

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **7288**



Introduced by Representative LEILA M. DE LIMA

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE MAGNA CARTA OF
MUNICIPAL SMALL-SCALE AND SUBSISTENCE FISHERFOLK

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to provide a Magna Carta of Municipal Small-Scale and Subsistence Fisherfolk.

Anchored on social justice and the precept that “those who have less in life should have more in law,” Article XIII, Section 7 of the 1987 Constitution provides that:

Section 7. The State shall protect the rights of subsistence fishermen, especially of local communities, to the preferential use of local marine and fishing resources, both inland and offshore. It shall provide support to such fishermen through appropriate technology and research, adequate financial, production, and marketing assistance, and other services. The State shall also protect, develop, and conserve such resources. The protection shall extend to offshore fishing grounds of subsistence fishermen against foreign intrusion. Fish workers shall receive a just share from their labor in the utilization of marine and fishing resources. (Underscoring supplied)

To implement the above-quoted constitutional provision and promote the protection and upliftment of the welfare of the fisherfolk, Republic Act (RA) No. 8550, otherwise known as “The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998,” as amended, was enacted whereby municipal waters are delineated by an expanse of 15 kilometers from the coastline of cities and municipalities. The municipal waters are reserved for the exclusive access and use of the municipal fisherfolk to support their livelihood. These waters also serve as a buffer and protection from unauthorized and illegal fishing activities that can destroy fish habitats and disrupt efforts to rehabilitate overfished areas.

Consonant with Section 2, Article X of the Constitution, which mandates the State to ensure that its territorial and political subdivisions enjoy local autonomy, RA 7160, otherwise known as the “Local Government Code of 1991,” vests local government units (LGUs) with jurisdiction over municipal waters. Being more attuned to the specific needs and conditions of their communities, LGUs are empowered under Section 17(b)(2)(i) and Section 149 to manage and enforce fishery laws and ordinances, issue licenses and permits for fishery activities within coastal areas of cities and municipalities, promote the sustainable use of aquatic resources, and safeguard the livelihoods of fisherfolk.

Millions of fisherfolk and their families rely on municipal waters as their primary source of sustenance and livelihood. From 2013 to 2022, data gathered by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) revealed that municipal fishers consistently contributed a greater share to the total landed catch than their commercial counterparts.

As of late, concerns have been raised about the implications of the policies and recent court rulings that allow commercial fishing in municipal waters. In addition, deficiencies in the enforcement of laws against illegal, unregulated, or unreported fishing, the unabated encroachment by commercial fishers into municipal waters, and the massive industrial projects, such as coal-fired power plants, shipyards, and infrastructure developments, have displaced fisherfolk, undermined their livelihoods, and worsened their food insecurity.

Confronted with the interconnected issues and challenges that are negatively affecting the small fishers, this bill seeks to provide a Magna Carta for the fisherfolk. To alleviate their economic condition, this bill seeks to guarantee certain specific rights for the municipal fisherfolk and sets up support mechanisms and government services to enable them to sustainably enjoy their equitable share of the country’s fisheries and aquatic resources. It is hoped that the promotion of their rights and the fulfillment of state obligations under this proposed Magna Carta will redound to the amelioration of the socio-economic status and general well-being of our small fisherfolk and their families.

Hence, immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



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

CHAPTER I. – GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Magna Carta of Municipal Small-Scale and Subsistence Fisherfolk.*”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the declared policy of the State to prioritize measures that uphold human dignity, reduce social, economic, and political inequalities, and eliminate cultural inequities by equitably diffusing wealth and power for the common good.

The State shall protect the rights of small-scale and subsistence fishermen, particularly those in the local communities, to preferential use of marine and fishing resources, inland and offshore. It shall provide support through appropriate technology, research, financial, production, and marketing assistance, and other relevant services.

