



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

20th CONGRESS
1st Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9060



Introduced by Representative SITTIE SHAHARA "BAI DIMPLE" I. MASTURA

AN ACT

**MANDATING THE DEVELOPMENT, PROMOTION, AND USE OF WATER CATCHMENT SYSTEMS
IN AGRICULTURE, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) issued a warning that there is now a 79% chance of El Niño developing in the tropical Pacific Ocean within the period of June to August of this year, raising the status from El Niño Watch to El Niño Alert.

The El Niño phenomenon and other climate-induced shocks have a direct impact on water supply for crops and livestock, farm productivity, rural incomes, agricultural production in general, energy supply, and overall public welfare. Expected to last until early 2027, this phenomenon poses more problems for the country, already reeling from the impact of the Middle East crisis on all sectors.

More importantly, water determines how well we can expect Philippine agriculture to contribute to GDP amid the challenges posed by climate disruptions, given that one-third of the country's irrigable land still lacks a dependable water supply.

As per records of the National Irrigation Administration, roughly one million hectares of irrigable land remain rain-dependent, such that when climate change diagnostics confirm a significant temperature rise, making dry seasons drier and hotter, closing the irrigation gap is an economic necessity that we cannot choose to ignore.

The Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) has identified rainwater harvesting systems, small farm reservoirs, and run-off water impounding ponds as cost-effective climate adaptation measures for our farms because large-scale infrastructure projects alone cannot promptly serve widely dispersed small farms.

On-site water catchment systems are scalable and cost-efficient projects that deliver direct benefits to the most vulnerable and inaccessible key production areas.

This bill, therefore, seeks to institutionalize a national program to secure a year-round water supply for agricultural production, relieve demand pressure on surface and groundwater sources, and contribute to our efforts to strengthen resilience to droughts, El Niño events, and other climate-induced impacts.

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



SITTIE SHAHARA "BAI DIMPLE" I. MASTURA
Representative
Maguindanao del Norte, Lone District
with Cotabato City



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

20th CONGRESS
1st Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9060

Introduced by Representative SITTIE SHAHARA “BAI DIMPLE” I. MASTURA

AN ACT

**MANDATING THE DEVELOPMENT, PROMOTION, AND USE OF WATER CATCHMENT SYSTEMS
IN AGRICULTURE, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

SECTION 1. Title. – This Act shall be known as the “*Agricultural Water Catchment Development Act of 2026*”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to ensure water security in the agricultural sector, develop and promote the use of sustainable farm production practices relative to water supply, and enhance the capacities of rural farm workers and their families to adapt to climate change.

To this end, the State shall develop, design, promote, disseminate, and assist in the transfer of technology on water catchment systems as both primary and alternative sources of water for irrigation, ease the pressure on surface water and groundwater sources for agricultural purposes, and create an enabling environment for the widespread adoption of water catchment systems in agricultural areas across the country.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

(a) Agricultural Water Catchment System refers to a system specifically designed for harvesting, storing, and processing rainwater, runoff, or other non-potable water sources for the primary purpose of irrigating agricultural lands, livestock use, and other farm-related requisites. This may include, but is not limited to, rainwater harvesting tanks, farm ponds, check dams, and other similar structures.

(b) Applicant refers to an individual farmer, a farmers’ association, and/or cooperative.

- (c) Implementing Agencies refer to the Department of Agriculture (DA), National Water Resources Board (WRB), and National Irrigation Administration (NIA), who shall together coordinate to implement the provisions of this Act.
- (d) Farmer refers to any person engaged directly or personally in farming and/or production of crops.
- (e) Farm land refers to land devoted to agricultural production and/or activities.
- (f) Local Government Units (LGUs) refer to provinces, cities, municipalities, and barangays

SEC. 4. *Information and Awareness Campaign.* – The Implementing Agency shall undertake a comprehensive information campaign to advance the technical aspects and benefits of agricultural water catchment systems to farmers, farmers’ associations, cooperatives, LGUs, and other stakeholders in the agricultural sector.

These campaigns must highlight the economic advantages, environmental benefits, and resilience-building aspects of adopting such systems, including practical guides on design, installation, operation, and maintenance suitable for various farm sizes and climatic conditions.

SEC. 5. *Technical Guidance and Standards.* – In consultation with relevant experts and agricultural institutions, the implementing agency shall establish and disseminate technical guidance and standards for the design, construction, installation, operation, and maintenance of various types of agricultural water catchment systems.

These guidelines shall consider local hydrological conditions, crop water requirements, soil types, and climate change projections to ensure the safety, efficacy, and sustainability of the systems. These guidelines must also incorporate best practices on water quality management for purposes of irrigation.

SEC. 6. *Subsidies and Incentives.* – To encourage the widespread adoption of agricultural water catchment systems, the implementing agency must provide subsidies and a wide range of incentives, which may include but are not limited to:

- (a) Grants and Direct Subsidies. – Direct financial grants or subsidies shall be provided to each applicant for the construction or acquisition of agricultural water catchment systems.

Priority shall be given to small-scale and subsistence farmers and those whose farms are in areas where irrigation is non-existent due to their location or prevailing climate conditions, such as frequent droughts.

- (b) **Low Interest Loans.** – Access to low-interest loans from the government financial institutions shall be facilitated for farmers and agricultural enterprises for the purpose of establishing and upgrading agricultural water catchment systems.
- (c) **Tax Breaks and Exemptions.** – Farmers and agricultural enterprises investing in the installation of agricultural water catchment systems shall be eligible for tax breaks, including exemptions from value-added tax (VAT) on the purchase of materials and equipment directly used for such systems and reduced real property taxes on land incorporating such systems.
- (d) **Technical Assistance and Training.** – Free technical assistance, training, and capacity-building programs shall be provided to farmers on the proper design, construction, operation, and maintenance of agricultural water catchment systems.

SEC. 7. *Interagency Collaboration and Coordination.* – The implementing agency shall establish a strong mechanism for dynamic collaboration with LGUs, irrigators' associations, water districts, agricultural cooperatives, non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions to generate public awareness and facilitate the effective implementation of the provisions of this Act.

To this end, local government units are encouraged to:

- (a) Integrate the promotion and development of agricultural water catchment systems in their local development plans, agricultural development programs, and land use plans.
- (b) Provide additional incentives or support mechanisms for farmers and farm businesses in their respective jurisdictions that adopt agricultural water catchment systems.
- (c) Allocate a portion of their annual budgets for the adoption, development, installation, and maintenance of agricultural water catchment systems, especially in areas already identified as water-stressed for agriculture.

SEC. 8. *Research and Development.* – The implementing agency in collaboration with relevant research institutions, shall promote and support research and development activities aimed at improving the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and sustainability of agricultural water catchment technologies suitable for various agro-climatic conditions in the Philippines. This shall include studies on optimal sizing, materials innovation, and integration with other sustainable farming practices.

SEC. 9. *Monitoring and Evaluation.* – The implementing agency shall establish a robust system to monitor and evaluate the implementation of this Act, including the number of agricultural water catchment systems installed and operating, the total area of farmlands irrigated, water savings achieved, and the overall impact on farm productivity and farmer livelihoods. An annual report shall be submitted to Congress detailing the progress, challenges, and recommendations to further enhance the water security in the agriculture sector through water catchment systems.

SEC. 10. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual general appropriations act of the year following its enactment and every year thereafter as may be necessary for its continued implementation.

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

SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, acts, executive orders, presidential decrees, issuances, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act, are hereby deemed amended, modified, or repealed accordingly.

SEC. 13. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following the publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.