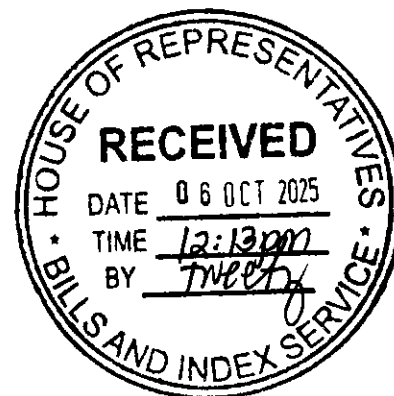


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **5129**



Introduced by Representative LEILA M. DE LIMA

AN ACT
CREATING A CONGRESSIONAL COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES,
AND FOOD SECURITY TO REVIEW, ASSESS, AND EVALUATE THE STATE OF
PHILIPPINE AGRICULTURE AND RECOMMEND INNOVATIVE AND TARGETED
POLICY REFORMS IN AGRICULTURE, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The agriculture and fisheries sector in the Philippines is going through a steady decline, as exhibited by the sector's decreasing productivity and competitiveness and diminishing GDP contribution. Current trends, such as the aging population of farmers and fisherfolk due to reduced income and the country's increased dependence on importation due to lower agricultural yields, do not paint a positive picture for the future of the country's agricultural and fisheries sector.

Particularly concerning is the direct impact of a dying agricultural and fisheries sector on the food security of the Filipino people. As such, timely, well-informed, comprehensive, decisive, and innovative measures must be promptly taken to address the challenges confronting the agricultural and fisheries sector and safeguard the country's food security now and in the future.

This bill proposes the creation of a Congressional Commission on Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food Security, or the AGRICOM, to address the long-standing and intersectional issues plaguing the country's agricultural and fisheries sector. Among these issues are the fragmented and uncoordinated system of supporting the agriculture sector, the lack of adequate and institutionalized mechanisms of resource-generation, and the disjointed implementation of agricultural laws and policies, thus leading to conflicting mandates, redundant programs, and inefficient budget allocation.

The AGRICOM, acting as a central, independent body, shall provide cohesive and comprehensive solutions to the sector's complex and intertwined problems through the following:

- Conducting a comprehensive review and assessment of all existing agricultural and fisheries programs, policies, and projects across all national agencies in the country;
- Identifying policy conflicts and program redundancies to formulate a more efficient and integrated framework;
- Developing targeted, measurable, and time-bound policy recommendations aimed at increasing the sector's productivity, competitiveness, and capacity; and
- Reporting its findings and recommendations to the public with the purpose of fostering transparency and prompting swift action from implementing agencies.

The AGRICOM is the government's way of creating a more comprehensive and targeted response to the increasingly complex issues faced by the agriculture and fisheries sector and the consequences of the sector's decline on national food security, employment, economy, and poverty. The urgency and necessity of taking decisive measures to support the dying sector of agriculture and fisheries cannot be overstated. This bill fully adopts Senator Francis Pangilinan's SBN 1199 filed under the present 20th Congress.

Early passage of this bill is requested.


LEILA M. DE LIMA

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

1 SECTION. 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Congressional
2 Commission on Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Security” (AGRICOM) Act.

3
4 SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State shall reaffirm the promotion of a just
5 and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the
6 nation that frees the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social
7 services and promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved
8 quality of life for all.

9
10 The State shall affirm labor as a primary social economic force, shall develop a
11 self-reliant and independent national economy effectively controlled by Filipinos, and
12 shall promote comprehensive rural development and agrarian reform.

13
14 To such ends, the State shall take the appropriate steps to ensure that the
15 national agriculture and fisheries sector shall be a robust, dynamic, and sustainable
16 means to economic security on participants on the production side of the sector, and
17 shall be a driver for human capital development, human liberation and development,
18 and overall well-being and welfare on the part of Filipino consumers.

1 SEC. 3. *Objectives of AGRICOM.* – The Commission shall, among other things,
2 critically review and assess agriculture and fisheries policies, strategies, and programs
3 to attain the following objectives:

- 4 a. Re-examine public sector goals and objectives with respect to
5 agriculture and fisheries;
- 6 b. Modify agriculture and fisheries policies and public expenditures to
7 integrate modern technologies and climate change adaption with the
8 ultimate goal of raising the productivity and global competitiveness of our
9 local agriculture and fisheries subsectors, and to employ long-term
10 policy instruments for raising productivity, protecting the environment,
11 improving market efficiency, and ensuring equity and social justice,
12 particularly for the benefit of small farmers and families;
- 13 c. Refocus and re-prioritize support programs for agriculture and fisheries
14 to ensure food security in basic staples for all Filipino communities;
- 15 d. Restructure and streamline agriculture and fisheries-related
16 bureaucracies to address their institutional weaknesses and
17 shortcomings, including the relationship between and among national,
18 provincial, and local stakeholders, in order to effectively implement
19 agriculture and fisheries policies and programs, including the transfer of
20 information and technology, particularly at the grassroots level; and
- 21 e. Encourage the active involvement of producers, cooperatives, media,
22 banks, financial institutions, and other members of the private sector in
23 the development of agri-business.

24
25 SEC. 5. *Composition of AGRICOM.* – The Commission shall be composed of
26 twelve (12) members, with six (6) members from the Senate and six (6) members from
27 the House of Representatives: Provided that one of the six (6) members from each
28 Chamber shall represent the Minority as designated by the Minority Leader of each
29 Chamber.

30
31 The Chairpersons of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Food, and Agrarian
32 Reform, the Senate Committee on Economic Affairs, and the Senate Committee on
33 Environment, Natural Resources, and Climate Change shall be members of the
34 Commission on the part of the Senate.