Toward these ends, the State shall safeguard the rights of small-scale fisherfolk, strengthen their equitable access to sustainable marine resources and livelihood opportunities, build capacity, and ensure their meaningful participation in planning, organization, and management of programs for their benefit.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

1 (a) *Aquatic resources* refer to fish, all other aquatic flora and fauna, and
2 other living resources of the marine environment, such as salt and corals;

3
4 (b) *Commercial fishing* refers to the taking of fishery species by passive or
5 active gear for trade, business, and profit beyond subsistence or sports fishing;

6
7 (c) *Fisherfolk* refers to the people directly, personally, or physically engaged
8 in taking, culturing, and processing of fishery and aquatic resources;

9
10 (d) *Fisherfolk cooperative* refers to a duly registered association of fisherfolk
11 with a common bond of interest, who have voluntarily joined together to achieve a
12 lawful common social or economic end, making equitable contributions to the capital
13 requirement and accepting a fair share of the risks and benefits of the undertakings in
14 accordance with universally accepted cooperative principles;

15
16 (e) *Fisherfolk organization* refers to an organized group, association,
17 federation, alliance, or institution of fisherfolk which has at least fifteen (15) members,
18 a set of officers, a constitution and by-laws, an organizational structure, and a program
19 of action;

20
21 (f) *Fisheries* refer to all activities relating to the act or business of fishing,
22 culturing, preserving, processing, marketing, developing, conserving, and managing
23 aquatic resources and the fishery areas, including the privilege to fish or take aquatic
24 resources thereof;

25
26 (g) *Fishworker* refers to a person regularly or not regularly employed in
27 commercial fishing and related industries, whose income is either in wage, profit-
28 sharing or stratified sharing basis, including those working in fish pens, fish cages, fish
29 corrals or traps, fishponds, prawn farms, sea farms, salt beds, fish ports, fishing boat
30 or trawlers, or fish processing or packing plants. Excluded from this category are
31 administrators, security guards, and overseers;

32
33 (h) *Municipal fisherfolk* refer to persons who are directly or indirectly
34 engaged in fishing and other related fishing activities in municipal waters, as
35 categorized into the following:

- 36
37 i. *Municipal Small-Scale Fisherfolk* refer to municipal fisherfolk who are
38 directly or indirectly engaged in fishing and other related fishing activities
39 for trade, business, and profit beyond subsistence or sports fishing:
40 *Provided*, That they use fishing vessels of three (3) gross tons or less,
41 or fish without requiring the use of fishing vessels; and
42

(f) Enhance and promote collaboration and coordination of municipal fisherfolk with non-government organizations, people's organizations, and other development partners, for the reinforced delivery and implementation of government programs and basic services.

CHAPTER III. – FUNDAMENTAL AND BASIC RIGHTS OF THE FISHERFOLK

SEC. 5. *Right to Adequate Food.* – Municipal fisherfolk shall have access to adequate and healthy food or the means to procure it. The DA, in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), other relevant agencies, and the local government units (LGUs) shall:

(a) Undertake necessary actions to mitigate and alleviate hunger of the fisherfolk communities, especially in times of calamities and disasters;

(b) Fully implement and maintain supplementary feeding programs in day care centers or designated areas for the young and dependent children of municipal fisherfolk;

(c) Ensure the availability, accessibility, and sustainability of food supplies in a quantity and quality sufficient to meet the dietary needs of municipal fisherfolk and their families; and

(d) Proactively engage municipal fisherfolk in activities intended to promote their food self-sufficiency and strengthen their access to resources and means to ensure food security.

SEC. 6. *Right to Relevant and Quality Education.* – Municipal fisherfolk and their family members shall have the right to attain full development through education. The Department of Education (DepEd), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), and the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), in coordination with development partners concerned, shall:

(a) Maintain a system of free public education in the kindergarten, elementary, and high school levels in schools that are accessible to the fisherfolk;

(b) Make higher education accessible to fisherfolk, their children, and dependents, including mechanisms providing scholarships in state colleges and universities;

1 (c) Ensure access of the fisherfolk to quality technical-vocational education
2 and training through scholarship, subsidies, or financial assistance to ensure access
3 to decent and productive employment, subject to qualification requirements; and
4

