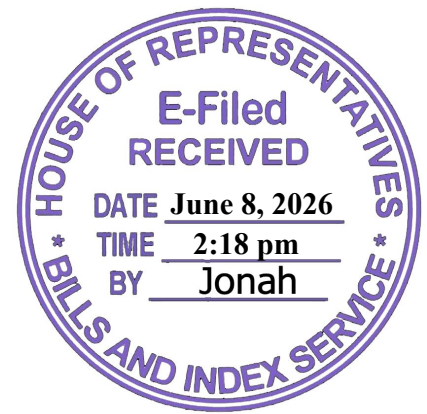


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **9826**



Introduced by **Representative ERIC G. YAP**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to establish a Benguet Highland Farmers Assistance Program to amend existing agricultural support frameworks under the Department of Agriculture (DA). This creates a dedicated, institutionalized mechanism for direct subsidies, climate resilience interventions, postharvest support, and market development assistance for farmers in the Province of Benguet. The measure recognizes the absence of an active funding mechanism under the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF), which under Republic Act No. 10848 was set for termination upon the lapse of its collection period in 2022, thereby necessitating a new statutory program anchored on annual national appropriations to ensure continuity of agricultural support services for highland farmers.

The Province of Benguet remains one of the country's primary vegetable-producing provinces, supplying a significant portion of highland vegetables consumed in Metro Manila and other urban centers. However, despite its critical role in national food security, Benguet farmers continue to experience severe market volatility and income instability. In 2026, multiple reports documented that cabbage farmgate prices in Benguet dropped to as low as Three pesos (P3.00) to Ten pesos (P10.00) per kilogram, far below production costs. This forces farmers to either sell at a loss or leave crops unharvested. The same reports show that production costs reach approximately Eighteen pesos (P18.00) to Twenty pesos (P20.00) per kilogram, creating persistent negative margins for farmers amid weak demand and oversupply conditions. GMA News further reported that many farmers have been forced to abandon harvesting altogether due to rising fuel and transport costs, which make delivery to trading centers financially unsustainable^{1,2}. Complementary coverage also shows instances where vegetables are either sold at extremely low

¹ Lema, K. and Portugal, A. (2026, April 7). High fuel costs forcing Philippine farmers to abandon harvests. Reuters. Accessed from: <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/high-fuel-costs-forcing-philippine-farmers-abandon-harvests-2026-04-07/>. Accessed in: June 4, 2026.

² GMA News. (2026, April 9). Benguet farmers let crops rot due to oversupply. GMA News Online. Accessed from: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/regions/983309/benguet-farmers-let-crops-rot-due-to-oversupply/story/>. Accessed in: June 4, 2026.

prices or given away due to lack of buyers in trading posts³. These conditions are further worsened by the rising of fuel and fertilizer costs, climate-related disruptions, and structural inefficiencies in the agricultural supply chain, all of which continue to place Benguet farmers in a cycle of production losses despite their critical contribution to the national food supply.

The proposed measure provides a comprehensive package of interventions, including direct input subsidies, fuel assistance, climate-resilient farming technologies, postharvest infrastructure, agricultural insurance support, and market development initiatives. Unlike fragmented and project-based interventions, the bill establishes a unified program under the DA to ensure coordinated planning, implementation, and monitoring of agricultural assistance. It also strengthens accountability mechanisms through annual reporting to Congress, guaranteeing that government support translates into measurable improvements in farm productivity, income stability, and sectoral resilience.

This measure responds to a persistent and painful reality: the very farmers who sustain the nation's food supply remain among its most economically vulnerable. Every season of price collapse, every field left unharvested, and every farmer forced to sell below cost reflects a deeper structural failure that cannot be ignored. Benguet farmers continue to feed millions, yet many struggle to feed their own families with dignity. This bill seeks to break that cycle of vulnerability and neglect. It carries the urgency of a sector that cannot wait for another harvest cycle of loss, and it calls for immediate and sustained government action to ensure that those who cultivate the nation's food are finally given the support they have long deserved.

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


HON. ERIC G. YAP

³ Virata, M. (2026, April 1). DA deploys trucks for excess vegetables. Daily Tribune. Accessed from: <https://tribune.net.ph/2026/03/31/da-deploys-trucks-for-excess-vegetables>. Accessed on: June 4, 2026.

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9826

Introduced by **Representative ERIC G. YAP**

AN ACT

ESTABLISHING THE BENGUET HIGHLAND FARMERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, PROVIDING DIRECT SUBSIDIES, CLIMATE RESILIENCE SUPPORT, POSTHARVEST ASSISTANCE, AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS FOR FARMERS IN THE PROVINCE OF BENGUET, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, 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 “*Benguet Highland Farmers Assistance Act.*”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to ensure food security, strengthen agricultural competitiveness, improve farmer incomes, and promote sustainable agricultural development. The State recognizes the Province of Benguet as a major producer of highland vegetables and other high-value crops and shall provide targeted interventions to address the unique challenges confronting its agricultural sector.

SEC. 3. *Establishment of the Benguet Highland Farmers Assistance Program.* – There is hereby established a Benguet Highland Farmers Assistance Program under the Department of Agriculture (DA) to provide direct assistance and support to qualified farmers, farmers' associations, cooperatives, and agricultural producers in the Province of Benguet.

SEC. 4. *Coverage.* – The Program shall cover farmers engaged in the production of vegetables, root crops, fruits, coffee, cut flowers, and other agricultural commodities within the Province of Benguet.

SEC. 5. *Forms of Assistance.* – Assistance under this Act may include:

- a) Direct farm input subsidies;
- b) Fuel assistance and transportation support;

- c) Climate resilience and adaptation projects;
- d) Postharvest facilities and equipment assistance;
- e) Market development and price stabilization programs;
- f) Agricultural insurance premium assistance;
- g) Emergency recovery assistance following disasters and severe market disruptions;
- h) Agricultural extension, training, and technology transfer programs;
and
- i) Other forms of assistance determined by the DA to improve farm productivity and farmer income.

SEC. 5. *Beneficiaries.* – Beneficiaries shall be registered under the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA) and shall comply with the qualifications prescribed by the DA.

SEC. 6. *Implementation.* – The DA, through its Regional Field Office in the Cordillera Administrative Region, and in coordination with the Provincial Government of Benguet, local government units, farmers’ organizations, and other concerned agencies, shall implement this Act.

SEC. 7. *Annual Report.* – The DA shall submit an annual report to Congress on the implementation of this Act, including fund utilization, beneficiaries served, and measurable impacts on agricultural productivity and farmer incomes.

SEC. 8. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act under the budget of the DA. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DA, in coordination with relevant agencies, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 10. *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. 11. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 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,