



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
Second Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. **10579**

Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE KATRINA REIKO CHUA - TAI**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The fisheries industry remains a vital pillar of the national economy. It contributes around 1.3 percent to the country's gross domestic product. It also anchors the broader agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sector, which together account for nearly 9 percent of total economic output. Each year, the industry hauls in over 4 million metric tons of catch and generates hundreds of billions of pesos. This highlights its dual role as a source of nourishment and a powerful driver of economic growth.

Just as crucial is the industry's role in providing livelihoods. It directly supports between 1.6 million and 2.3 million Filipinos. Many of these individuals live in coastal and rural areas where opportunities are scarce. When related industries are included, the number of people whose lives are tied to fisheries swells to over three million. The sector also makes waves in international trade. It earns more than one billion US dollars each year from the export of prized marine products.

Despite these vital contributions, municipal fisherfolk still grapple with persistent economic hardship. Many live below the poverty line. They face mounting threats from environmental decline, unpredictable weather, and stronger natural disasters. Coastal communities are especially vulnerable. They face storm surges, flooding, and rising seas that can sweep away homes and livelihoods in an instant.

These challenges worsen with development projects such as land reclamation and infrastructure expansion. These have often forced fisherfolk to relocate without adequate support or resettlement. Without secure land rights and access to safe, resilient housing, their ability to maintain livelihoods and improve their quality of life is severely hampered.

The 1987 Constitution unequivocally recognizes the centrality of labor in the nation's development. It imposes upon the State the duty to afford full protection to workers, promote productive employment, and ensure just and decent conditions of work. Supporting this mandate, the Constitution further directs that the country's natural resources, including fisheries, be utilized and conserved mainly for the benefit of the Filipino people.

Within this constitutional vision, municipal fisherfolk stand at a crossroads of importance and fragility. They feed the nation and drive economic activity. They also act as guardians of the country's marine and coastal treasures. Yet, despite their vital contributions, they remain among the most economically marginalized groups in society.

Existing law, particularly Section 108 of Republic Act No. 8550, as amended, contemplates the establishment of fisherfolk settlement areas. However, experience shows that its implementation has been uneven and sometimes ineffective. This may be largely due to the lack of a clear, enforceable framework. Such a framework would define the responsibilities of relevant agencies and ensure coordinated action at the national and local levels.

This proposed measure seeks to fill these gaps. It aims to create a stronger, more unified approach to developing fisherfolk settlements and resettlement areas. It calls for close collaboration among the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and local governments. These groups must work together to ensure these communities are thoughtfully identified, developed, and sustained.

The measure also ensures that these settlements and resettlements are shielded from environmental dangers and built to withstand climate change. They are equipped with vital services and infrastructure. Most importantly, it safeguards fisherfolk's access to fishing grounds, so their main income source remains intact. It also calls for integration into local land-use plans and prioritizes the displaced, landless, or most needy.

By securing resources, improving livelihoods, and guaranteeing shelter, this measure breathes life into constitutional goals of social justice and inclusive development. It seeks to meet the urgent needs of municipal fisherfolk and lay the groundwork for a thriving, resilient fisheries sector. These communities rely on this support. This action affirms the State's dedication to upholding the dignity and welfare of municipal fisherfolk and to recognizing their essential role in the nation's well-being.

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


KATRINA REIKO CHUA-TAI

1 Towards this end, the State shall establish and institutionalize fisherfolk settlement
2 and resettlement areas that are climate-resilient, accessible, and strategically located to
3 preserve fisherfolk livelihoods, particularly for those displaced by environmental
4 degradation, natural disasters, and government development projects.

5
6 SEC. 3. *Amendment.* - Section 108 of Republic Act No. 8550, otherwise known as
7 the “Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998,” as amended by Republic Act No. 10654, is hereby
8 further amended to read as follows:

9
10 “Section 108. *Fisherfolk Settlement AND RESETTLEMENT* Areas. — The
11 Department shall ~~establish and create fisherfolk settlement areas in~~
12 ~~coordination with concerned agencies of the government, where certain~~
13 ~~areas of the public domain, specifically near the fishing grounds, shall be~~
14 ~~reserved for the settlement of the municipal fisherfolk. Nothing in this section~~
15 ~~shall be construed to vest ownership of any resettlement area to a municipal~~
16 ~~fisherfolk for whom said areas may have been reserved for or had been~~
17 ~~actually granted to.~~ **IN COORDINATION WITH THE BUREAU OF**
18 **FISHERIES AND AQUATIC RESOURCES (BFAR) OF THE**
19 **DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN**
20 **SETTLEMENTS AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (DHSUD), THE**
21 **DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES**
22 **(DENR), AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS (LGUS) OF CITIES**
23 **AND MUNICIPALITIES EXERCISING JURISDICTION OVER COASTAL**
24 **AREAS AND MUNICIPAL WATERS, SHALL IDENTIFY, ESTABLISH,**