5 (d) Promote and support training programs on fisheries and coastal
6 resource management for the fisherfolk, their children, and dependents.
7

8 SEC. 7. *Right to Housing.* – Municipal fisherfolk and their families have the
9 right to decent, affordable, safe, and culturally appropriate places to live in, with dignity,
10 security of tenure, in peace, and with access to basic services, facilities, and fishing
11 grounds.
12

13 The Department of Agriculture (DA), the Department of Human Settlements and
14 Urban Development (DHSUD), the Department of Environment and Natural
15 Resources (DENR), the local government units (LGUs) of cities and municipalities
16 exercising jurisdiction over coastal areas and municipal waters, and other
17 implementing agencies concerned, shall:
18

19 (a) Prioritize and assist in the implementation of the socialized housing
20 program for the fisherfolk;
21

22 (b) Facilitate the relocation, construction, and provision of housing facilities
23 for fisherfolk families who are living in identified hazardous or danger zones, areas
24 prone to and frequently affected by disasters or calamities, and where the housing
25 needs of the fisherfolk are exigent;
26

27 (c) Identify, establish, and create housing or settlement areas with adequate
28 access to fishing grounds and the LGU's municipal waters: *Provided*, That in
29 previously identified or established settlement areas with adequate access to fishing
30 grounds and the LGU's municipal waters, fisherfolk shall be granted preference in the
31 award of settlement rights thereat; *Provided, further*, That the establishment of
32 settlement areas shall prioritize the fisherfolk registered as such with their respective
33 city or municipality and who are without real property: *Provided, finally*, That the LGUs
34 exercising jurisdiction over coastal areas and municipal waters are hereby mandated
35 to integrate settlement areas for fisherfolk in their comprehensive land use plans;
36

37 (d) Create an enabling environment that will assist the fisherfolk in gaining
38 access to security of tenure with the least financial burden; and
39

40 (e) Simplify the qualification requirements, procedures, processing, and
41 approval of fisherfolk's application for socialized housing.
42

43 SEC. 8. *Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health.* – The Department
44 of Health (DOH), through its rural health units and other implementing agencies

concerned, shall facilitate access to a variety of medical and health services for the realization of the highest attainable standard of health for municipal fisherfolk. The DOH shall:

(a) Ensure equitable access to a system of quality and affordable health care and protection of the fisherfolk;

(b) Provide for comprehensive, universal, culture-sensitive, nondiscriminatory, and gender-responsive health services and programs;

(c) Provide a socialized health insurance program for the fisherfolk to reduce the financial costs of health care and eliminate out-of-pocket expenses; and

(d) Provide health-related education and information to the community.

CHAPTER IV. – RIGHT TO ORGANIZATION, PARTICIPATION, AND REPRESENTATION

SEC. 9. Right to Organize and Join Organizations. – Municipal fisherfolk shall have the right to organize themselves and join fisherfolk cooperatives or organizations in pursuit of their common interests, including the right to engage with the relevant government agencies in the promotion of their welfare and advancement of their rights.

SEC. 10. Right to Participation and Representation. – Municipal fisherfolk shall be accorded recognition for their contribution to national development, and encouraged to actively participate in policy-making about fisheries and aquatic resources, and marine conservation.

The fisheries and aquatic resource management councils (FARMCs), which are mainly composed of fisherfolk and their cooperatives or organizations, shall actively participate in the preparation and recommendation of development programs for integration into the local development plans of LGUs. In the course of developing these programs, FARMCs are mandated to ensure that all fisher organizations and cooperatives who may not be formally part of the councils are involved in the development planning process.

The FARMCs shall advise the LGUs on community-based development, management, protection, regulation, conservation of fisheries and aquatic resources, and sustainable use of municipal waters under its jurisdiction, and regulations relevant to the promotion and protection of their welfare.

All LGU projects that may have direct or indirect impact on municipal fisherfolk are required to include FARMCs and other fisherfolk organizations and cooperatives in the implementation of the said projects.

