



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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 8760

Introduced by Representative Howard A. Guintu

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Section 9, Article II of the 1987 Constitution provides that the State shall promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty. In line with this, the State is duty-bound to support vulnerable sectors, including municipal fisherfolk, whose livelihoods are essential to food security and the local economy.

Our municipal fisherfolk remain one of the most vulnerable sectors of society. Their livelihood depends on their daily catch. In recent years, rising prices, especially fuel, have made it harder for them to sustain their operations. Fuel is a basic requirement for operating fishing boats, and its increasing cost directly affects their ability to work.

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA)¹, municipal fisherfolk had a poverty incidence of 27.4 percent in 2023, making them one of the sectors with the highest proportions of families living below the poverty threshold. This vulnerability has persisted over time, with fisherfolk consistently among the poorest basic sectors. The poverty incidence was 30.6 percent in 2021 and 26.2 percent in 2018. Also, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR)² reports that there were approximately 2.60 million registered fisherfolk nationwide in 2024, showing the large scope of the sector that relies on fishing for their livelihood.

Rising fuel costs have forced many fisherfolk to reduce or stop fishing, leading to lower catch, lower income, and a smaller supply of locally sourced fish in the market. This not only affects fisherfolk and their families but also Filipino households who depend on affordable fish and it weakens the country's food security.

This bill seeks to address this problem by establishing the Pantawid Pambangka Program, which will provide a monthly fuel voucher of not less than Two Thousand Five Hundred Pesos, Php 2,500.00, to qualified beneficiaries registered under national and local fisherfolk registry systems, including FishR, BoatR, and LGU registries. The Program will be implemented by the Department of Agriculture (DA) through the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and funded through appropriations provided under this Act.

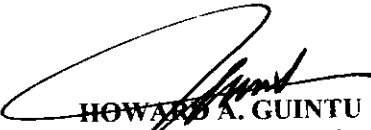
¹ Philippine Statistics Authority. Philippine Statistics Authority. 2023. *Poverty incidence among municipal fisherfolk*. Retrieved from: <https://psa.gov.ph/statistics/poverty/node/1684075985>

² Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources. Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources. 2024. *Philippine Fisheries Profile*. Retrieved from: https://www.bfar.da.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/FINAL_FOR-PUBLICATION-2024-FISHERIES-PROFILE-SIZE-A4.pdf

Thus, this bill will help reduce operational expenses for fisherfolk, sustain their livelihood, and enable them to continue contributing to food production and the local economy.

By providing a fuel subsidy and linking beneficiaries to existing social protection programs, including automatic coverage under the National Health Insurance Program and access to microinsurance through the Social Security System (SSS), this measure is expected to stabilize incomes, strengthen the fisheries sector, support the local economy, and ensure a steady supply of fish in the market. In effect, it will improve the welfare of fisherfolk and reinforce the country's food security.

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



HOWARD A. GUINTU
Representative, First District of Capiz



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

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "*Pantawid Pambangka Act of 2026*".

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

SEC. 3. *The Pantawid Pambangka Program.* - Pursuant to the declared policy of this Act, there is hereby established the Pantawid Pambangka Program, herein referred to as the Program which shall grant a monthly fuel voucher amounting to not less than Two Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (Php 2,500.00) per month for each eligible beneficiary under this Act: *Provided*, that the amount shall be revised every year to account for inflation. The Program shall be implemented by the Department of Agriculture (DA), through the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).

SEC. 4. *Beneficiaries.* - The beneficiaries of this Act shall be municipal fisherfolk who fish within municipal waters, whether coastal or inland, and who use motorized fishing vessels of three (3) gross tons or less, either individually or through a fisherfolk organization, cooperative or association. *Provided*, That such beneficiaries are duly listed in the Municipal Fisherfolk Registration System or "FishR" of the DA, the National Program for Municipal Fishing Vessels and Gears Registration or "BoatR" of the BFAR, or the boat registry system of the concerned local government unit (LGU): *Provided*, finally, That municipal fisherfolk and fishing vessels that are not yet registered under the aforementioned registry systems may still avail of the benefits of this Act provided they register in any of the aforementioned registry systems within the periods set by the DA, BFAR, or the LGU.

SEC. 5. *Convergence of Social Services.* - 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 micro-insurance mechanisms to beneficiaries of the program.

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

SEC. 7. Appropriations. – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the Department of Agriculture. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continuation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - Within one hundred twenty (120) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DA together with BFAR and in consultation with other relevant stakeholders including the Department of Energy (DOE), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), as well as concerned stakeholders especially municipal fisherfolk, cooperatives, and associations. Failure of the relevant government agencies to promulgate the IRR within the period provided shall subject the heads of these agencies to administrative penalties under applicable civil service laws. Should the IRR contain provisions that are contrary to this Act, the heads of the government agencies responsible for such provision, when done in bad faith or with gross negligence, shall be held administratively liable.

SEC. 9. Separability Clause. - If any provision or part of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 10. Repealing Clause. - All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, and administrative regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 11. Effectivity Clause. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,