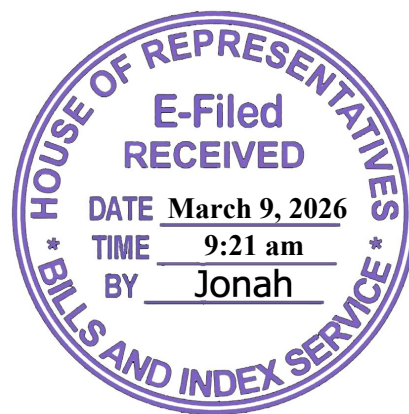


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City
TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 8349

Introduced by: **REP. TOBIAS “TOBY” M. TIANGCO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Municipal fisherfolk across the Philippines remain among the *most economically vulnerable sectors despite their indispensable role* in ensuring national food security, nutrition, and livelihood generation. Operating primarily within municipal waters using small-scale equipment and motorized boats, these fisherfolk face rising fuel prices, declining fish stocks, and increasing operational costs that threaten the sustainability of their livelihood.

Fuel constitutes one of the largest expenses in small-scale fishing operations, often accounting for a substantial portion of daily production costs. Volatile fuel prices directly affect fishing frequency, access to productive fishing grounds, and income stability. In many coastal and inland communities, reduced fishing output can also lead to disruptions in local food supply and increased prices of fish, a primary source of protein for millions of Filipinos.

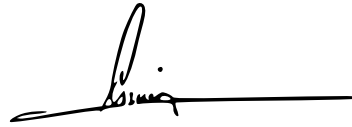
Republic Act No. 8550, otherwise known as the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998, as amended by Republic Act No. 10654, recognizes *municipal fisherfolk as a priority sector* and mandates the State to provide support services to enhance productivity, ensure equitable access to resources, and promote sustainable fisheries development. While existing programs of the Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) provide fuel assistance to selected beneficiaries, such programs are largely temporary, limited in coverage, and dependent on annual appropriations.

There is therefore a compelling need to institutionalize a nationwide fuel subsidy program that guarantees predictable and equitable assistance to registered municipal fisherfolk. Providing a uniform monthly fuel subsidy will help stabilize fishing operations, reduce vulnerability to fuel price fluctuations, support livelihoods, and sustain fish production for domestic consumption.

This proposed measure seeks to establish a permanent national fuel subsidy program granting a fixed monthly assistance of *Two Thousand Pesos (₱2,000.00)* to qualified municipal fisherfolk throughout the country, consistent with the objectives of the Fisheries Code and existing Department of Agriculture policies.

By reducing operational costs and strengthening livelihood resilience, this measure will help ensure a stable and affordable fish supply, alleviate poverty in coastal communities, and advance inclusive and sustainable economic development.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Toby', followed by a long horizontal line.

TOBIAS “TOBY” M. TIANGCO

Representative

Lone District, Navotas City

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8349

Introduced by: **REP. TOBIAS “TOBY” M. TIANGCO**

AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING A NATIONAL FUEL SUBSIDY PROGRAM FOR
MUNICIPAL FISHERFOLK AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Municipal Fisherfolk Fuel Subsidy Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect the rights and welfare of municipal fisherfolk, enhance fisheries productivity, ensure food security, and promote the sustainable use of aquatic resources consistent with Republic Act No. 8550, as amended. The State shall provide targeted assistance to reduce operational costs while encouraging responsible and sustainable fishing practices nationwide.

SEC. 3. *Establishment of the National Municipal Fisherfolk Fuel Subsidy Program.*
– There is hereby established a nationwide Fuel Subsidy Program for municipal fisherfolk, hereinafter referred to as the Program, to provide direct financial assistance to offset fuel expenses incurred in fishing operations within municipal waters.

SEC. 4. *Implementing Agency.* – The Program shall be implemented by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) under the Department of Agriculture, in coordination with local government units, fisheries management councils, and other relevant agencies.

SEC. 5. *Beneficiaries Covered.* – Beneficiaries shall be duly registered municipal fisherfolk who are:

- a) Listed in the Municipal Fisherfolk Registry (FishR);
- b) Operate motorized fishing vessels of three (3) gross tons or less;

- b) Conduct fishing activities within municipal waters, inland waters, or coastal areas;
- c) Possess valid permits and comply with fisheries regulations.

Priority shall be given to subsistence fisherfolk, indigenous fisherfolk communities, and those residing in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas.

SEC. 6. *Amount of Fuel Subsidy.* — Each qualified beneficiary shall receive a fixed fuel subsidy of Two Thousand Pesos (₱2,000.00) per month, regardless of vessel classification, to help defray fuel expenses for fishing operations.

The amount shall be reviewed every three (3) years by BFAR to determine the need for adjustment based on inflation, fuel prices, and fiscal sustainability.

SEC. 7. *Mode of Distribution.*—Fuel assistance shall be provided through secure and transparent mechanisms, including:

- a) Fuel vouchers redeemable at accredited fuel stations; or
- b) Electronic fuel cards;

SEC. 8. *Sustainability and Compliance Conditions.*—Eligibility for continued participation shall require:

- a) Compliance with fisheries laws, rules, and regulations;
- b) Observance of closed seasons and conservation measures;
- c) Use of legal fishing gear and methods;
- d) Non-engagement in illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing;

Violation of these conditions may result in *suspension or disqualification* from the Program.

SEC. 9. *Complementary Support Services.*—Consistent with national fisheries policy, beneficiaries may also receive:

- a) Safety and navigational equipment;
- b) Post-harvest facilities and cold storage support;
- c) Access to credit and microfinance;

- d) Livelihood diversification assistance;
- e) Insurance coverage and disaster relief support;
- f) Training on sustainable fisheries management.

SEC. 10. *Convergence with Existing Programs.*—The Program shall complement existing assistance provided by national government agencies and local government units to avoid duplication and ensure efficient use of resources.

SEC. 11. *Funding.*— An initial amount of One Billion Pesos (₱1,000,000,000.00) shall be immediately appropriated and included in the budget, as recommended by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR). Thereafter, the amounts necessary for the effective implementation of this Act shall be included annually in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) under the Department of Agriculture. Additional funding may be sourced from fisheries development funds, grants, official development assistance, and other lawful sources.

SEC. 12. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*—Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, BFAR shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations in coordination with relevant agencies and stakeholders.

SEC. 13. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws and executive orders, rules and regulations, or any part thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed and/or modified accordingly.

SEC 14. *Separability Clause* - In case any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, such declaration shall not affect the other remaining provisions, which shall remain valid.

SEC. 15. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen days (15) after its complete publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,