1 SEC. 11. *Right to Information.* – The FARMCs and fisherfolk organizations or
2 cooperatives shall inform their members of the inclusion in the provincial, city, or
3 municipal development plans of the programs that address the socio-economic needs
4 of the fisherfolk, including the status of implementation and regulations relevant to the
5 promotion and protection of their welfare.

6
7 LGUs are also mandated to ensure that all information relevant to fishers are
8 relayed to their organizations, cooperatives, and communities.

9
10 **CHAPTER V. – RIGHT OF ACCESS TO FISHERIES AND AQUATIC RESOURCES**
11

12 SEC. 12. *Exclusive Access to Municipal Waters.* – Municipal fisherfolk,
13 especially those in the local communities, shall be given exclusive access to municipal
14 waters and fishing grounds, as defined under Republic Act No. 8550 or “The Philippine
15 Fisheries Code of 1998,” to ensure adequate food for the fisherfolk communities,
16 protect their livelihood, and protect the municipal waters from overfishing, unregulated,
17 and unreported fishing.

18
19 Municipal small-scale fisherfolk shall be provided with:

- 20
21 (a) Access to appropriate technology and research for sustainable fishing
22 practices;
23 (b) Adequate financial, production, and marketing assistance to strengthen
24 livelihoods; and
25 (c) Other essential services that enhance productivity and resilience.
26

27 Local marine and fishing resources shall be protected, developed, and
28 conserved, with safeguards extending to offshore fishing grounds against large
29 commercial fishing vessels and foreign intrusion.
30

31 Fishworkers are entitled to a just share of the value of their labor in the utilization
32 of marine and fishing resources.
33

34 SEC. 13. *Fishery Rights in Municipal Waters.* – Duly registered fisherfolk
35 organizations and cooperatives shall be accorded preference in the grant of exclusive
36 fishery rights within municipal waters, as authorized under Section 149 of Republic Act
37 No. 7160, otherwise known as the “Local Government Code of 1991.”
38

39 SEC. 14. *Registration of the Fisherfolk.* – To protect the livelihoods of municipal
40 fisherfolk, limit entry to, and monitor fishing activities in the municipal waters, only
41 accredited fisherfolk and their fisherfolk organizations or cooperatives listed in the
42 registry of municipal fisherfolk shall be authorized to engage in the fishing activities in
43 the municipal waters: *Provided*, That the LGUs, in coordination with the FARMCS, DA,
44 and BFAR, shall ensure that registration is accessible to municipal fisherfolk.

1
2 The registry shall be updated annually or as may be necessary, which shall be
3 conspicuously posted in barangay halls or other strategic locations where it shall be
4 open to public inspection, to ensure the transparency, correctness, and completeness
5 of the list. The LGU shall, in consultation with and recommendation of the FARMCs,
6 formulate the transparent and equitable mechanisms for inclusion or exclusion
7 procedures, ensuring that such processes are responsive to the needs and most
8 beneficial to the municipal fisherfolk.

9
10 The LGUs shall use a uniform list of accredited fisherfolk for inclusion as
11 qualified beneficiaries to government programs for the basic sectors administered by
12 the DA, DSWD, and other relevant government agencies.

13
14 To advance the modernization of municipal fisherfolk registration, LGUs shall
15 adopt digital registries that are regularly updated and synchronized with the central
16 database maintained by the DA and the BFAR.

17
18 SEC. 15. *Municipal Licenses and Permits.* – The BFAR or the LGU shall issue
19 licenses and permits for the conduct of municipal fishery activities, subject to harvest
20 control rules and reference points as determined by scientific studies or best available
21 evidence. Preference shall be given to fisherfolk in the local communities that are
22 adjacent or nearest to the municipal waters.

