

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

**TWENTIETH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **9160**



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Introduced by: **REPRESENTATIVE ERIC L. OLIVAREZ**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The Philippines is increasingly confronted with the twin challenges of groundwater depletion and groundwater contamination brought about by rapid urbanization, population growth, unsustainable extraction practices, and the worsening impacts of climate change. Groundwater remains a critical source of potable water, agricultural irrigation, industrial use, and ecological stability, particularly in areas vulnerable to drought, saltwater intrusion, and seasonal water shortages.

Consistent with the State policy to protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology, there is a need to institutionalize a comprehensive and science-based approach to groundwater preservation and management.

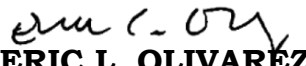
Despite its importance, the country has yet to adopt a comprehensive national framework specifically focused on the preservation, sustainable management, and restoration of groundwater resources. Excessive groundwater withdrawal has already resulted in declining water tables, land subsidence, saltwater intrusion in coastal communities, and the degradation of aquifers in several parts of the country. These threats endanger water security, food production, public health, environmental sustainability, and long-term economic resilience.

This proposed measure seeks to establish a National Groundwater Preservation and Management Program that institutionalizes groundwater monitoring, recharge enhancement, aquifer protection, sustainable extraction practices, and inter-agency coordination among national government agencies and local government units. It further integrates groundwater preservation into climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies while promoting water-efficient technologies and responsible resource management.

The bill likewise strengthens local participation by encouraging the integration of groundwater preservation measures into local land use and climate action planning, while providing incentives for industries, farmers, cooperatives, and communities adopting sustainable water conservation and recharge practices.

By harmonizing national and local efforts toward the protection of the country's groundwater resources, this measure aims to secure a sustainable and resilient water future for present and succeeding generations.

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

  
**ERIC L. OLIVAREZ**

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**AN ACT**  
**ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL GROUNDWATER PRESERVATION**  
**AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM, PROVIDING FOR THE**  
**SUSTAINABLE USE, PROTECTION, AND RESTORATION OF**  
**GROUNDWATER RESOURCES, 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 "*National Groundwater Preservation and Management Act.*"

**SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.** - It is the policy of the State to protect and conserve groundwater as a vital source of potable water, agricultural irrigation, industrial supply, and ecological balance. The State shall regulate its extraction, ensure sustainable recharge, prevent contamination, and integrate groundwater management into climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction consistent with the Philippine Water Code, the Local Government Code, the Climate Change Act, and the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act.

**SECTION 3. Definition of Terms.** For purposes of this Act:

- (a) *Groundwater* refers to water found beneath the surface of the ground, occupying the pores and crevices of soil, sand, and rock formations.
- (b) *Aquifer* refers to a geological formation that can store, transmit, and yield significant quantities of groundwater.
- (c) *Groundwater recharge* refers to the process of water infiltrating from the surface to replenish aquifers.
- (d) *Over-extraction* refers to the withdrawal of groundwater beyond the safe yield or recharge capacity of the aquifer, leading to depletion or degradation.
- (e) *Saltwater intrusion* refers to the movement of saline water into freshwater aquifers due to excessive pumping or reduced recharge.

**SECTION 4. National Groundwater Preservation and Management Program.** There is hereby established a National Groundwater Preservation and Management Program (NGPMP) to be implemented by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in coordination with the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) as the primary regulatory agency for water resources, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Department of Health (DOH), and local government units (LGUs).

The Program shall:

- (a) Establish a nationwide groundwater monitoring network for water levels, quality and recharge rates;
- (b) Designate critical groundwater areas subject to regulation, rehabilitation, or moratorium on new wells;
- (c) Promote artificial recharge methods such as rainwater harvesting, infiltration ponds, and percolation tanks;
- (d) Protect recharge zones from land conversion, pollution, and unsustainable development;
- (e) Support and strengthen the regulation by the NWRB of the drilling of new wells through groundwater assessments, monitoring systems, and technical recommendations on spacing requirements and allowable abstraction limits;
- (f) Provide technical and financial assistance to LUs and water districts to implement sustainable extraction and recharge projects; and
- (g) Promote the reuse of treated wastewater and water-saving technologies to reduce pressure on aquifers.

**SECTION 5. Role of Local Government Units (LGUs).** LGUs shall:

- (a) Incorporate groundwater preservation strategies in their Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUPs) and Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAPs);
- (b) Designate or utilize existing local environment, planning, or disaster risk reduction offices or councils to coordinate groundwater preservation initiatives;

- (c) Subject to the availability of local funds and applicable budgeting laws, allocate appropriate funds for groundwater recharge and monitoring projects; and
- (d) Maintain local databases of registered wells, water quality, and abstraction volumes, linked to the national database.

#### **SECTION 6. Incentives.**

- (a) Industries, cooperatives, and communities that adopt water recycling, aquifer recharge, or efficient irrigation technologies shall be eligible for tax incentives under the Green Jobs Act (RA 10771).
- (b) Farmers practicing groundwater-saving irrigation methods (*e.g.*, alternate wetting and drying for rice) shall be eligible for crop insurance premium discounts from the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC).
- (c) LGUs with exemplary groundwater preservation programs shall be recognized under the Seal of Good Local Governance.

**SECTION 7. Funding.** The initial amount necessary to carry out this Act shall be charged against current appropriations of the DENR, DPWH, and NWRB. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. LGUs may also access the People's Survival Fund (RA 10174) and their Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund for eligible climate adaptation, mitigation, and disaster resilience measures related to groundwater protection, consistent with existing laws and auditing rules.

**SECTION 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** Within ninety (90) days from effectivity of this Act, the DENR, with the NWRB, in coordination with DPWH, DA, DOH, and LGUs, shall promulgate the rules and regulations necessary for its implementation.

**SECTION 9. Separability Clause.** If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

**SECTION 10. Repealing Clause.** All laws, decrees, executive issuances, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are repealed or modified accordingly.

Nothing in this Act shall diminish or modify the powers and functions of the National Water Resources Board under Presidential Decree No. 1067 or other existing laws.”

**SECTION 11. Non-Impairment Clause.** — Nothing in this Act shall diminish or modify the powers and functions of the National Water

Resources Board under Presidential Decree No. 1067 or other existing laws.

**SECTION 12. Effectivity.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved.*