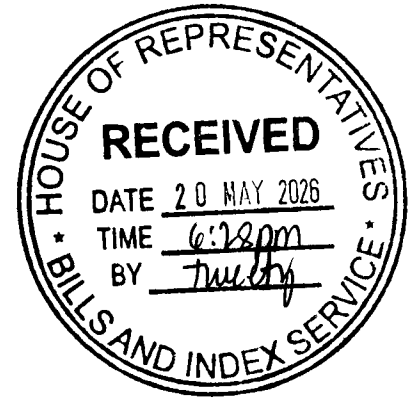


TWENTIETH CONGRESS)
OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

House Bill No. **9380**

Introduced by Representative KARL FERNANDEZ LEGAZPI

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines, as the world's second largest archipelagic state, possesses a vast maritime domain covering approximately 2.2 million square kilometers, comprising nearly eighty-eight percent (88%) of the country's national territory. With more than sixty percent (60%) of Filipinos residing in coastal communities across 315 municipalities and 25 coastal cities, the country's marine and coastal ecosystems remain central to national food security, biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and economic development.

The Philippines is likewise endowed with abundant marine and coastal resources that sustain millions of Filipinos through fisheries, tourism, transportation, and other ocean-based industries. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) 2020 State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture Report, the Philippines produced approximately 1.89 million metric tons of marine capture fisheries in 2018, ranking among the top fisheries-producing countries in the world. Recent data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) showed that the country's ocean economy reached approximately ₱1.01 trillion in 2024, accounting for 3.8% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). Ocean-based industries likewise employed around 2.39 million Filipinos, representing approximately 4.9% of total national employment.

Despite their immense ecological and economic value, the country's coral reefs, mangrove forests, seagrass beds, and other coastal ecosystems continue to face serious threats from climate change, coastal development, illegal fishing, marine pollution, sedimentation, and destructive human activities. The degradation of these ecosystems weakens coastal protection against storm surges and erosion, diminishes fishery productivity, threatens marine biodiversity, and adversely affects the livelihoods of coastal communities.

Mangrove forests and coral reefs serve as natural barriers that reduce the impacts of typhoons, storm surges, and coastal flooding. They likewise function as vital breeding grounds and habitats for marine species that sustain the country's fisheries sector. Healthy coastal ecosystems are also indispensable to the continued growth of ecotourism and the preservation of the country's natural heritage.

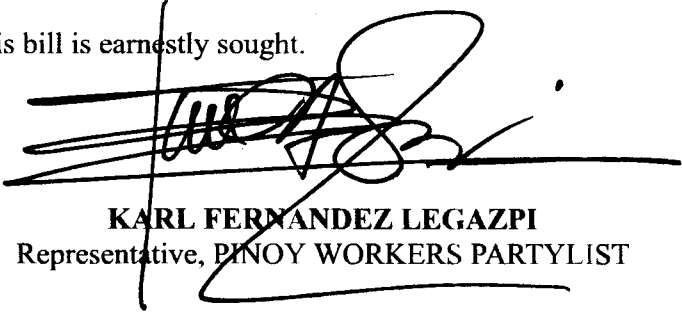
Recognizing the urgent need to rehabilitate and protect these critical ecosystems, the State has already undertaken initiatives such as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources'

(DENR) National Greening Program (NGP), which includes coastal and mangrove rehabilitation efforts in several parts of the country. However, despite existing programs, the continuing degradation of coastal and marine ecosystems demonstrates the need for a more focused, science-based, and long-term national restoration framework specifically dedicated to coral reefs, mangroves, and coastal habitats.

This proposed measure seeks to establish a comprehensive Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Restoration Program aimed at restoring degraded coral reefs and mangrove forests, strengthening climate resilience, enhancing biodiversity conservation, improving fishery productivity, and promoting sustainable livelihoods for coastal communities. The bill also seeks to institutionalize stronger coordination among national government agencies, local government units, academic institutions, civil society organizations, and coastal stakeholders in the rehabilitation, protection, and sustainable management of marine and coastal resources.