1 **AND DEVELOP FISHERFOLK SETTLEMENT AND RESETTLEMENT**
2 **AREAS IN COASTAL AND NEARBY INLAND ZONES.**

3
4 **CERTAIN AREAS OF THE PUBLIC DOMAIN, PARTICULARLY THOSE**
5 **SITUATED NEAR FISHING GROUNDS, SHALL BE RESERVED FOR**
6 **THE SETTLEMENT OF MUNICIPAL FISHERFOLK: PROVIDED, THAT**
7 **SUCH AREAS SHALL ENSURE ADEQUATE AND REASONABLE**
8 **ACCESS TO FISHING GROUNDS AND MARINE RESOURCES.**

9
10 **THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUCH AREAS SHALL BE GUIDED BY THE**
11 **FOLLOWING:**

12
13 **a. SITES SHALL ENSURE CONTINUED ACCESS TO FISHING**
14 **GROUNDS AND MARINE RESOURCES;**

15 **b. AREAS SHALL BE SAFE FROM ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS,**
16 **INCLUDING STORM SURGES, FLOODING, COASTAL EROSION,**
17 **AND SEA LEVEL RISE, AND SHALL BE CLIMATE-RESILIENT;**

18 **c. AREAS SHALL BE EQUIPPED WITH BASIC SERVICES AND**
19 **FACILITIES, INCLUDING POTABLE WATER, ELECTRICITY,**
20 **SANITATION, ACCESS ROADS, AND LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT**
21 **INFRASTRUCTURE;**

22 **d. PROVISION SHALL BE MADE FOR SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES-**
23 **BASED AND ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS; AND**

1 **e. DEVELOPMENT SHALL BE UNDERTAKEN IN CONSULTATION**
2 **WITH AFFECTED FISHERFOLK COMMUNITIES.**

3
4 **NOTHING IN THIS SECTION SHALL BE CONSTRUED TO VEST**
5 **OWNERSHIP OF THE RESETTLEMENT AREA IN THE MUNICIPAL**
6 **FISHERFOLK, EXCEPT IN CASES WHERE OWNERSHIP RIGHTS HAVE**
7 **BEEN GRANTED UNDER EXISTING LAWS: PROVIDED, FURTHER,**
8 **THAT IN PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED OR ESTABLISHED SETTLEMENT**
9 **AREAS WITH ADEQUATE ACCESS TO FISHING GROUNDS,**
10 **QUALIFIED FISHERFOLK SHALL BE GRANTED PREFERENCE IN THE**
11 **AWARD OF SETTLEMENT RIGHTS THEREIN.**

12
13 **PROVIDED, FURTHERMORE, THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF**
14 **SETTLEMENT AREAS SHALL PRIMARILY BENEFIT FISHERFOLK**
15 **WHO ARE DULY REGISTERED WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE CITY OR**
16 **MUNICIPALITY AND WHO DO NOT OWN ANY REAL PROPERTY.**

17
18 **PROVIDED, FINALLY, THAT LGUS EXERCISING JURISDICTION OVER**
19 **COASTAL AREAS AND MUNICIPAL WATERS ARE HEREBY**
20 **MANDATED TO INTEGRATE FISHERFOLK SETTLEMENT AND**
21 **RESETTLEMENT AREAS INTO THEIR RESPECTIVE COMPREHENSIVE**
22 **LAND USE PLANS (CLUPS), IN COORDINATION WITH THE DA,**
23 **DHSUD, AND DENR.**

1 THE DA SHALL LEAD IN THE FORMULATION OF A NATIONAL
2 FISHERFOLK RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM; THE DHSUD SHALL
3 OVERSEE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT; THE DENR SHALL ENSURE
4 ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND SITE SUITABILITY; AND LGUS
5 SHALL FACILITATE LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION, BENEFICIARY
6 IDENTIFICATION, AND LAND USE INTEGRATION.

7
8 PRIORITY SHALL BE GIVEN TO FISHERFOLK DISPLACED BY
9 NATURAL DISASTERS, COASTAL EROSION, ENVIRONMENTAL
10 DEGRADATION, RECLAMATION, MARINE PROTECTED AREA
11 ESTABLISHMENT, AND OTHER GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT
12 PROJECTS.

13
14 THE CONCERNED AGENCIES SHALL ENSURE SECURITY OF TENURE FOR
15 QUALIFIED BENEFICIARIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH EXISTING LAWS.

16 SEC. 4. *Appropriations.* - The amount necessary for the initial implementation of
17 this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the concerned agencies.
18 Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General
19 Appropriations Act.

20 SEC. 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* - Within one (1) year from
21 the effectivity of this Act, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of the Department
22 of Agriculture, in coordination with the DHSUD, DENR, and LGUs, shall promulgate the
23 necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

1 SEC. 6. ***Separability Clause.*** - If any provision of this Act is declared
2 unconstitutional, the remainder shall continue to be in full force and effect.

3 SEC. 7. ***Repealing Clause.*** - All laws inconsistent with this Act are hereby amended
4 or repealed accordingly.

5 SEC. 8. ***Effectivity.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication
6 in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

7 Approved,