

TWENTIETH CONGRESS)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City



HOUSE BILL NO. 4553

Introduced by Honorable Celso G. Regencia

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Iligan City's abundant water resources—including rivers, streams, and inland water systems—make it highly suitable for aquaculture development. Despite this natural advantage, the city has no dedicated facility for large-scale fish breeding, research, and the promotion of sustainable aquaculture practices.

This measure seeks to establish a Freshwater Aquaculture Center in Iligan City to serve as a hub for fish breeding, research, and training. The proposed facility will strengthen food security, provide technical support to fisherfolk and aquaculture stakeholders, and open new livelihood opportunities for local residents.

While Republic Act No. 11401 created a similar hatchery in Balo-i, Lanao del Norte, a separate center in Iligan City is necessary. Iligan City's freshwater ecosystems are distinct due to their fast-flowing, oxygen-rich rivers fed by the Agus River system and numerous waterfalls, creating ideal conditions for breeding high-value and native fish species. Unlike nearby areas, Iligan's cooler water temperatures, stable flow, and abundant clean water make it uniquely suited for specialized and sustainable aquaculture practices. As such, the center in Iligan will complement, rather than duplicate, the functions of the Balo-i facility by focusing on species and production systems that are most suitable for the city's environment.

In view of its potential to support livelihoods, boost food production, and stimulate economic activity in the region, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



CELSO GOMERA REGENCIA
Lone District, Iligan City

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE ILIGAN CITY FRESHWATER AQUACULTURE
CENTER FOR MULTI-SPECIES BREEDING, RESEARCH, AND HATCHERY
DEVELOPMENT, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. *Establishment of the Iligan City Freshwater Aquaculture Center.* — There is hereby established, under the supervision of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) of the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Iligan City Freshwater Aquaculture Center in the Lone District of Iligan, for the purpose of breeding, rearing, and producing fingerlings of various freshwater fish species, as well as conducting aquaculture research and training.

SECTION 2. *Site Selection.* — The specific venue of the aquaculture center within Iligan City shall be identified by the BFAR in close coordination with the City Government of Iligan, considering factors such as proximity to freshwater sources, ecological sustainability, accessibility, and counterpart commitments of the local government unit (LGU).

SECTION 3. *Environmental Compliance.* — Before construction and operation, the establishment of the center shall fully comply with the environmental standards, permits, and clearances required by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and other relevant agencies.

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) shall be conducted to ensure ecological safeguards and sustainable aquaculture practices.

SECTION 4. *Function of the Center.* — The center shall undertake the following functions:

1. Breeding and Hatchery Operations – Produce high-quality fry and fingerlings of multiple freshwater fish species for distribution to fisherfolk, cooperatives, and local entrepreneurs at reasonable costs.
2. Research and Development – Conduct studies to improve breeding techniques, develop disease-resistant species, and enhance aquaculture productivity.
3. Technology Transfer and Training – Provide capacity-building programs, workshops, and technical assistance to local stakeholders.
4. Restocking of Public Waters – Assist in replenishing freshwater ecosystems in Iligan City and nearby areas by releasing fry and fingerlings into rivers, lakes, and reservoirs.

SECTION 5. *Local Advisory Council.* — To ensure effective implementation, a Local Advisory Council shall be constituted and chaired by the BFAR Regional Director. Its members shall include:

1. The Congressman of the Lone District of Iligan or authorized representative;
2. The City Mayor of Iligan or authorized representative;
3. The Chairperson of the City Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council or equivalent;
4. A representative from the City Agriculture Office;
5. Representatives from local fisherfolk and aquaculture cooperatives; and
6. At least one representative from an academic or research institution based in Iligan City.

The council shall assist the BFAR in setting priorities, reviewing programs, and ensuring that community needs are integrated into the center's operations.

SECTION 6. *Management and Transfer.* — The BFAR shall establish and operate the center during its initial years. Within two (2) years from the start of operations, the BFAR shall conduct capacity-building and training for personnel designated by the City Government of Iligan.

Upon completion of the training period, management of the center shall be formally turned over to the Iligan LGU through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), without prejudice to continued technical assistance from the BFAR.

SECTION 7. *Appropriations.* — The Secretary of Agriculture shall include in the DA's budget proposal the amount necessary for the establishment and operation of the Iligan City Freshwater Aquaculture Center. Such amounts shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act until the center becomes fully operational.

SECTION 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* — Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the BFAR, in coordination with the City Government of Iligan and other concerned agencies, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement this Act effectively.

SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.* — If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 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,