23 24 **CHAPTER VI. – RIGHT TO LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT**

25
26 SEC. 16. *Sustainable Fisheries Livelihood Support.* – To ensure sustained
27 livelihood support to municipal fisherfolk, the LGUs, with the support of DA-BFAR and
28 NAPC, shall:

29
30 (a) Establish the necessary infrastructure and post-harvest facilities that
31 include fish landing centers, bulk buying areas or *bagsakan*, cold storage facilities, ice
32 plants, fish processing centers, fish ports, and roads to markets to avoid wastage or
33 spoilage of harvested fishery resources. Such infrastructure and post-harvest facilities
34 shall be leased to the fisherfolk cooperatives or organizations, with an option to buy
35 such facilities depending on their utilization requirements and financial capacity;

36
37 (b) Establish an integrated, publicly accessible, and technology-enabled
38 procurement platform that will keep the fisherfolk and fisherfolk cooperatives or
39 organizations abreast of the market prices and market demand, allow them to sell their
40 produce at competitive prices, and expand their alternative livelihoods and markets for
41 the different fishery resources and value-added products;

42
43 (c) Provide subsidies and livelihood support, including fuel assistance,
44 during closed seasons, or episodes of fish-kill due to algal bloom, high temperature,

1 localized outbreak of infectious diseases, or pollution from man-made sources,
2 including oil-spills and other chemical spills;

3
4 (d) Provide appropriate training, technical, and administrative support in the
5 production, processing, storage, and marketing of fishery resources to help them
6 develop value-added fishery products for domestic consumption and export, and
7 establish their livelihood enterprise for additional and alternative income;

8
9 (e) Facilitate partnerships or alliances between the fisherfolk and the private
10 sector to improve market access of fisherfolk who have the potential to produce
11 marketable surplus. Private sector partners may provide or donate equipment,
12 machinery, and other forms of assistance to the fisherfolk engaging in the partnership,
13 subject to the guidelines and qualification requirements issued by the DA for the
14 purpose; and

15
16 (f) Provide special loan windows for accredited fisherfolk enterprises and
17 affordable access to credit with preferential rates and minimal collateral requirements
18 for fishery needs.

19 20 **CHAPTER VII. – RIGHT TO SOCIAL PROTECTION**

21
22 *SEC. 17. Coverage of Social Protection.* – The social protection for municipal
23 fisherfolk comprises a range of programs that shall enhance their social status, by
24 promoting and protecting their livelihood and employment against hazards, and
25 sustaining their living during sudden loss of income, and improving their capacity to
26 manage risks.

27
28 The following government agencies shall undertake these responsibilities:

29
30 (a) Social Security System (SSS), in coordination with PhilHealth, shall provide
31 a comprehensive social security package for fisherfolk, including a voluntary pension
32 scheme, and sickness, maternity, disability, calamity, death, and funeral benefits, at
33 reasonably affordable contributions and flexible payment schedules aligned with
34 favorable fishery harvest seasons;

35
36 (b) DOLE shall, in partnership with the DSWD, establish an unemployment
37 safety-net scheme to ensure that fisherfolk receive compensation to remain resilient
38 during months when fishing is not possible due to seasonal closures, natural disasters,
39 climate change impacts, and other environmental and economic shocks;

40
41 (c) Department of Finance (DOF), the *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas* (BSP), and
42 the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) shall make
43 available digital payment platforms and internet banking facilities in locations most
44 accessible to fisherfolk's residential and coastal working areas, to facilitate payments

1 of social security contributions, applications for and amortizations on loans, savings
2 plans, and other financial services designed to help fisherfolk attain financial security;
3 and
4

5 (d) DA, through the BFAR, together with the Department of Trade and Industry
6 (DTI) and the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), shall teach and introduce
7 the fisherfolk to profitable and innovative fishery resource transformation and business
8 ventures, thereby enhancing their paying capacity and building credibility for access
9 to formal financing channels.

10 11 **CHAPTER VIII. – RIGHT TO DECENT WORK**

12
13 **SEC. 18. *Right to Decent Work.*** – The right to decent work includes the right to
14 obtain productive employment, in conditions of freedom, equity, gender equality,
15 security, and human dignity. The municipal fisherfolk, specifically the fishworkers, shall
16 have the same basic rights accorded to all workers, as enshrined in the Philippine
17 Constitution, the Labor Code, as amended, and relevant local and national, and
18 international labor laws and commitments, respectively.

