

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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4335**



Introduced by **Representative RAYMOND ADRIAN SALCEDA**

**AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL GROUNDWATER PRESERVATION AND
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM, PROVIDING FOR THE SUSTAINABLE USE,
PROTECTION, AND RESTORATION OF GROUNDWATER RESOURCES, AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Groundwater is the hidden lifeline of the Philippines. It supplies more than fifty percent (50%) of the country's freshwater requirements and is the primary source of potable water for most urban centers and rural communities. It also sustains agricultural irrigation, industrial processes, and ecosystem services. Yet this vital resource is increasingly threatened by over-extraction, pollution, saltwater intrusion, and the lack of a comprehensive monitoring and preservation framework.

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) has reported that Metro Manila and other highly urbanized areas are already experiencing groundwater depletion, leading to declining water tables and land subsidence. In Bulacan and Pampanga, aquifer depletion has been linked to flooding and ground sinking. In coastal provinces, excessive pumping has allowed seawater to intrude into freshwater aquifers, reducing water quality and forcing communities to depend on costly alternatives.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has also raised concern over contamination of aquifers due to unregulated septic systems, industrial effluents, and agricultural runoff. At the same time, climate change is projected to reduce recharge rates due to longer dry spells, while increased rainfall intensity accelerates erosion and runoff instead of infiltration.

Groundwater cannot be managed by infrastructure alone. The country needs a comprehensive national program that integrates monitoring, regulation, recharge, and sustainable use. International experience demonstrates the value of artificial recharge methods

(rainwater harvesting, infiltration ponds, percolation tanks), community-based groundwater management, and the strict protection of recharge zones.

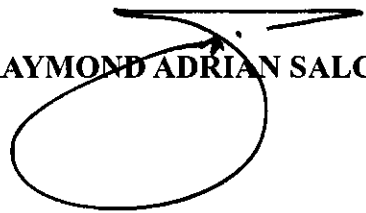
This proposed measure, to be known as the National Groundwater Preservation and Management Act, seeks to:

1. Establish a National Groundwater Preservation and Management Program under the DENR, in coordination with the NWRB, DPWH, DA, DOH, and local government units (LGUs);
2. Create a nationwide groundwater monitoring network to track water levels, extraction volumes, recharge, and quality, linked to LGU-managed well registries;
3. Declare and regulate critical groundwater areas, including moratoria on new wells where aquifers are at risk of depletion;
4. Promote artificial recharge and aquifer restoration using rainwater harvesting, infiltration ponds, and watershed rehabilitation;
5. Mandate LGUs to integrate groundwater preservation into their Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUPs) and Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAPs); and
6. Provide incentives for industries, cooperatives, and farmers who adopt water-saving technologies, aquifer recharge, and efficient irrigation systems.

Funding for the program shall be drawn from national appropriations for the DENR, DPWH, and NWRB, as well as climate financing facilities such as the People's Survival Fund and the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund.

By institutionalizing groundwater preservation, this Act ensures the sustainability of the nation's freshwater resources. It protects households, secures agriculture, reduces disaster risks from land subsidence and saltwater intrusion, and strengthens resilience against climate change.

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


RAYMOND ADRIAN SALCEDA

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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4335**

Introduced by **Representative RAYMOND ADRIAN SALCEDA**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL GROUNDWATER PRESERVATION AND
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM, PROVIDING FOR THE SUSTAINABLE USE,
PROTECTION, AND RESTORATION OF GROUNDWATER RESOURCES, AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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 “National Groundwater Preservation and Management Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to protect and conserve groundwater as a vital source of potable water, agricultural irrigation, industrial supply, and ecological balance. The State shall regulate its extraction, ensure sustainable recharge, prevent contamination, and integrate groundwater management into climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

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

- (a) Groundwater refers to water found beneath the surface of the ground, occupying the pores and crevices of soil, sand, and rock formations.
- (b) Aquifer refers to a geological formation that can store, transmit, and yield significant quantities of groundwater.
- (c) Groundwater recharge refers to the process of water infiltrating from the surface to replenish aquifers.
- (d) Over-extraction refers to the withdrawal of groundwater beyond the sustainable yield of an aquifer, leading to depletion or degradation.
- (e) Saltwater intrusion refers to the movement of saline water into freshwater aquifers due to excessive pumping or reduced recharge.

SEC. 4. *National Groundwater Preservation and Management Program.* There is hereby established a National Groundwater Preservation and Management Program (NGPMP) to be led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), National Water Resources Board (NWRB), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Health (DOH), and local government units (LGUs).

The Program shall:

- (a) Establish a nationwide groundwater monitoring network for water levels, quality, and recharge rates;
- (b) Designate critical groundwater areas subject to regulation, rehabilitation, or moratorium on new wells;
- (c) Promote artificial recharge methods such as rainwater harvesting, infiltration ponds, and percolation tanks;
- (d) Protect recharge zones from land conversion, pollution, and unsustainable development;
- (e) Regulate the drilling of new wells through permits, spacing requirements, and allowable abstraction limits;
- (f) Provide technical and financial assistance to LGUs and water districts to implement sustainable extraction and recharge projects; and
- (g) Promote the reuse of treated wastewater and water-saving technologies to reduce pressure on aquifers.

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

- (a) Incorporate groundwater preservation strategies in their Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUPs) and Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAPs);
- (b) Establish groundwater management committees to enforce local regulations on wells and extraction;
- (c) Allocate at least one percent (1%) of their development fund for groundwater recharge and monitoring projects; and
- (d) Maintain local databases of registered wells, water quality, and abstraction volumes, linked to the national database.

SEC. 6. *Incentives.*

- (a) Industries, cooperatives, and communities that adopt water recycling, aquifer recharge, or efficient irrigation technologies shall be eligible for tax incentives under the Green Jobs Act (RA 10771).

(b) Farmers practicing groundwater-saving irrigation methods (e.g., alternate wetting and drying for rice) shall be eligible for crop insurance premium discounts from the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC).

(c) LGUs with exemplary groundwater preservation programs shall be recognized under the Seal of Good Local Governance.

SEC. 7. *Funding.* The initial amount necessary to carry out this Act shall be charged against current appropriations of the DENR, DPWH, and NWRB. Thereafter, such sums as may be 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 groundwater preservation measures.

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