

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **9374**



Introduced by Abang Lingkod Party-list Representative
Manuel "Manman" O. Ko

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The municipal fisherfolk sector remains among the most economically vulnerable sectors in the Philippines despite its vital role in ensuring food security, sustaining coastal economies, and preserving marine resources. Many fisherfolk families continue to reside in informal coastal settlements exposed to recurring typhoons, storm surges, coastal erosion, sea level rise, and displacement caused by reclamation, tourism development, and other infrastructure projects. The absence of secure, climate-resilient, and livelihood-accessible settlement areas has contributed to persistent poverty, insecurity of tenure, and heightened social vulnerability among coastal communities.

Section 108 of Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 recognizes the need for fisherfolk settlement areas near fishing grounds. However, despite the existence of this policy, implementation has remained limited due to the absence of clearer institutional responsibilities, coordinated land use planning, and mechanisms for integrating fisherfolk housing into local development frameworks.

This proposed measure seeks to strengthen and operationalize the mandate under Section 108 by requiring the Department of Agriculture, through the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, in coordination with the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development, the Department of Environment and Natural

Resources, and local government units, to identify, establish, and develop fisherfolk settlement areas in coastal municipalities and cities.

The bill further ensures that settlement areas are strategically located near fishing grounds and livelihood opportunities, while integrating climate resilience, disaster risk reduction, environmental sustainability, and access to basic services and infrastructure. It likewise mandates the integration of fisherfolk settlement areas into Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUPs), Local Shelter Plans, and local climate adaptation frameworks to guarantee long-term sustainability and proper local implementation.

Moreover, the proposed measure recognizes the importance of balancing social justice and environmental protection by ensuring that settlement areas are established in environmentally suitable locations and by providing appropriate tenure arrangements consistent with existing laws governing public lands and coastal resources.

At a time when coastal communities face increasing threats from climate change and displacement, there is an urgent need to strengthen the State's commitment to protecting the welfare, dignity, and livelihood of municipal fisherfolk through sustainable and climate-resilient human settlements.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Manuel O. Ko', with a stylized, cursive flourish.

Manuel “Manman” O. Ko

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**AN ACT STRENGTHENING AND MANDATING THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF FISHERFOLK SETTLEMENT AREAS, AMENDING FOR THE
PURPOSE SECTION 108 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8550, OTHERWISE
KNOWN AS THE “PHILIPPINE FISHERIES CODE OF 1998,” AS
AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10654**

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

SECTION 1. Amendment of Section 108 of Republic Act No. 8550- Section 108 of the Republic Act no. 8550, otherwise known as “ The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998”, as amended by Republic Act no. 10654, is hereby amended to read as follows

Section 108. *Fisherfolk Settlement Areas.* - ~~The Department shall establish and create fisherfolk settlement areas in coordination with concerned agencies of the government, where certain areas of the public domain, specifically near the fishing grounds, shall be reserved for the settlement of the municipal fisherfolk. Nothing in this section shall be construed to vest ownership of any resettlement area to a municipal fisherfolk for whom said areas may have been reserved for or had been actually granted to.~~

"THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, THROUGH THE BUREAU OF FISHERIES AND AQUATIC RESOURCES (BFAR), IN COORDINATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES, AND CONCERNED LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS (LGUS), SHALL IDENTIFY, ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, AND MAINTAIN FISHERFOLK SETTLEMENT AREAS IN COASTAL MUNICIPALITIES AND CITIES WITH MUNICIPAL WATERS.

SUCH SETTLEMENT AREAS SHALL, AS FAR AS PRACTICABLE, BE LOCATED IN AREAS WITH ADEQUATE AND REASONABLE ACCESS TO MUNICIPAL FISHING GROUNDS, FISHING FACILITIES, FISH LANDING SITES, AND OTHER LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES NECESSARY FOR THE ECONOMIC WELFARE OF MUNICIPAL FISHERFOLK.

PRIORITY BENEFICIARIES SHALL INCLUDE DULY REGISTERED MUNICIPAL FISHERFOLK, PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO ARE INFORMAL SETTLERS IN DANGER ZONES, DISPLACED BY CALAMITIES, COASTAL EROSION, RECLAMATION, INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS, MARINE PROTECTED AREA ESTABLISHMENT, OR OTHER GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES, AND THOSE WHO DO NOT OWN REAL PROPERTY.

THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF FISHERFOLK SETTLEMENT AREAS SHALL INCLUDE ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE, INCLUDING POTABLE WATER, SANITATION, ELECTRICITY, ACCESS ROADS, DISASTER-RESILIENT HOUSING, LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT, AND CLIMATE-RESILIENT COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SUBJECT TO EXISTING LAWS, RULES, AND REGULATIONS.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS EXERCISING JURISDICTION OVER COASTAL AREAS AND MUNICIPAL WATERS ARE HEREBY MANDATED TO INTEGRATE FISHERFOLK SETTLEMENT AREAS INTO THEIR RESPECTIVE COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLANS (CLUPS), LOCAL SHELTER PLANS, COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLANS (CDPS), AND LOCAL CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION PLANS.

THE DENR SHALL ENSURE THAT SETTLEMENT AREAS ESTABLISHED UNDER THIS SECTION ARE ENVIRONMENTALLY SUITABLE, CLIMATE-RESILIENT, AND NOT LOCATED WITHIN PROTECTED AREAS OR ENVIRONMENTALLY CRITICAL ZONES, UNLESS OTHERWISE ALLOWED BY LAW.

NOTHING IN THIS SECTION SHALL BE CONSTRUED AS AUTOMATICALLY VESTING OWNERSHIP OVER PUBLIC LANDS IN FAVOR OF BENEFICIARIES. SECURITY OF TENURE, USUFRUCT RIGHTS, STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENTS, LEASE ARRANGEMENTS, OR OTHER APPROPRIATE TENURE INSTRUMENTS MAY BE GRANTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH EXISTING LAWS AND REGULATIONS.”

SECTION 2. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Agriculture, through the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, in coordination with the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Department of the Interior and Local Government, and concerned stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 3. Separability Clause. - If any portion or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, the validity of the other provisions shall not be affected thereby and shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 4. Repealing Clause. - All laws, decrees, orders, circulars, issuances, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 5. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,