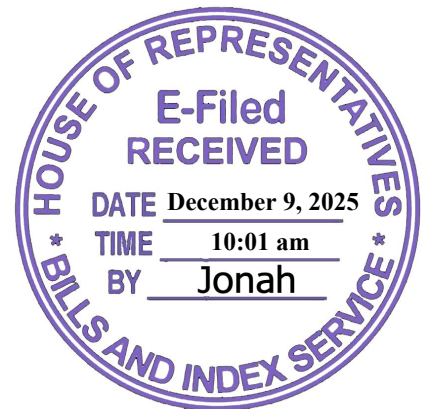




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 6689

**Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez,
Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez and Jude A.
Acidre**

AN ACT
CREATING A CONGRESSIONAL COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE
(AGRICOM), TO REVIEW, ASSESS, AND EVALUATE THE STATE OF
PHILIPPINE AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS, AND TO
RECOMMEND INNOVATIVE, RESPONSIVE, AND TARGETED
POLICY REFORMS FOR AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Agriculture and fisheries remain the foundation of national development, ensuring food security, sustaining rural livelihoods, and contributing significantly to inclusive economic growth. These sectors not only provide the country's staple food and raw materials but also support millions of Filipino farmers, fisherfolk, agri-workers, and rural households who form the backbone of the national economy. Agriculture continues to shape the country's cultural identity, regional economies, and local food systems, playing a vital role in maintaining social stability, territorial integrity, and community resilience.

Yet despite their strategic importance, the sector continues to suffer from long-standing and deeply rooted challenges—stagnant productivity, outdated technologies, inadequate extension systems, weak market linkages, fragmented governance, chronic underinvestment, and the worsening impacts of climate change. These structural issues have resulted in inefficient value chains, high production losses, low rural incomes, and increased dependence on food imports. Global disruptions—from supply chain volatility to geopolitical tensions—further expose the fragility of the Philippines’ agri-food systems. Collectively, these constraints hinder the nation’s capacity to achieve food sovereignty, rural prosperity, and long-term resilience.

These persistent challenges have made it clear that agricultural reform cannot be addressed by short-term or piecemeal interventions. There is an urgent need for a unified, science-based, and forward-looking institutional mechanism that can harmonize policies, guide long-term planning, coordinate national and local initiatives, and provide Congress with the analytical rigor needed to legislate transformative reforms.

The proposed “*Congressional Commission on Agriculture (AGRICOM) Act*” responds to this need by establishing an independent, multisectoral, and evidence-informed Congressional Commission mandated to spearhead a comprehensive national review of the agriculture and fisheries sector. The AGRICOM will function as the primary legislative policy advisory body responsible for developing coordinated, inclusive, and future-oriented reforms aimed at making Philippine agriculture more productive, competitive, sustainable, and resilient to climate change.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly requested.



FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ



YEDDA MARIE K. ROMUALDEZ



ANDREW JULIAN K. ROMUALDEZ



JUDE A. ACIDRE



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

SEC. 1. *Short Title.* — This Act shall be known as the “Congressional Commission on Agriculture (AGRICOM) Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy* — The State recognizes the strategic importance of agriculture and fisheries in national development. It shall uphold the right of every Filipino to food security, sustainable livelihoods, and resilient rural communities. The State affirms its obligation to ensure the modernization, inclusiveness, and climate resilience of Philippine agriculture, and to address the

persistent issues of low productivity, rural poverty, underinvestment, weak market linkages, and fragmented policies.

It is hereby declared the policy of the State to create an independent, multisectoral, and evidence-informed Congressional Commission that will serve as a platform for thorough analysis, inclusive consultation, and bold recommendations aimed at transforming Philippine agriculture into a productive, competitive, and sustainable sector that contributes significantly to national growth and social justice.

To this end, the State commits to strengthening agricultural governance, enhancing institutional coherence, and ensuring that farmers, fisherfolk, agri-workers, and rural communities are at the center of decision-making. Agricultural development shall be informed by scientific knowledge, technological innovations, socioeconomic realities, and the long-term impacts of climate change.

The State shall also pursue diversified food systems, sustainable land and water management, and improved access to markets, infrastructure, and financial services. Agricultural modernization shall be complemented by investments in human capital, research and development, digital agriculture, and the integration of value-adding enterprises that generate rural employment and competitiveness.