35
36 The Chairpersons of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food, the House
37 Committee on Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources, the House Committee on
38 Agrarian Reform, and the House Committee on Climate Change shall be members of
39 the Commission on the part of the House of Representatives.

40
41 The members of the Commission shall receive no compensation, but travelling,
42 communications, and other necessary expenses shall be allowed, subject to existing
43 laws, rules, and regulations.

1 SEC. 6. *Executive Director.* – The Executive Director (ED) to be appointed by
2 the Commission must be a recognized expert in the fields of agriculture and fisheries.

3 The Executive Director shall work full-time and shall have the rank, privileges,
4 and emoluments of an Executive Director IV (Salary Grade 29).

5
6 SEC. 7. *Technical Secretariat.* – A Technical Secretariat, to be headed by the
7 Executive Director, shall be organized to provide technical and administrative support
8 to the Commission in the exercise of its powers and performance of its functions under
9 Section 11 of this Act.

10
11 The Executive Director shall organize its staff and technical panel, and hire and
12 appoint such employees and personnel, whether temporary, contractual, or on
13 consultancy, and determine their compensation subject to applicable civil service laws,
14 rules, and regulations, with a view to ensuring a competent and efficient secretariat.

15
16 The Technical Secretariat shall co-exist with the Commission.

17
18 SEC. 8. *Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) as Research Arm.*
19 – The PIDS shall serve as the research arm of the Commission. During the course of
20 the Commission's existence, it shall produce data-based research and provide
21 analysis to contribute to the formulation of agriculture and fisheries policy
22 recommendations. It may coordinate with existing advisory and consultative bodies on
23 agriculture and fisheries policies under the Department of Agriculture and Department
24 of Science and Technology.

25
26 SEC. 9. *Agriculture and Fisheries Legislation and Policy Advisory Council.* – An
27 Agriculture and Fisheries Legislation and Policy Advisory Council is hereby created to
28 provide the Commission with expert assistance and advice. The members of the
29 Advisory Council shall always be present in all meetings of the Commission. The
30 Senate President and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, upon the
31 recommendation of the members of the Commission, shall choose recognized experts
32 from the following sectors to form part of the Advisory Council: three (3) members from
33 state university academia with equal representation from Luzon, Visayas, and
34 Mindanao, two (2) members from the business sector, two (2) members from
35 government agriculture and fisheries agencies, two (2) members who are heads of
36 local government units (LGUs), and two (2) members from civil society organizations
37 and development partners engaged in agriculture and fisheries.

38
39 SEC. 10. *Duration of AGRICOM.* – The Commission shall accomplish its
40 mandate within three (3) years from its organization. It shall organize itself and
41 commence its mandate upon the effectivity of this Act.

42
43 SEC. 11. *Powers and Functions of AGRICOM.* – The Commission shall have
44 the following powers and functions:

- a. Formulate short-term and long-term policy and program recommendations relating to agriculture and fisheries consisting of specific, targeted, measurable, and time-bound solutions to the following:
 - i. Sectoral plan and targets;
 - ii. Physical and digital infrastructure;
 - iii. Trainings and programs;
 - iv. Financing; and
 - v. Coordination among departments and sectors concerned.
- b. Approve the work plan, guidelines, and overall framework for the conduct of the national review, assessment, and harmonization tasks, and the budget for the programs of the Commission and all disbursements therefrom, including compensation of all personnel;
- c. Hold hearings and receive testimonies, reports, and expert advice on the status of the Philippine agriculture and fisheries sector and its subsectors, exhaust available options to identify problems, and consolidate coherent courses of action as remedies;
- d. Summon by *subpoena ad testificandum* any public official or private person to testify before it, or require by *subpoena duces tecum* the production of necessary documents, as may be deemed necessary by the Commission;
- e. Secure from any department, bureau, office, or instrumentality of the government technical information, preparation and production of reports, and the submission of recommendations or plans;
- f. Conduct multi-stakeholder consultations, using proper mechanisms and guidance;
- g. Collaborate with emerging and innovative industries and services for the sharing of important information relative to their practice in the development of the agriculture and fisheries sectors;
- h. Review and act upon the recommendations of the Technical Secretariat or Standing Committees, or both, as it may deem appropriate;
- i. Report to Congress biannually its accomplishments, findings, and recommendations on actions to be taken by Congress, the departments, and other government agencies concerned with the implementation of policies and programs related to agriculture and fisheries sector;
- j. Submit a final report of its findings and recommendations with a program of implementation to the President and Congress at the end of its term;
- k. Recommend the adoption of legislation and other executive measures pursuant to its findings;
- l. Review and prioritize pending legislation before both Chambers pursuant to the findings contained in the report of the Commission; and
- m. Perform such other duties and functions as may be necessary to attain its objectives.

1 SEC. 12. *Standing Committees.* – The members of the Commission shall
2 establish from among its members standing committees, to be chaired by such
3 members or experts from multisectoral groups, and engage resource persons from the
4 public and private sectors as may be needed.

5
6 SEC. 13. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation
7 of this Act shall be charged against available appropriations of the Senate and the
8 House of Representatives. Thereafter, the amount necessary for its continuous
9 implementation, including any deficiency in the current year, shall be included in the
10 annual General Appropriations Act subject to existing budgeting, accounting, and
11 auditing rules and regulations.

12
13 SEC. 14. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part of this Act is declared
14 invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts not affected shall remain in full force
15 and effect.

16
17 SEC. 15. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees,
18 presidential proclamations, administrative orders, letters of instruction, rules and
19 regulations, issuances, or parts thereof inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions
20 of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

21
22 SEC. 16. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its
23 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation in the
24 Philippines.

Approved,