By investing in ecosystem restoration today, the State not only protects the environment but also safeguards food security, strengthens disaster resilience, promotes sustainable economic development, and secures the welfare of future generations of Filipinos.

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



KARL FERNANDEZ LEGAZPI
Representative, PINOY WORKERS PARTYLIST

TWENTIETH CONGRESS)
OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

House Bill No. 9380

Introduced by Representative KARL FERNANDEZ LEGAZPI

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PALAWAN CORAL REEF AND MANGROVE
RESTORATION PROGRAM, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES**

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

GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the “Palawan Coral Reef and Mangrove Restoration Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect, conserve, rehabilitate, and sustainably manage the country’s marine and coastal ecosystems as part of its commitment to environmental protection, climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, food security, and sustainable development.

Towards this end, the State shall strengthen the restoration and rehabilitation of degraded coral reefs, mangrove forests, and other critical coastal ecosystems in the Province of Palawan through science-based, community-driven, and climate-responsive approaches.

SEC. 3. *Establishment of the Palawan Coral Reef and Mangrove Restoration Program* - There is hereby established a Palawan Coral Reef and Mangrove Restoration Program, hereinafter referred to as the “Program,” which shall serve as the primary framework for the rehabilitation, restoration, protection, and sustainable management of coral reef ecosystems and mangrove forests in the Province of Palawan.

SEC. 4. *Lead Implementing Agencies.* - The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), shall serve as the lead implementing agency of the Program, in coordination with the following:

- (a) Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR);
- (b) Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD);
- (c) Department of Science and Technology (DOST);
- (d) concerned Local Government Units (LGUs);

- (e) State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), including the Western Philippines University and Palawan State University; and
- (f) accredited civil society organizations, people's organizations, and coastal community groups.

SEC. 5. *Establishment of Coral Research and Propagation Centers.* - The DENR, in coordination with BFAR, DOST, and concerned academic institutions, shall establish and maintain Coral Research and Propagation Centers in strategic coastal areas of Palawan for the purposes of:

- (a) coral propagation and transplantation;
- (b) marine biodiversity research;
- (c) monitoring of coral health and reef recovery;
- (d) capacity-building and technical training; and
- (e) development of science-based restoration technologies and practices.

SEC. 6. *Mangrove Rehabilitation and Coastal Restoration* - The DENR, together with concerned LGUs and community stakeholders, shall identify degraded coastal areas suitable for mangrove rehabilitation and coastal ecosystem restoration.

Restoration activities shall prioritize:

- (a) ecologically appropriate mangrove species;
- (b) climate-resilient coastal protection measures;
- (c) community-based coastal resource management; and
- (d) protection of existing natural mangrove forests from illegal conversion and destruction.

SEC. 7. *Community Participation and Livelihood Support* - The Program shall promote the active participation of coastal communities, fisherfolk organizations, Indigenous Peoples communities, and local stakeholders in restoration and conservation activities.

Subject to existing laws, the DENR and BFAR may provide technical assistance, training, and sustainable livelihood support related to coastal resource management, ecotourism, mangrove stewardship, and marine conservation.

SEC. 8. *Research, Monitoring, and Data Management* - The DENR, in coordination with DOST, BFAR, and partner academic institutions, shall develop a scientific monitoring and assessment system to regularly evaluate coral reef conditions, mangrove cover, biodiversity indicators, and ecosystem restoration outcomes. An annual status report shall be submitted to Congress and made publicly accessible through appropriate government platforms.

SEC. 9. *Grants and Partnerships.* - The DENR may enter into partnerships and collaborative agreements with academic institutions, non-government organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), private entities, and international development partners for purposes consistent with this Act. Subject to existing accounting and auditing laws, grants and technical assistance may be extended for qualified restoration, research, and conservation projects.

SEC. 10. *Appropriations.* - The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the DENR, BFAR, and other concerned agencies. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DENR, in coordination with BFAR, PCSD, DOST, and other concerned agencies, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 12. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 13. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 14. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,