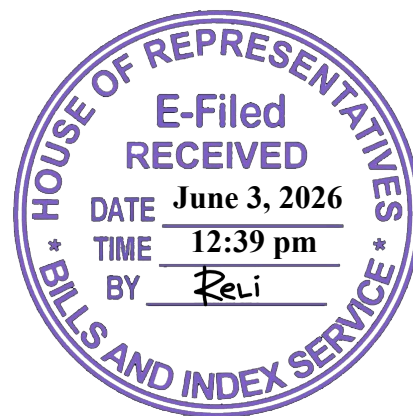


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 9712

Introduced by Honorable Representatives
SARAH JANE I. ELAGO (Gabriela Women's Party)
RENEE LOUISE M. CO (Kabataan Partylist)
ANTONIO L. TINIO (ACT Teachers Partylist)

AN ACT MANDATING THE PROVISION OF A FIFTEEN THOUSAND PESOS (P15,000.00) PRODUCTION SUBSIDY TO THE FILIPINOS EMPLOYED IN THE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SECTOR, TO STRENGTHEN PRODUCTION, SUPPORT SECTORAL RECOVERY, AND ADVANCE NATIONAL ECONOMIC RESILIENCE AMID ECONOMIC CRISES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Among the country's basic sectors, fisherfolk are among the poorest of the poor. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, the incidence of poverty remains higher among fisherfolk. From 2018 to 2023, the number of poor fisherfolk increased from 287,070 to 353,190.

Subsequent interventions involving fisherfolk were largely limited to broad categories such as assistance to micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and measures to ensure supply chain continuity. In practice, fisherfolk were subsumed under a small allocation of credit facilities—₱1 billion shared among approximately 40,000 small farmers and fishers—primarily in the form of concessional loans. This approach contrasts sharply with direct subsidies provided to other sectors, such as rice farmers. Furthermore, policies focused on market access and supply chains primarily benefit intermediaries and traders, rather than addressing the production challenges faced by small fisherfolk.

Notably, no substantial production subsidies were provided for the fisheries sector. This omission reflects a failure to uphold the principles enshrined in Republic Act No. 8425, including access to basic services, asset reform, sustainable resource development, and participatory governance. Despite repeated warnings from international bodies and calls from fisherfolk organizations such as Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (PAMALAKAYA), the lack of targeted support has exacerbated the sector's marginalization and vulnerability.

Compounding these challenges is the recent surge in global oil prices, which has significantly increased operational costs for fisherfolk. By early February, a typical fisher using 10 liters of diesel per trip faced an additional ₱1,760 in monthly expenses (based on 16 fishing days), increasing costs from ₱7,200 to ₱8,960. By March, this increase reached approximately

₱3,800 per month. As a result, some fisherfolk have reportedly ceased operations due to the risk of financial losses.

Given these conditions, there is an urgent need to provide production subsidies for small fisherfolk, alongside social amelioration for fish workers.

In response, the proposed measure seeks to provide P15,000 in production subsidy to fisherfolk. This support aims to stimulate small-scale fishery production, contribute to national food security, and facilitate economic recovery, while mitigating the disproportionate impact of the crisis on already impoverished and vulnerable fisherfolk households.

The urgent passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



REP. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO
Gabriela Women's Party



REP. RENEE LOUISE M. CO
Kabataan Partylist



REP. ANTONIO L. TINIO
ACT Teachers Partylist

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

SECTION 1. Short title. – This Act shall be known as the "P15,000 Fisherfolk Production Subsidy Act."

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policies. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to recognize the fisheries and aquatic resources sector as vital to national economic recovery and the attainment of food security. The State likewise affirms the fisherfolk sector as a frontliner in the food supply chain and shall ensure that it receives adequate support and immediate relief, particularly in times of economic crisis, including but not limited to oil price increases and other external shocks affecting livelihoods.

The State likewise recognizes the fisherfolk sector as among the most vulnerable and marginalized sectors of society, having been disproportionately affected by the economic crisis and continuing economic challenges. The State shall adopt timely and urgent support interventions to safeguard their welfare and sustain their livelihoods.

SECTION 3. Beneficiaries. – The 2.7 million Filipinos registered fisherfolk shall directly receive a production subsidy of Fifteen Thousand Pesos (P15,000.00), subject to the following order of prioritization:

- a. Individuals belonging to households living below the poverty threshold;

- b. Municipal fishers and fish workers employed in, or operating, municipal fishing vessels, regardless of the status of their licensing or registration with the concerned local government unit;
- c. Fish workers employed in commercial fishing vessels and aquaculture operations, including but not limited to fish pens, fish cages, fish corrals or traps, fishponds, prawn farms, sea farms, salt beds, fish ports, fishing boats, and trawlers;
- d. Workers engaged in ancillary industries related to the fisheries sector, including the supply, construction, and maintenance of fishing vessels, gears, nets, and other fishing paraphernalia; fishery machine shops; and facilities such as hatcheries, nurseries, feed plants, cold storage and refrigeration facilities, processing plants, and other pre-harvest and post-harvest facilities; and
- e. Operators of small-scale commercial fishing vessels with a gross tonnage of 3.1 to 20.

The production subsidy shall be released on a quarterly basis: Provided, That in the event of a state of calamity or state of national emergency, the production subsidy shall be released on a monthly basis for the duration of such declaration.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) shall conduct an annual census of fisherfolk and update the list of registered fisherfolk.

SECTION 4. Functions of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR). – The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) shall:

- a. Administer and utilize the funds appropriated under this Act;
- b. Finalize the list of beneficiaries, guided by the criteria provided in the immediately preceding section, in close coordination with the Philippine Statistics Authority and the concerned local government units;
- c. Formulate and implement the mechanisms for the direct distribution of the production subsidy to the beneficiaries;
- d. Ensure the prompt and efficient distribution of the production subsidy at the earliest possible time; and
- e. Regularly and publicly disclose the status of fund releases and distribution to ensure transparency and accountability.

SECTION 5. Appropriations. – For the implementation of this Act, the amount of Forty Billion Five Hundred Million Pesos (P40,500,000,000) is hereby appropriated to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) to fund the provision of production subsidies under this Act.

SECTION 6. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), in consultation with people's organizations (POs) and non-government organizations (NGOs) advocating for the rights and welfare of small-scale fisherfolk, shall issue the implementing rules and regulations within fifteen (15) days from the effectivity of this Act,

SECTION 7. Repealing clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances not consistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended as to inconsistent parts.

SECTION 8. Separability clause. – If any provision or part of this Act is declared void, the remaining parts shall remain in force and effect.

SECTION 9. Effectivity clause. – This Act shall take effect immediately after fifteen (15) days from its publication in the Official Gazette.

Approved,