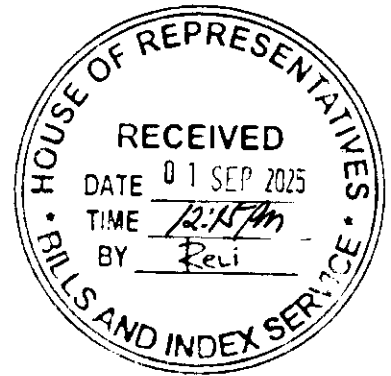


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4219**



Introduced by **Representative RAYMOND ADRIAN SALCEDA**

**AN ACT
DECLARING CACAO DEVELOPMENT AS A PRIORITY PROGRAM FOR BICOL
REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ESTABLISHING THE BICOL CACAO
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OFFICE UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE REGIONAL FIELD OFFICE V, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Cacao has emerged as one of the fastest-growing crops in the Philippines, with production value reaching ₱1.78 billion in 2024, a 49 percent increase from the previous year. The Bicol Region, with its fertile volcanic soil and favorable tropical climate, is uniquely positioned to lead in the production of premium cacao and world-class specialty chocolate.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. has emphasized the potential of “Bicol Cacao” as a globally recognized brand, backed by climate-smart farming, high-quality post-harvest processing, and community empowerment. Local champions, including Alea Chocolates, have already demonstrated that Bicol cacao can compete in the premium chocolate segment.

However, realizing this vision requires institutional coordination, sustained investment, and strategic planning. Fragmented support services and the absence of a dedicated regional coordinating office have hindered the scaling up of cacao production and processing in Bicol.

This bill responds to these challenges by declaring cacao development a priority program for Bicol regional economic development and establishing the Bicol Cacao Development Program Office under the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office V.

The Office will coordinate production, research, processing, and market development, serving as the focal point for all cacao initiatives in the region.

By institutionalizing cacao development in Bicol, the Philippines can position itself as a competitive player in the global cacao market, generate rural employment, raise farmers' incomes, and transform the region into a hub for premium chocolate.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this measure 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 “Bicol Cacao Development Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is the policy of the State to promote inclusive and sustainable agricultural growth, increase farmers’ incomes, and position the Bicol Region as a key contributor to national and global markets. Towards this end, cacao development is hereby recognized as a priority program for Bicol regional economic development, and institutional support shall be provided through a dedicated program office under the Department of Agriculture (DA).

SEC. 3. *Establishment of the Bicol Cacao Development Program Office.* There is hereby created a Bicol Cacao Development Program Office (BCDPO) under the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office V, which shall serve as the coordinating and implementing arm of the government’s cacao industry development initiatives in the Bicol Region.

SEC. 4. *Mandate and Functions.* The BCDPO shall have the following functions:

- (a) Formulate and implement a Bicol Cacao Industry Development Roadmap, aligned with the national cacao roadmap and responsive to the needs of smallholder farmers, processors, and exporters;
- (b) Provide technical and financial support for cacao production, post-harvest facilities, and processing centers;

- (c) Facilitate access to quality planting materials, farm inputs, and climate-resilient technologies;
- (d) Promote research, development, and innovation in cacao farming and processing, in partnership with state universities and colleges (SUCs) and research institutions;
- (e) Develop market linkages and branding strategies for “Bicol Cacao” as a globally recognized premium origin;
- (f) Coordinate with local government units, farmers’ cooperatives, and private sector partners to ensure inclusive value chain development;
- (g) Monitor and evaluate the performance of cacao programs and projects in the region.

SEC. 5. *Organizational Structure.* The BCDPO shall be headed by a Program Director designated by the Secretary of Agriculture from among qualified DA officials, and staffed by personnel assigned or seconded from existing plantilla positions in DA RFO V, subject to existing civil service rules. The Program Office may engage technical experts on contractual or consultancy basis as needed.

SEC. 6. *Funding.* The amount necessary to implement the provisions of this Act shall be sourced from the current appropriations of the Department of Agriculture. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Agriculture shall, in consultation with stakeholders, promulgate the implementing rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remaining provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of 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.

Approved,