

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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4333**



Introduced by **Representative RAYMOND ADRIAN SALCEDA**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT,
PROTECTION, AND SUSTAINABLE UTILIZATION OF SURFACE WATER
SOURCES, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Water security is one of the defining challenges of the Philippines in the twenty-first century. As population and economic activity expand, demand for water for agriculture, industry, and domestic consumption continues to rise. At the same time, climate change has intensified the variability of rainfall, leading to both prolonged droughts and destructive floods.

Surface water — rivers, lakes, reservoirs, springs, and wetlands — remains the country's largest potential source of sustainable water supply. The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) has estimated that the Philippines has around 146 billion cubic meters of surface water resources annually, yet only a fraction is harnessed for domestic water supply, irrigation, and renewable energy. Instead, over-dependence on groundwater has led to aquifer depletion, land subsidence, and saltwater intrusion in many regions.

The underdevelopment of surface water sources has also weakened resilience against disasters. Silted and degraded watersheds reduce the storage capacity of reservoirs. River systems clogged with sediment and encroachment overflow more easily. The lack of small impounding projects and catchments in upland areas wastes rainfall that could otherwise be stored for agriculture and domestic use.

This proposed measure seeks to institutionalize a National Program on Surface Water Sources Development to ensure that the country's rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and springs are systematically inventoried, protected, and harnessed for national development. The program will:

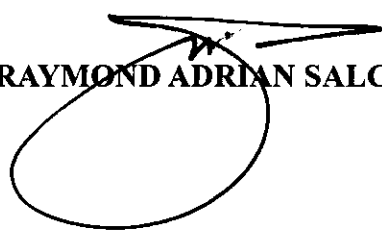
1. Conduct a comprehensive inventory and mapping of surface water sources nationwide;

2. Prioritize the multi-purpose development of rivers, lakes, and reservoirs for potable water, irrigation, flood control, fisheries, and renewable energy;
3. Establish water quality monitoring systems and safeguard watersheds and riparian zones from degradation;
4. Promote the construction of small water impounding projects, diversion dams, and rainwater harvesting facilities, especially in water-scarce areas;
5. Require local governments to integrate surface water development in their Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUPs) and Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAPs); and
6. Encourage private sector and cooperative participation in surface water projects, with access to incentives under the Renewable Energy Act and Green Jobs Act.

Funding for this program shall be sourced from the appropriations of concerned agencies, local government development funds, the People's Survival Fund, and the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund.

By strengthening the development of surface water sources, this measure will reduce dependence on groundwater, improve irrigation coverage, secure potable water supply, generate renewable energy, and enhance resilience to floods and droughts. It recognizes water as both an economic resource and a public good, ensuring that surface water development contributes to inclusive growth and climate adaptation.

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


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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 “Surface Water Sources Development Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is the policy of the State to ensure the sustainable management and development of surface water sources for water security, food production, energy generation, and disaster risk reduction. The State shall promote equitable access, prevent degradation, and integrate surface water management into national and local development planning.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* For purposes of this Act:

- (a) Surface water refers to water that collects on the surface of the ground, including rivers, lakes, reservoirs, springs, streams, ponds, and wetlands;
- (b) Watershed refers to a land area that channels rainfall and snowmelt into creeks, streams, and rivers, eventually to outflow points such as reservoirs, bays, and oceans;
- (c) Surface water development refers to the planning, construction, and management of facilities and programs to harness surface water for domestic, agricultural, industrial, or energy use; and
- (d) Integrated water resources management (IWRM) refers to a process that promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land, and related resources to maximize economic and social welfare equitably without compromising ecosystem sustainability.

SEC. 4. *National Program on Surface Water Sources Development.* There is hereby established a National Program on Surface Water Sources Development (NPSWSD) to be led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) through the National Water Resources Board (NWRB), in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Energy (DOE), and local government units (LGUs).

The Program shall:

- (a) Conduct an inventory and mapping of all surface water sources in the country;
- (b) Prioritize the development of rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and springs for potable water supply, irrigation, and renewable energy;
- (c) Promote multi-purpose water infrastructure for irrigation, flood control, fisheries, and eco-tourism;
- (d) Establish water quality monitoring systems and pollution control measures;
- (e) Protect watersheds, wetlands, and riparian zones from degradation and encroachment;
- (f) Develop small water impounding projects, diversion dams, and rainwater catchments in water-scarce areas; and
- (g) Integrate surface water development projects into LGU land use and development plans.

SEC. 5. *Role of Local Government Units (LGUs).* LGUs shall:

- (a) Identify and develop local surface water sources in coordination with the DENR and DPWH;
- (b) Protect watershed and riparian zones through reforestation and zoning ordinances;
- (c) Allocate a portion of their development funds for surface water projects, including barangay-level water harvesting systems; and
- (d) Establish community-based organizations to manage small-scale surface water facilities.

SEC. 6. *Incentives.*

- (a) LGUs and cooperatives that develop and maintain surface water facilities shall be eligible for financial assistance from national agencies and climate financing facilities;
- (b) Private sector investment in renewable energy or water supply projects using surface water shall be entitled to incentives under the Renewable Energy Act (RA 9513) and Green Jobs Act (RA 10771);

(c) Farmers adopting water-efficient irrigation practices shall be eligible for crop insurance premium discounts from the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC).

SEC. 7. *Funding.* The initial amount necessary to implement this Act shall be charged against the appropriations of the DENR, DPWH, DA, and NIA. Thereafter, the sums necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. LGUs may also access the People's Survival Fund (RA 10174) and their Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund for surface water projects.

SEC. 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DENR, in consultation with the DPWH, DA, DOE, and LGUs, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for its effective implementation.

SEC. 9. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 10. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, executive issuances, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are repealed or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,