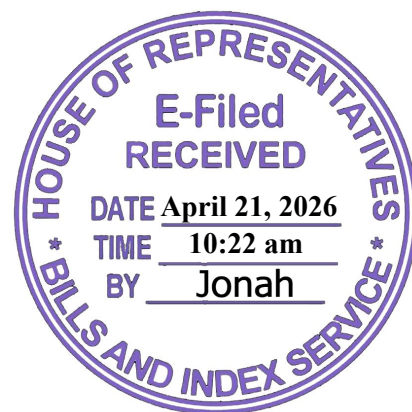




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8906



Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez, and Jude A. Acidre

AN ACT
REVERTING TO THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT THE DISCHARGE
OF BASIC AGRICULTURAL FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
DEVOLVED TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS, AMENDING FOR
THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution, under Section 2, Article XII, mandates the State to protect and promote the national economy and ensure food security for all Filipinos. However, as a direct result of the devolution under Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, the current fragmented state of agricultural extension services has created a systemic barrier to national self-sufficiency.

For over three decades, the responsibility for agricultural support, research, and infrastructure has been split among 1,488 municipalities and 82 provinces. While the intent of the Local Government Code intended to empower communities, the reality has been a "Postcode Lottery" for Filipino farmers. A farmer's access to quality seeds, irrigation, and technical expertise currently depends on the fiscal health and local political priorities, rather than a unified national strategy.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) currently lacks direct command over the very personnel, the Agricultural Technicians (ATs), tasked with

implementing national programs. These technicians, now employees of Local Government Units (LGUs), are often diverted to non-agricultural administrative tasks, leaving our food producers without the technical guidance necessary to modernize. Furthermore, the Mandanas-Garcia Ruling, while increasing LGU budgets, has not solved the lack of specialized technical expertise in smaller, 4th to 6th-class municipalities.

This bill seeks to renationalize basic agricultural functions to achieve three critical goals:

- Unified Command: To allow the DA to implement high-impact, large-scale programs (e.g., *Masagana* Rice Industry Development Program) with a direct line to the field.
- Professional Standardization: To ensure that all agricultural workers receive standardized compensation under the National Salary Standardization Law, shielding them from local political interference.
- Data-Driven Governance: To centralize agricultural data collection, enabling the State to make accurate decisions on importation, production subsidies, and climate-resilient interventions.

Food security is a matter of national survival. It cannot be left to the varying capacities of fragmented local units. By reverting these functions to the National Government, we restore the State's ability to feed its people and modernize the backbone of our economy. The DA should be given full power and authority to implement the agricultural programs, policies, rules, and regulations efficiently, effectively, and uniformly across the country.

Since the 11th Congress, this measure has been consistently filed but it remained pending with Committee on Local Government.

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



FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ



YEDDA MARIE K. ROMUALDEZ



ANDREW JULIAN K. ROMUALDEZ



JUDE A. ACIDRE



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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 "*Renationalization of Basic Agricultural Functions Act.*"

Section 2. *Renationalization.* – Section 17 of Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, is hereby amended:

“Section 1.1 The devolution of the basic services and facilities to the Barangay on “Agricultural Support services which include planting materials distribution system and operation of farm produce collection and buying station,” is hereby withdrawn from the Barangay and reverted back to the National Government. This amends Section 17, item (b), No. (1),

Par. 1 of the Local Government Code of 1991.

Section 1.2 The devolution of the basic services and facilities to the Municipality on "Extension and on-site research services and facilities related to Agriculture and Fisheries activities which include dispersal of livestock and poultry, fingerlings and other seedlings materials for aquaculture; palay, corn and vegetable seed farms; medicinal plant gardens; fruit tree, coconut and other kinds of seedling nurseries; demonstration farms; quality control of copra and improvement and development of local distribution channels, preferable through cooperatives; inter-barangay irrigation system; water and soil resource utilization and conservation projects; and enforcement of fishery laws in municipal waters including the conservation of mangroves" is hereby withdrawn from the Municipality and reverted back to the National Government. This amends Section 17, item (b). No. (2), Par. 1 of the Local Government Code of 1991.

Section 1.3 The devolution of basic services and facilities to the province on "Agricultural extension and on-site research services and facilities which include the prevention and control of pest and animal pet and diseases; dairy farms, livestock markers, animal breeding station and artificial insemination centers, and assistance in the organization of farmers' and fishermen's cooperative and other collective organizations, as well as the transfer of appropriate technology." is hereby withdrawn from the Province and reverted back to the National Government. This amends Section 17, item (b), No. (3), Par. (1), of the Local Government Code of 1991.

Section 1.4 The devolution of the basic services and facilities to the City “as embodied in the same basic services and facilities for Municipality and Province,” Section 17, Item (b), No. 1 and 3, Par. (1), is hereby withdrawn from the city and reverted back to the national Government. This amends Section 17, item (b), No. (4), Par. (I) of the Local Government Code of 1991.”

Section 3. *Transition Period, Personnel Absorption, and Asset Transfer.*

– Accordingly, all personnel, technicians, facilities, and properties previously transferred to the Barangays, Municipalities, Provinces, and Cities shall be returned to the National Government.

To ensure the unhampered delivery of services, a transition period of three (3) years from the effectivity of this Act is hereby established.

- (a) Absorption of Personnel: All incumbent agricultural and fishery personnel of LGUs shall be absorbed by the Department of Agriculture (DA). There shall be no diminution in rank, salary, or benefits.
- (b) Security of Tenure: Personnel who are currently holding permanent positions shall retain their permanent status under the National Government.
- (c) Asset Inventory: The DA, in coordination with the DILG and the DBM, shall conduct a nationwide inventory of all agricultural facilities, nurseries, and equipment previously devolved to be returned to the national registry within one hundred eighty (180) days.

Section 4. *Appropriations.* – The funds necessary to cover the implementation of these amendments should be appropriated for agriculture and

shall be provided for in the current General Appropriations Act and the years after.

Section 5. *Agriculture and Fisheries Review Panel.* – For the purpose of this Act, an Agriculture and Fisheries Review Panel is hereby created to be composed of the following: the Secretary of Agriculture, as Chairman; the Secretary of Interior and Local Government, the Director of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, and the Director of the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries, or their duly designated representatives, as members.

The Agriculture and Fishery Review Panel, in consultation with concerned sectors in the field, shall identify the problems of the industry under the re-nationalization set-up and recommend measures to enhance agricultural productivity.

Section 6. *Separability Clause.* – If, for any reason, any section or provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other sections or provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

Section 7. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof, inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 8. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,