



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



TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 4468

Introduced by **Representative KATRINA REIKO CHUA - TAI**
1st District, Zamboanga City

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Zamboanga City anchors the Philippines' sardine industry, driving national production, processing, and consumption. Its eight major canneries and multiple processing plants provide critical employment for thousands and are essential to the livelihoods of MSMEs along the sardine value chain.

According to the National Fisheries Research and Development Institute (NFRDI), approximately 46% of the Philippines' total sardine production comes from the Zamboanga Peninsula, with Zamboanga City as its center. Between 2016 and 2020, the region recorded a total sardine catch of over 1.39 million metric tons, with *Sardinella lemuru* (tamban) comprising 70.7% of the total. The region's average annual catch of 300,000 metric tons, as confirmed by BFAR and the Philippine Statistics Authority, underlines its unmatched contribution to national food security and marine-based livelihoods.

However, the sardine industry faces challenges, including resource depletion, overfishing, climate change, outdated technology, and limited financial resources. Strengthening the Amended Fisheries Code (RA 10654) through science-based management and inclusive development is vital to addressing these threats across the sardine value chain.

This measure supports the National Fisheries Management Program (NFMP) and the Fisheries Code by establishing a scientific and sustainability-based strategy for the country's sardine industry. It adopts a multi-sectoral approach to address ecological, economic, and social gaps in sardine fisheries governance.

This legislative proposal designates Zamboanga City as the Sardines Capital of the Philippines in recognition of its substantial contributions to economic growth and employment. By supporting sustainable resource management aligned with RA 10654 and the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management, it enhances post-harvest processing, increases livelihood and credit support for marginalized fishers and MSMEs, and promotes capacity-building and innovation. Major benefits include expanded livelihood opportunities, improved product quality, targeted research and education, and

strengthened industry governance through the Sardines Industry Development Council and a Sardines Innovation, Processing, and Training Center.

Enacting this Act will strengthen the fisheries framework, advance the objectives of RA 10654, promote the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management, and protect the livelihoods, food supply, and marine biodiversity essential to millions.

IN VIEW OF THE FOREGOING, immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


KATRINA REIKO CHUA - TAI



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AN ACT

DECLARING ZAMBOANGA CITY AS THE SARDINES CAPITAL OF THE PHILIPPINES, STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SARDINE INDUSTRY, SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE USE, IMPROVING PROCESSING, PROVIDING LIVELIHOOD AND CREDIT SUPPORT, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Title. - This Act shall be known as the "Sardine Industry Development and Fisheries Management Act."

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is the policy of the State to conserve, protect, and manage the country's fishery and aquatic resources in a sustainable manner. Pursuant to the Amended Fisheries Code (RA 10654), the government shall ensure that fishery resources are developed and managed based on scientific data, equitable access, ecological integrity, and national food security objectives. The State further strengthens the National Fisheries Management Program by promoting regional fisheries innovation, research, and inclusive development, anchored on the principles of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) under the Department of Agriculture.

SECTION 3. Declaration as Sardines Capital. - Zamboanga City is hereby declared the Sardines Capital of the Philippines, in recognition of its leadership in sardine production, processing, and its strategic role in the fisheries economy. various species of small, oily fish commonly caught, processed, and consumed, with particular emphasis on *Sardinella lemuru* (tamban) and other commercially significant sardine species in the Philippines.

SECTION 4. Definition of Terms. - For purposes of this Act, the following terms are defined as:

"Sardines" shall refer to various species of small, oily fish commonly caught, processed, and consumed, with particular emphasis on *Sardinella lemuru* (tamban) and other commercially significant sardine species in the Philippines.

1 ***“The Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM)”*** refers to a strategy for
2 the integrated management of fisheries that considers the entire ecosystem, including
3 humans, to promote the sustainable use of aquatic resources, conserve biodiversity, and
4 maintain ecosystem health and productivity.

5 ***“MSMEs”*** shall refer to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises engaged in any activity
6 within the sardine value chain, including fishing, processing, trading, and ancillary
7 services.

8 ***“Sardines Industry Development Council (SIDC)”*** refers to the multi-sectoral body
9 established under this Act to coordinate sardine industry programs, policies, and
10 initiatives.

11 ***“The National Fisheries Management Program (NFMP)”*** refers to a government
12 program that aims to promote sustainable fisheries management, consistent with RA
10654 (Amended Fisheries Code).

13 ***“Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS)”*** shall refer to the activities and
14 systems used to ensure compliance with fisheries laws, regulations, and management
15 measures.

16 ***“Post-harvest processing”*** refers to the activities involved in handling, processing,
17 packaging, and preserving sardines from the time of catch until the product reaches the
consumer.

18 ***“Livelihood Support”*** shall refer to the financial, technical, and capacity-building
19 assistance aimed at improving income and employment opportunities for fisherfolk and
20 MSMEs.

21 ***“Stock assessment”*** refers to the scientific evaluation of the status of fish populations to
22 inform sustainable harvesting levels and management actions.

23 ***“Food Safety and Compliance”*** shall ensure that all processing and post-harvest
24 activities adhere to the standards and regulations set forth by the Food and Drug
25 Administration (FDA), thereby maintaining the safety, quality, and legal compliance of
26 food products.

