



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Twentieth Congress
1st Regular Session
HOUSE BILL NO. 6479



Introduced by Rep. Elisa Olga T. Kho

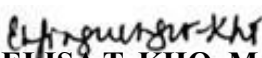
EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is currently grappling with a severe water crisis, driven by a confluence of issues, most notably the pervasive problem of non-revenue water (NRW). According to data from the Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA), which oversees 532 water districts outside Metro Manila, nearly half of these districts are losing substantial volumes of water.

The national average NRW rate is alarmingly high at almost 30%. This represents water that is produced and treated but is subsequently lost through leaks, pilferage, or metering inaccuracies before it reaches consumers. The sheer scale of this loss is staggering, amounting to an annual waste of 488 million cubic meters—a volume exceeding half the entire capacity of the critical Angat dam, which supplies the capital region. Recognizing the urgency of this situation, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has initiated key government actions. In March 2023, he established the Water Resource Management Office (WRMO) via an executive order to coordinate water efforts.

Furthermore, the President has strongly advocated for the legislative creation of a permanent Department of Water Resources Management. The proposed bill for this new department is designed to consolidate the fragmented governance of the nation's water assets into a single, integrated framework. This department would be mandated to review and revise all current policies on water conservation and supply, with the primary and ultimate objective of guaranteeing that all Filipino citizens have reliable access to clean and safe water.

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


REP. ELISA T. KHO, M.D., FPCCP



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**AN ACT
CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT,
DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

Section 1: Declaration of Policy

It is the policy of the State to ensure water security for all Filipinos by promoting the sustainable, efficient, and integrated management of the country's water resources. The State shall develop a unified framework to conserve, protect, and optimize the use of water for domestic, agricultural, industrial, and ecological purposes.

Section 2: Creation of the Department of Water Resources Management

The Department of Water Resources Management (DWRM) is hereby created. It will be the primary government agency responsible for the overall planning, policy formulation, coordination, and implementation of all programs related to water resources.

Section 3: Powers and Functions

The DWRM shall have the following powers and functions:

1. Integrated Water Resource Management: Develop and implement a national plan for the integrated management of all freshwater resources.
2. Policy and Regulation: Review, revise, and integrate all existing laws, regulations, and policies pertaining to water.
3. Water Conservation: Formulate and enforce strategies to reduce water waste, including a national program to address non-revenue water (NRW).
4. Infrastructure Development: Coordinate with relevant agencies to develop and manage water infrastructure projects, such as dams, reservoirs, and water treatment facilities.

5. Data and Monitoring: Establish a unified system for collecting and analyzing data on water availability, consumption, and quality.
6. Oversight: Exercise administrative oversight over all government agencies and entities with water-related functions, including LWUA and local water districts, to ensure consistency with national policies.

Section 4: Absorption of Existing Agencies

To streamline water governance, the DWRM shall absorb the functions and personnel of key water-related offices, such as the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) and the Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA). The recently created Water Resource Management Office (WRMO) will also be integrated into the new department.

Section 5: Appropriation of Funds

The necessary funds for the establishment and operation of the DWRM will be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Section 6: Separability and Repealing Clauses

If any part of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected shall remain valid. All laws, decrees, and orders inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

Section 7: Effectivity

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

Approved,