The State further recognizes that contemporary challenges, including climate variability, global price shocks, extreme weather events, transboundary pests and diseases, geopolitical tensions, and disruptions in global supply chains, require a strong and adaptive institutional mechanism capable of generating evidence-based policy proposals and comprehensive reform strategies. The AGRICOM shall therefore be the principal legislative instrument for articulating long-term national agricultural reforms.

SEC. 3. *Objectives of AGRICOM.* — The AGRICOM shall serve as a legislative and policy think tank of Congress to spearhead a systematic and forward-looking national review of the agriculture and fisheries sector. Its objectives shall include:

- a. Conducting a comprehensive assessment of agricultural production systems, agri-food value chains, support institutions, and regulatory frameworks;
- b. Identifying major gaps, inefficiencies, and constraints in the current policy and program architecture;
- c. Proposing transformative policy, structural, and legislative reforms that are inclusive, science-based, climate-adaptive, and aligned with the goals of food sovereignty, rural prosperity, and sustainable development;
- d. Institutionalizing participatory reform processes that engage farmers, fisherfolk, agri-workers, youth, women, cooperatives, agribusinesses, indigenous peoples, and other grassroots stakeholders;
- e. Formulating a strategic roadmap for agricultural transformation over a 10-year period, including investment strategies, institutional realignment, workforce development, and innovation ecosystems; and
- f. Benchmarking progress through a robust monitoring and evaluation framework, grounded in quantifiable key performance indicators that are updated annually.

To attain these objectives, the AGRICOM shall also undertake a complete mapping of the Philippine agri-food system, including the movement of goods from production to consumption, integration with regional and international markets, and the underlying economic, technological, and environmental drivers influencing agricultural performance. It shall review the alignment of national and local plans, evaluate the efficiency of public expenditures in agriculture, assess the adequacy of extension and research systems, and study the implications of land tenure structures for productivity and equity. The AGRICOM shall

likewise analyze the resilience of rural communities, the state of agricultural labor, the quality of rural infrastructure, and opportunities for value chain upgrading and agro-industry development.

Each Priority Thematic Area shall be supported by nationwide consultations, regional case studies, field validation activities, comparative analyses of global best practices, and detailed sectoral diagnostics. The AGRICOM shall ensure that recommendations are actionable, evidence-based, costed, and supported by implementation pathways suited to national and local capacities.

SEC. 4. *Creation of the AGRICOM* — There is hereby established a Congressional Commission on Agriculture (AGRICOM), a joint body of Congress composed of Members of the Senate and House of Representatives, mandated to lead the national agricultural reform review. It shall operate independently of any national agency and submit recommendations directly to Congress.

The AGRICOM shall have full autonomy to determine its research agenda, analytical methods, consultation processes, and institutional arrangements necessary to accomplish its mandate. It may establish partnerships with universities, think tanks, government agencies, research institutions, private sector entities, and international organizations. It shall maintain transparent and participatory processes by releasing periodic updates, reports, and relevant documentation.

SEC. 5. *Composition of the AGRICOM* — The Commission shall be composed of fourteen (14) Members of Congress:

a. Co-Chairpersons:

1. Chairperson, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Food, and Agrarian Reform

2. Chairperson, Senate Committee on Aquaculture and Fisheries
 3. Chairperson, House Committee on Agriculture and Food
 4. Chairperson, House Committee on Aquaculture and Fisheries
- b. Members:
1. Five (5) Senators designated by the Senate President
 2. Five (5) Representatives designated by the Speaker of the House

The Co-Chairpersons shall alternate in presiding over meetings. A quorum shall consist of eight (8) members. Decisions shall require a majority vote of those present.

The Commission may constitute Subcommittees and Technical Panels and may designate sectoral experts, former public officials, economists, scientists, and practitioners as resource advisers. The AGRICOM may convene regular and special meetings, conduct field missions, and organize thematic summits and regional consultations.

SEC. 6. *Duration.* — The AGRICOM shall exist for three (3) years from the date of its organizational meeting. Congress may, through joint resolution, extend its term for up to two (2) more years if deemed necessary.

Any extension shall be based on clear justifications, including the status of deliverables, emerging policy needs, or evolving sectoral challenges requiring further study or consultation.

