

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7872



Introduced by **HON. BRIAN RAYMUND S. YAMSUAN**

AN ACT
MANDATING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FISHERFOLK RESETTLEMENT
AREAS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN
SETTLEMENTS AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
UNITS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SEC. 108 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO.
8550, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "PHILIPPINE FISHERIES CODE OF 1998,"
AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10654

EXPLANATORY NOTE

As an archipelagic country rich in marine and coastal resources, the Philippines relies on its fisheries sector as an important component of its economy.¹ Based on the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) FishStat database, in 2022, the Philippines was the 11th largest fish-producing country in the world.² In fact, the value of fisheries production has increased from P281.6 million in 2019 to P328.7 million in 2023. Further, in 2023, the Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing sector accounted for 8.6% of the country's total GDP.³

Millions of Filipinos remain dependent on the fishing industry. In 2023, 2.29 million fisherfolk engaged in various fishing and aquaculture activities were registered with

¹ Fisheries Country Profile. Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center. Available at <https://www.seafdec.org/fisheries-country-profile-philippines/>.

² *Id.*

³ Fisheries Sector Situationer. Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department, House of Representatives, September 2024 (No. 55). Available at <https://cpbrd.congress.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/FF2024-55-Fisheries-Sector-Situationer.pdf>

the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.⁴ However, despite the integral work that they do, our country's fisherfolk continue to face multiple challenges. In 2021, the poverty incidence among fisherfolk rose to 30.6%.⁵ In addition, the threat of destructive typhoons and other natural disasters continue to increase this sector's vulnerability. As the former Chairman of the House Committee on Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources, we heard firsthand the plight of our fisherfolk, and among their persistent difficulties is the possibility of displacement and relocation, which affects access to their livelihood.

The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998, as amended, mandates the establishment of fisherfolk settlement areas in coordination with concerned agencies of the government, where certain areas of the public domain shall be reserved for the settlement of the municipal fisherfolk. However, the law does not mandate a clear and specific framework for the creation of said settlement areas, nor does it define the roles of the relevant government agencies.

This proposed measure aims to strengthen the provisions of the Fisheries Code and provide our fisherfolk with security and stability by ensuring they have suitable settlement areas that have access to fishing grounds. This bill requires the Department of Agriculture, Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the local government units to establish settlement areas for fisherfolk, granting preference to fisherfolk registered in the respective city or municipality who do not have real property. To ensure a forward-looking approach, the bill also mandates LGUs to integrate these settlement areas in their comprehensive land use plans.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this measure is earnestly sought.


BRIAN RAYMUND S. YAMSUAN
Representative
2nd District of Parañaque

⁴ 2023 Philippine Fisheries Profile. Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources. Available at <https://www.bfar.da.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2023-Philippine-Fisheries-Profile.pdf>.

⁵ *Id.*

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

SECTION 1. Section 108 of Republic Act No. 8550, otherwise known as "The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998", as amended by Republic Act No. 10654, is hereby amended to read as follows:

Section 108. Fisherfolk Settlement Areas. - ~~The Department shall establish and create fisherfolk settlement areas in coordination with concerned agencies of the government, where certain areas of the public domain, specifically near the fishing grounds, shall be reserved for the settlement of the municipal fisherfolk. Nothing in this section shall be construed to vest ownership of any resettlement area to a municipal fisherfolk for whom said areas may have been reserved for or had been actually granted to.~~ **THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES, AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS OF CITIES OR MUNICIPALITIES EXERCISING JURISDICTION OVER COASTAL AREAS AND MUNICIPAL WATERS, SHALL IDENTIFY, ESTABLISH, AND CREATE SETTLEMENT AREAS WHICH HAVE ADEQUATE**

ACCESS TO FISHING GROUNDS: PROVIDED, THAT IN PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED OR ESTABLISHED SETTLEMENT AREAS WITH ADEQUATE ACCESS TO FISHING GROUNDS, FISHERFOLK SHALL BE GRANTED PREFERENCE IN THE AWARD OF SETTLEMENT RIGHTS THEREAT: PROVIDED, FURTHER, THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SETTLEMENT AREAS SHALL BE IN FAVOR OF FISHERFOLK WHO ARE REGISTERED AS SUCH WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE CITY OR MUNICIPALITY AND WHO ARE WITHOUT REAL PROPERTY: PROVIDED, FINALLY, THAT LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS EXERCISING JURISDICTION OVER COASTAL AREAS AND MUNICIPAL WATERS ARE HEREBY MANDATED TO INTEGRATE SETTLEMENT AREAS FOR FISHERFOLK IN THEIR RESPECTIVE COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLANS.

SECTION 2. Separability Clause. - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder thereof not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 3. Repealing Clause. – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, letters of instruction, proclamations, or administrative orders, rules or regulations that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 4. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,