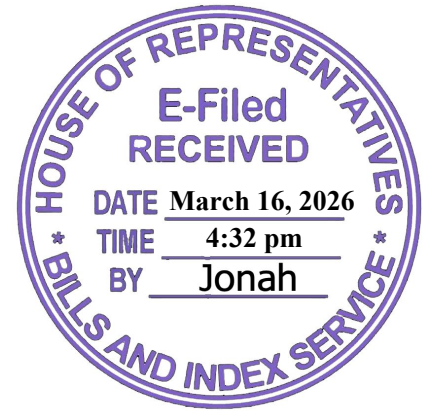


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8559



INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ADRIAN MICHAEL A. AMATONG

EXPLANATORY NOTE

For the poorest province in the Philippines, where agriculture sustains the lives and livelihoods of thousands, a comprehensive irrigation strategy is not merely a tool for development—it is a lifeline for the agricultural workers who feed and sustain our communities.

Despite its fertile lands and significant agricultural potential, farming communities in the Province of Zamboanga del Norte remain dependent on rain-fed cultivation, making agricultural production vulnerable to unpredictable weather patterns and prolonged dry spells. This is a condition largely brought about by decades of insufficient irrigation development in the province.

According to data from the National Irrigation Administration, Zamboanga del Norte has a potential irrigation service area of 23,999 hectares. However, only 34.88 % of this potential has been developed, leaving 65.12 % of agricultural lands without irrigation support. This considerable gap highlights the necessity for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to irrigation development in order to fully harness the agricultural potential of the province. At present, irrigation initiatives in Zamboanga del Norte are implemented on a project-by-project basis, often without the benefit of an integrated provincial framework that systematically identifies priority areas, maximizes available water resources, and aligns irrigation investments with long-term agricultural development objectives.

This proposed measure seeks to address this gap by directing the National Irrigation Administration to prepare and implement a Zamboanga del Norte Provincial Irrigation Master Plan. The Master Plan will provide a strategic framework for irrigation development by identifying priority irrigation service areas, mapping water resources, assessing existing irrigation facilities, and establishing a long-term program for the expansion, rehabilitation, and modernization of irrigation systems across the province.

Ultimately, this measure seeks to ensure that the farmers of Zamboanga del Norte are given the opportunity to survive and thrive.

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


ADRIAN MICHAEL A. AMATONG

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HOUSE BILL NO. 8559

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ADRIAN MICHAEL A. AMATONG

AN ACT
CREATING THE ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE PROVINCIAL IRRIGATION MASTER PLAN, DIRECTING THE NATIONAL IRRIGATION ADMINISTRATION TO PREPARE AND IMPLEMENT THE SAME, IDENTIFYING PRIORITY IRRIGATION SERVICE AREAS IN THE PROVINCE, 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 “Zamboanga del Norte Provincial Irrigation Master Plan Act.”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote agricultural productivity, ensure food security, and uplift the welfare of farmers through the development of sustainable and climate-resilient irrigation systems. The State recognizes that many agricultural communities in Zamboanga del Norte remain dependent on rain-fed farming due to the absence of adequate irrigation infrastructure, resulting in low productivity and persistent rural poverty.

To address these challenges, the government shall establish a comprehensive irrigation development strategy for Zamboanga del Norte to maximize the province’s agricultural potential, expand irrigated farmlands, and support the livelihood of farmers across the province.

SEC. 3. Creation of the Zamboanga del Norte Provincial Irrigation Master Plan.
- The National Irrigation Administration (NIA), in coordination with the Department of Agriculture (DA), the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the Provincial Government of Zamboanga del Norte, and concerned Local Government Units, shall prepare and implement a comprehensive Zamboanga del Norte Provincial Irrigation Master Plan.

The Master Plan shall serve as the primary framework for identifying, prioritizing, and implementing irrigation infrastructure projects across the province

Infrastructure and public works, including roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, public markets, and other government facilities.

SEC. 4. Scope and Coverage. – The Provincial Irrigation Master Plan shall cover all agricultural areas of Zamboanga del Norte, including the municipalities of Baliguian, Godod, Gotalac, Jose Dalman, Kalawit, Katipunan, La Libertad, Labason, Leon B.

Postigo, Liloy, Manukan, Mutia, Piñan, Polanco, Rizal, Salug, Sergio Osmeña Sr., Siayan, Sibuco, Siocon, Sindangan, and Sirawai, and shall identify priority irrigation service areas based on technical, environmental, and agricultural considerations.

SEC. 5. Components of the Master Plan. – The Zamboanga del Norte Provincial Irrigation Master Plan shall include:

- a. Comprehensive mapping of irrigation potential**, including rivers, watersheds, groundwater sources, and agricultural lands suitable for irrigation;
- b. Inventory and assessment of existing irrigation facilities**, including national irrigation systems, communal irrigation systems, and pump irrigation projects currently operating in the province;
- c. Identification of priority irrigation infrastructure projects**, including:
 - National Irrigation Systems (NIS);
 - Communal Irrigation Systems (CIS);
 - Small Reservoir Irrigation Projects (SRIP);
 - Solar-powered pump irrigation systems;
 - River diversion irrigation systems; and
 - Rehabilitation and modernization of existing irrigation facilities;
- d. Estimation of potential irrigation service areas**, including the number of hectares that may be irrigated under the proposed irrigation projects;
- e. Watershed protection and water resource management strategies** to ensure sustainable irrigation water supply; and
- f. A Ten-Year Provincial Irrigation Development Program** identifying priority projects, estimated costs, and implementation timelines.

SEC. 6. Implementing Agency. – The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) shall be the lead agency responsible for the preparation, implementation, monitoring, and periodic updating of the Zamboanga del Norte Provincial Irrigation Master Plan.

The NIA shall coordinate with the Department of Agriculture, the Provincial Government of Zamboanga del Norte, concerned Local Government Units, and Irrigators' Associations to ensure effective implementation of irrigation projects.

SEC. 7. Participation of Irrigators' Associations and Local Communities. – Irrigators' Associations and local farming communities shall be consulted and involved in the planning, implementation, operation, and maintenance of irrigation systems developed under this Act.

SEC. 8. Timeline for Completion of the Master Plan. – The National Irrigation Administration shall complete the Zamboanga del Norte Provincial Irrigation Master Plan within eighteen (18) months from the effectivity of this Act.

The completed Master Plan shall be submitted to the Congress of the Philippines, the Department of Agriculture, and the Provincial Government of Zamboanga del Norte.

SEC. 9. Funding. – The funding necessary for the preparation of the Zamboanga del Norte Provincial Irrigation Master Plan, including feasibility studies, hydrological surveys, engineering designs, and related technical assessments, shall be included in

the annual General Appropriations Act under the budget of the National Irrigation Administration.

Thereafter, the funding requirements for the irrigation infrastructure projects identified under the Master Plan shall likewise be included in the annual General Appropriations Act and other appropriate funding sources of the national government.

SEC. 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the National Irrigation Administration, in coordination with the Department of Agriculture and other concerned agencies, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.* - If any part or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 13. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,