SEC. 7. *Powers and Functions* — The AGRICOM shall have the following powers and functions:

- a. Undertake a comprehensive review of the agricultural sector, assessing and evaluating its systems, performance, and outcomes, and developing both short- term and long-term policy and program recommendations. These

recommendations shall provide specific, targeted, measurable, and time-bound solutions;

- b. Improve the harmonization of policies and programs across the Department of Agriculture and all key agricultural agencies, ensuring alignment, coherence, and coordinated implementation;
- c. Approve the AGRICOM's work plan and budget, covering the national review, assessment, and program harmonization processes;
- d. Hire and appoint personnel and staff necessary for the effective performance of its mandate;
- e. Conduct hearings and receive testimonies, reports, studies, and expert advice relevant to its work;
- f. Issue subpoenas to require the attendance of any public official or private individual needed for inquiries;
- g. Request assistance from government offices and agencies to support the fulfillment of its objectives;
- h. Hold multi-stakeholder consultations to gather insights from farmers, cooperatives, industry partners, local governments, academic institutions, and civil society groups;
- i. Collaborate with industries, institutions, and organizations to develop and implement training programs, capacity-building initiatives, and technical support activities;
- j. Review and act on the recommendations of the Technical Secretariat, including research outputs, policy studies, and administrative proposals;
- k. Submit regular reports to Congress detailing its accomplishments, findings from its assessments, and final recommendations for policy reforms;
- l. Recommend additional legislation necessary to strengthen, modernize, or reform the agricultural sector;
- m. Formulate rules, guidelines, and implementing procedures to carry out the intent of this Act; and

- n. Exercise all other powers necessary and incidental to effectively fulfill its mandate and achieve the purposes of this Act.

In addition, the AGRICOM shall undertake systems analysis, market diagnostics, competitiveness assessments, water and climate modeling reviews, social and economic profiling of rural households, and evaluation of price stabilization instruments. It may conduct foresight studies, scenario planning, and policy simulations to ensure that recommendations remain relevant to future conditions. It shall review the structure and effectiveness of agricultural subsidies, insurance schemes, and financing programs, propose approaches to strengthen farmer and fisherfolk organizations, and assess the institutional capacities of agencies and local government units.

SEC. 8. *Technical Secretariat.* — The AGRICOM Technical Secretariat shall be headed by an Executive Director appointed jointly by the Co-Chairpersons. It shall be staffed by full-time personnel, including legal researchers, policy analysts, agricultural economists, communications officers, and administrative staff. It shall serve as the operational backbone of the AGRICOM.

The Secretariat shall establish divisions dedicated to policy research, data management, legal analysis, stakeholder engagement, communications, and monitoring. It may coordinate with regional networks of research institutions and extension providers. It shall maintain the AGRICOM Knowledge Hub, which shall host publications, data sets, dashboards, and policy briefs.

SEC. 9. *Advisory Council.* — The Advisory Council shall include up to fifteen (15) members representing key stakeholder groups. It shall convene biannually to review the AGRICOM progress and provide collective advice. It may propose additional studies, highlight emerging sectoral issues, and raise concerns relevant to rural communities.

SEC. 10. *Reporting and Deliverables.* — The AGRICOM shall produce an Inception Report, Quarterly Technical Updates, Annual Progress Reports, Green and White Papers, and a Final Report and Reform Roadmap.

The Final Report shall contain a national reform blueprint with policy recommendations, investment strategies, institutional reforms, timelines, and impact projections. All reports shall be accessible through an AGRICOM portal.

SEC. 11. *Monitoring and Evaluation and Key Performance Indicators.* — The AGRICOM shall establish and monitor key performance indicators, including crop yield, income, credit access, loss reduction, mechanization, MSME growth, infrastructure access, extension reach, climate resilience, and gender and youth participation.

Additional indicators may include competitiveness benchmarks, water efficiency, logistics performance, digital adoption, governance scores, poverty reduction impacts, and supply chain resilience.

SEC. 12. *Appropriations.* — Initial funding shall be charged to available appropriations of the Senate and House. Thereafter, funding shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. Congress may authorize supplemental appropriations to support specialized studies, field missions, and digital infrastructure.

SEC. 13. *Transitory Provisions.* — Within thirty (30) days from effectivity, the Senate President and the Speaker shall jointly issue rules for the appointment and organization of the AGRICOM. The Commission shall convene within sixty (60) days and commence its work plan within ninety (90) days.

SEC. 14. *Separability Clause.* — If any provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 15. *Repealing Clause.* — All inconsistent laws, executive orders, and issuances are repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 16. *Effectivity.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,