsd/20230/o20FY%20Official%20Poverty%20Statistics%20Publication_15August2024.pdf (Accessed on 05 July 2025).

⁴ PSA. Poverty Incidence Declined from 2021 to 2023 in Ten Basic Sectors. Published in March 2025. Available at <https://psa.gov.ph/statistics/poverty> (Accessed on 05 July 2025).

⁵ PSA. Agriculture and Fisheries Indicators System: Employment and Wages (2019 - 2023). Published in November 2024. Available at https://psa.gov.ph/system/files/mainpublication/AFIS%20Employment%20and%20Wages%20in%20Agri%20and%20Fishing%202019-2023_esigned.pdf (Accessed on 03 July 2025).

⁶ Pamalakaya, as cited by Inquirer. Fisher group: Fuel subsidy not enough, seeks more fund to boost production. Published on 31 December 2023. Available at <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1881876/fisher-group-fuel-subsidy-not-enough-seeks-more-fund-to-boost-production> (Accessed on 05 July 2025).

⁷ Philippine Resource Center for Inclusive Development. How does the OH Price Hike affect the Filipino Consumer? Published on 05 February 2025. Available at <https://www.inklusbio.org/oil-price-hike/> (Accessed on 05 July 2025).

livelihood of fisherfolk but also the stability of local food supply chains, especially in coastal and rural communities where alternative livelihoods are scarce.

Recognizing these challenges, ₱75 million has been allocated under the 2025 General Appropriations Act for fuel assistance to fisherfolk.⁸ Building on this initiative, this bill seeks to institutionalize a monthly fuel subsidy of ₱1,000.00 for eligible municipal fisherfolk using motorized vessels. To ensure responsiveness to changing economic conditions, the subsidy amount shall be subject to annual adjustments based on inflation.

Beyond financial relief, the bill incorporates social protection mechanisms. Beneficiaries will be automatically enrolled in the National Health Insurance Program under PhilHealth and provided with micro-insurance coverage through the Social Security System (SSS). These measures will provide fisherfolk with critical support during illness, accidents, or economic disruptions.

This measure is not merely a financial lifeline. It is a strategic investment in food security, poverty alleviation, and economic resilience. By addressing the structural burdens faced by fisherfolk and extending meaningful support to one of the most vulnerable sectors of society, the proposed program will contribute to a more equitable and stable future for fisherfolk, their families, and the nation as a whole.

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


EDUARDO "BRÖ. EDDIE" C. VILLANUEVA

⁸ DBM. 2025 GAA - Department of Agriculture. Available at <https://www.dbm.gov.ph/wpcontent/uploads/GAA/GAA2025/VolumelA/DA/DA.pdf> (Accessed on 05 July 2025).



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AN ACT
PROVIDING A FUEL SUBSIDY FOR MUNICIPAL FISHERIES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** - This Act shall be known as the "*Pantawid Pambangka*
2 *Act.*"
3

4 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** - The State recognizes the crucial role of
5 municipal fisherfolk in ensuring the food security of the country. It is hereby declared
6 a policy of the State to provide support to municipal fisherfolk, in recognition of their
7 sacrifices and contributions to the nation, and in pursuit of the Constitutional mandate
8 to promote social justice in all phases of development.
9

10 **SEC. 3. The Pantawid Pambangka Program.** - There is hereby established the
11 Pantawid Pambangka Program, herein referred to as the Program, which shall provide
12 a fuel voucher worth at least One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00) per month to each
13 eligible beneficiary under this Act: Provided, That the amount shall be revised every
14 year to account for inflation. The Program shall be administered by the Department of
15 Agriculture (DA), through the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).
16

17 **SEC. 4. Beneficiaries.** - The beneficiaries of this Act shall be municipal fisherfolk
18 who fish within municipal waters, whether coastal or inland, and who operate a
19 motorized fishing vessel individually or through a fisherfolk organization, cooperative,
20 or association: Provided, That the beneficiaries are listed in the registry system of the
21 DA, mainly in the Municipal Fisherfolk Registration System (FishR): Provided, further,
22 That their fishing vessels are duly registered in the integrated boat registry system,
23 BFAR's Boat Registration, or the local government unit's boat registry system.
24

25 **SEC. 5. Convergence of Social Protection Programs.** - Beneficiaries of the
26 Program shall also be automatically enrolled and covered under the National Health
27 Insurance Program of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth). The

1 Social Security System (SSS) shall also provide micro-insurance mechanisms to
2 beneficiaries of the Program.

3
4 **SEC. 6. Appropriations.** - The amount necessary for the initial implementation
5 of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the DA.
6 Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this
7 Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

8
9 **SEC. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** - Within one hundred twenty
10 (120) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DA shall, in consultation with relevant
11 government agencies and stakeholders, promulgate the implementing rules and
12 regulations (IRR) to carry out the provisions of this Act.

13
14 Failure of the relevant government agencies to promulgate the IRR within the
15 specified period shall subject the heads of these government agencies to
16 administrative penalties under applicable civil service laws.

17
18 Should the IRR contain provisions that are contrary to this Act, the heads of the
19 government agencies responsible for such provision, when done in bad faith or with
20 gross negligence, shall be held administratively liable.

21
22 **SEC. 8. Separability Clause.** – If any portion or provision of this Act is declared
23 unconstitutional, the remainder hereof or any provisions not affected thereby shall
24 remain in force and effect.

25
26 **SEC. 9. Repealing Clause.** – Any law, presidential decree or issuance,
27 executive order, letter of instruction, rule, or regulation inconsistent with the provisions
28 of this Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

31
32 *Approved,*