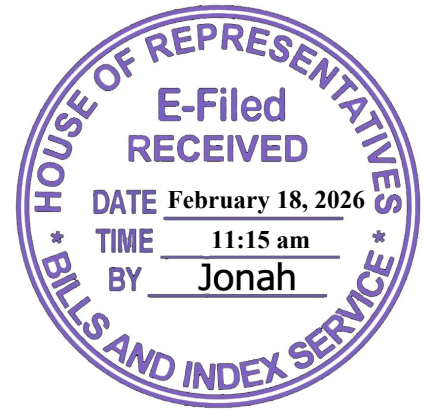


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City
TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 7846

Introduced by **REP. BERNADETTE "DETTE" G. ESCUDERO**

**AN ACT
PROVIDING A FUEL SUBSIDY FOR MUNICIPAL FISHERIES,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article XIII, Section 7 of the 1987 Constitution explicitly provides that the State shall protect the rights of subsistence fisherfolk, especially of local communities, to the preferential use of the communal marine and fishing resources, both inland and offshore.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported that total fisheries output from July to September 2025 reached only 894,320 metric tons, marking a significant 7.5 percent decline from the 966,730 MT recorded a year earlier. During this period, production setbacks affected nearly every subsector, including aquaculture, marine municipal fisheries, and inland municipal fisheries. In stark contrast, only commercial fisheries posted growth, with an output rise of 4.7 percent to 224,560 MT, accounting for 25.1 percent of the total production. This disparity highlighted the vulnerability of small-scale operations compared to commercial fishing. Most notably, marine municipal fisheries, the very lifeblood of our coastal communities, suffered a sharp 9.7 percent drop, falling to 168,920 MT from the 187,130 MT produced in the same quarter of 2024. These figures illustrated a deteriorating environment for municipal fisherfolk, whose diminishing catch was increasingly insufficient to cover the rising costs of fuel and basic survival.¹

Local studies in Sorsogon, particularly in municipalities like Magallanes and Bulan, highlight that municipal fisherfolk are disproportionately affected by high input costs. In Magallanes, research indicates that the majority of fishing households live on the edge of food insecurity, largely due to the high cost of fuel and supplies.² In Bulan, while sardine production remains high, small-scale fishers have seen their

¹ Descloso, J. (2025, November 6). *Fisheries output down 7.5% in Q3*. The Philippine Star. <https://www.philstar.com/business/2025/11/06/2485095/fisheries-output-down-75-q3>

² Labayo, A. S., & Prena, J. P. (2023). *COVID-19 impacts on food security and income of the fisherfolk in Magallanes, Sorsogon, Philippines*. *NRCP Research Journal*, 179-201.

average income slashed by nearly 40% in recent years due to market volatility and the soaring price of crude oil.³

Thus, the measure proposes to guarantee a fuel subsidy for municipal fisherfolk who utilize motorized boats. It proposes to provide a fuel voucher worth at least One Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (PHP 1,500.00) per month for each eligible beneficiary. In addition, beneficiaries of this program shall also be automatically enrolled and covered under the National Health Insurance program of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth). The Social Security System (SSS) shall also provide microinsurance mechanisms to beneficiaries of the program.

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



HON. BERNADETTE "DETTE" G. ESCUDERO

Representative
1st District, Sorsogon

³ Naz, A. (2022). Impact of COVID-19 on the production of sardines in Bulan, Sorsogon, Southern Luzon, Philippines. Asian Journal of Economics, Business and Accounting, 22(9), 11-19.

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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 "*Pantawid Pambangka*
2 *Act*

3 **Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy.** - The State recognizes the crucial role of
4 municipal fisherfolk in ensuring food security in the country. It is hereby declared a
5 policy of the State to provide support to municipal fisherfolk, in recognition of their
6 sacrifices and contributions to the nation, and in pursuit of the Constitutional mandate
7 to promote social justice in all phases of development.

8 **Sec. 3. The Pantawid Pambangka Program.** - Pursuant to the declared
9 policy of this Act, the Pantawid Pambangka Program is hereby established, herein
10 referred to as the Program which shall provide a fuel voucher worth of at least One
11 Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (PHP 1,500.00) per month for each eligible beneficiary
12 under this Act: *Provided*, that the amount shall be revised every year to account for
13 inflation. The Program shall be administered by the Department of Agriculture (DA).
14

15 **Sec. 4. Program Beneficiaries.** - This beneficiaries of this Act shall be
16 municipal fisherfolk who fish within municipal waters, whether coastal or inland, and
17 who use motorized fishing vessels of three (3) gross tons or less: *Provided*, that
18 registration under the National Program for Municipal Fisherfolk Registration of the
19 Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources shall be a precondition for the receipt of
20 benefits under this Act.

21 **Sec. 5. Convergence of Social Services.** - Beneficiaries of this program shall
22 also be automatically enrolled and covered under the National Health Insurance

1 program of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth). The Social
2 Security System (SSS) shall also provide micro-insurance mechanisms to beneficiaries
3 of the program.

4 **Sec. 6. Non-Diminution of Benefits.** - Nothing in this Act shall be construed
5 to reduce existing benefits granted under existing laws, decrees, executive orders, or
6 any contract, agreement, or policy between the employer and employee.

7
8 **Sec. 7. Appropriations.** - The equivalent of ten percent (10%) of any
9 increase in the collections in the excise tax on fuel shall be earmarked for the
10 implementation for this Act, which shall be indicated as a separate line item under
11 the annual appropriations of the DA under the General Appropriations Act.

12
13 **SEC. 8. Separability Clause.**- If any part or provision of this Act is held invalid
14 or unconstitutional, other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in force and
15 effect.

16
17 **SEC. 9. Repealing Clause.** - All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations
18 or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended
19 accordingly.

20
21 **SEC. 10. Effectivity.** - Notwithstanding the non-issuance of the IRR, this Act
22 shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a
23 newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,