19
20 The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), in coordination with the
21 relevant government agencies and the LGUs shall:
22

23 (a) Promote safe and healthy working conditions for the fishworkers,
24 especially fish port workers, safeguarding their general, occupational, and
25 reproductive health in the workplace;
26

27 (b) Facilitate the provision of just and favorable conditions of work.
28

29 (c) Ensure that fisherfolk have access to information regarding employment
30 opportunities in private enterprises and in government programs and projects;
31

32 (d) Ensure protection of fishworkers from any form of discrimination,
33 violence, sexual exploitation, harassment, debt bondage, abuse, unsafe working
34 conditions, and any form of inhumane treatment which debases, degrades, or
35 demeans the intrinsic worth and dignity of the fishworker as a human being.
36

37 **CHAPTER IX. – DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF FISHERFOLK**

38
39 **SEC. 19. *Duties and Obligations of Fisherfolk.*** – The fisherfolk shall:
40

41 (a) Make use of the fisherfolk cooperatives or organizations to enhance their
42 capabilities in production, processing, marketing, and financing towards self-reliance;
43

1 (b) Comply with the terms and conditions stipulated in the availment of any
2 form of assistance from the government, financial institutions, nongovernment
3 organizations, to enable eligible fisherfolk to benefit from such assistance;
4

5 (c) Exert efforts to meet local demand requirements to avert any shortage
6 that may compromise regular fish supply and food requirements;
7

8 (d) Participate in the monitoring, control, and surveillance system to ensure
9 that the fisheries, aquatic resources, and fish habitats in Philippine waters are
10 judiciously and wisely utilized and managed on a sustainable basis and conserved for
11 the benefit and enjoyment exclusively of Filipino citizens;
12

13 (e) Participate or represent fisherfolk organizations or cooperatives in the
14 management, conservation, development, protection, utilization, and disposition of all
15 fish and aquatic resources within their respective municipal waters;
16

17 (f) Participate in the crafting of local ordinances and national laws pertaining
18 to management, conservation, development, protection, utilization, and disposition of
19 all fish and aquatic resources within their respective municipal waters; and
20

21 (g) Keep abreast of and abide by the fishery laws, as well as municipal or
22 city fishery ordinances enacted by the national government and the LGUs,
23 respectively.
24

25 **CHAPTER X. – FINAL PROVISIONS**

26

27 *SEC. 20. Non-Diminution of the Rights of the Fisherfolk.* – The rights of
28 municipal fisherfolk provided under existing laws shall remain in full force and effect.
29 Nothing in this Act shall be construed in a manner that will diminish the enjoyment of
30 such rights accorded by existing laws, including those granted under this Act.
31

32 *SEC. 21. Donation and Tax Incentive.* – The participation of the private sector,
33 as a partner in the financing of programs for the fisherfolk, shall be highly encouraged.
34 The private sector, as a development partner of government agencies in the
35 implementation of the programs for the fisherfolk, shall be accredited by BFAR. These
36 private development partners may provide donations or grants, in cash or in kind, to
37 support the government programs for the fisherfolk.
38

39 Any donation, contribution, or grant made for the benefit of the fisherfolk and
40 implemented by the national government or an LGU shall be exempt from donor's tax
41 in accordance with the "National Internal Revenue Code of 1997," as amended.
42

43 *SEC. 22. Appropriations.* – The initial funding requirements for the
44 implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the

1 Department of Agriculture and other agencies implementing the different programs for
2 the fisherfolk included under this Act. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for
3 the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the concerned agencies'
4 annual budgets in the General Appropriations Act.
5

6 SEC. 23. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from
7 the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Agriculture shall, in coordination with all
8 concerned national government agencies, and representatives of the basic sectors,
9 promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this
10 Act.
11

12 SEC. 24. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid
13 or unconstitutional, the provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force
14 and effect.
15

16 SEC. 25. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees,
17 presidential proclamations, letters of instruction, rules and regulations, or parts thereof
18 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended
19 accordingly.
20

21 SEC. 26. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its
22 publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the
23 Philippines.

Approved,