27 **SECTION 5. Sardine Industry Development Council (SIDC).** - There is hereby
28 established a Sardines Industry Development Council (SIDC), tasked with coordinating all
29 sardine-related initiatives under this Act.

30 Composition:

- 31 • Department of Agriculture (DA) – Chair
- 32 • Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) – Co-Chair
- 33 • Department of Science and Technology (DOST)
- 34 • Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR)
- 35 • Commission on Higher Education (CHED)
- 36 • Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- 37 • Local Government Unit (LGU)
- 38 • Representatives from:
 - 39 a) Sardine processors
 - 40 b) Fisherfolk groups
 - 41 c) MSMEs
 - 42 d) Academic and research institutions

1 The Council shall develop a Sardines Industry Development Roadmap consistent with
2 the National Fisheries Management Program (NFMP) and Republic Act 10654 (Amended
3 Fisheries Code); promote science-based fisheries management and stock assessment; and
4 coordinate research and development, processing innovation, training, and marine conservation
5 initiatives. It shall also ensure compliance with food safety standards and regulations, in
6 coordination with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), particularly in post-harvest
7 handling and processing. Furthermore, the Council shall promote fair access to programs and
8 support for marginalized fisherfolk and MSMEs, and monitor compliance with environmental,
9 food safety, and competition laws and regulations across the sardine value chain.

10 **SECTION 6. *Alignment with the Philippine Competition Law.*** - All actions under this
11 Act shall comply with RA 10667 (Philippine Competition Act). The SIDC shall collaborate
12 with the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) to ensure that industry programs promote
13 open markets, prevent anti-competitive practices, and encourage MSME participation in the
14 sardines sector.

15 **SECTION 7. *Strengthened Sustainable Sardines Management Program.*** - The DA-
16 BFAR, in coordination with the SIDC, shall implement a Sustainable Sardines Management
17 Program anchored on **EAFM principles**, which The Department of Agriculture - Bureau of
18 Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR), in coordination with the SIDC, shall implement
19 a Sustainable Sardines Management Program anchored on Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries
20 Management (EAFM) principles, which shall include:

- 21 • Science-based seasonal fishing closures;
- 22 • Marine spatial planning and protected area support;
- 23 • Monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) activities;
- 24 • Training in climate-resilient and responsible fishing practices;
- 25 • Public education on marine biodiversity and fisheries conservation; and
- 26 • Integration of ecosystem considerations in stock assessment and fisheries management;
 - 27 1. Establish a Sardines Innovation, Processing, and Training Center to:
 - 28 2. Provide Research and Development, processing support, and technology
 - 29 transfer;
 - 30 3. Assist MSMEs in improving product quality, packaging, and food safety;
 - 31 4. Conduct training programs and promote local innovation;
 - 32 5. Partner with academic institutions for ongoing research and workforce
 - 33 development.

34 **SECTION 8. *Sardines Innovation, Processing, and Training Center.*** - The DTI, in
35 partnership with Food and Drugs Authority (FDA), DOST, CHED, TESDA, and the LGU, shall
36 establish a Sardines Innovation, Processing, and Training Center to provide Research and
37 Development, processing support, and technology transfer, assist MSMEs in improving product
38 quality, packaging, and food safety, conduct training programs and promote local innovation,
39 and partner with academic institutions for ongoing research and workforce development.

40 **SECTION 9. *Credit Assistance and Livelihood Support.*** - DA, in partnership with the
41 Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP),
42 LandBank of the Philippines (LBP), Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), and
43 government financial institutions (GFIs), shall implement credit and livelihood support
44 programs for: a) Fisherfolk and MSMEs in the sardine sector; b) Women, youth, and
45 marginalized communities ; c) Sardine value chain improvement and enterprise resilience, in
46 coordination with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the Department of
47 Agriculture (DA), shall:

- 1 1. Support fisheries science education and curriculum development;
- 2 2. Fund Research and Development on sardine species, stock health, and value chain
- 3 efficiency;
- 4 3. Provide scholarships and training opportunities for students and workers;
- 5 4. Promote community extension services and knowledge transfer.

6 **SECTION 10. *Support for Education and Research.*** - CHED, in partnership with
7 DOST and DA, shall support fisheries science education and curriculum development, fund
8 Research and Development on sardine species, stock health, and value chain efficiency, provide
9 scholarships and training opportunities for students and workers, and promote community
10 extension services and knowledge transfer.

11 **SECTION 11. *Appropriations.*** – Funds necessary for the implementation of this Act
12 shall be sourced from the General Appropriations Act of DA, supplemented by official
13 development assistance (ODA), public-private partnerships, and grants.

14 **SECTION 12. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).*** – The DA, within 90 days
15 from the effectivity of this Act, shall issue the IRR in consultation with relevant stakeholders.
16 The IRR shall ensure that all programs under this Act align with RA 10654, RA 10667, and the
17 National Fisheries Management Program, including adherence to EAFM principles.

18 **SECTION 12. *Separability Clause.*** – If any of the sections or provisions of this Act is
19 held invalid, all other provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid.

20 **SECTION 13. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, issuances, rules and regulations
21 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

22 **SECTION 14. *Effectivity Clause.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
23 complete publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

24 *Approved,*