



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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10854



Introduced by **Representative EDUARDO R. RAMA JR.**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Water scarcity in Metropolitan Cebu has reached critical levels, threatening public health, economic productivity, and long-term urban resilience. Rapid population growth, uneven infrastructure development, and fragmented resource management have strained the region's ability to ensure safe, sufficient, and sustainable water access for its residents, leaving a governance gap in one of the country's most densely populated and economically vital corridors.

Despite various efforts at the national and local levels, the absence of a unified, science-based, and locally responsive governance framework has hindered the development of long-term solutions. Jurisdictional overlaps, limited coordination among stakeholders, and the lack of integrated planning mechanisms have contributed to inefficiencies in water resource management and infrastructure investment.

This bill proposes the creation of the Metropolitan Cebu Integrated Water Resources Management Board. It is a multi-sectoral, inter-local body mandated to plan, coordinate, and implement strategic water resource initiatives across key cities and municipalities in the region. The Board shall be empowered to identify and harness viable water sources, promote conservation technologies, and facilitate infrastructure development through data-driven and climate-resilient approaches.

By institutionalizing this Board, the measure aims to bridge existing governance gaps, foster collaboration among local governments and stakeholders, and ensure that water resource planning is aligned with the region's development goals and climate adaptation needs. It affirms the constitutional right to water and reinforces the State's duty to promote equitable, transparent, and sustainable resource management.

For these reasons, the immediate passage of this bill is urgently sought.

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REP. EDUARDO R. RAMA, JR.

2nd District, City of Cebu



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AN ACT
CREATING THE METROPOLITAN CEBU INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT BOARD, PRESCRIBING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS,
PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Metropolitan Cebu Integrated Water Resources Management Board Act.”

SECTION. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to ensure the sustainable management, protection, development, and equitable distribution of water resources in Metropolitan Cebu. Recognizing water as a vital human right and a critical resource for inclusive economic growth, health, urban resilience, and ecological balance, the State upholds the urgent need for an integrated, coordinated, and participatory framework in managing Metropolitan Cebu’s water supply and related infrastructure. This Act affirms the government’s commitment to:

- (a) Attain water security and resilience in Metropolitan Cebu through science-based policy, system innovation, and multi-sectoral governance;
- (b) Enable the efficient exploration, development, and utilization of new water sources;
- (c) Promote collaboration among concerned local government units (LGUs), national agencies, civil society, and the private sector for transparent and accountable water governance; and

- (d) Prevent the further decline of groundwater and environmental assets, reduce institutional fragmentation, and align local initiatives with national reforms.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act:

- (a) **“Alternative Water Sources”** refer to non-traditional sources of bulk or potable water, including desalinated seawater, recycled water, brackish water, treated wastewater, harvested rainfall, and any other sources endorsed by the Board;
- (b) **“Board”** refers to the Metro Cebu Integrated Water Resources Management Board (MCIWRMB) created under this Act;
- (c) **“Floodwater Utilization”** refers to the capture, storage, treatment, and productive use of excess stormwater and floodwaters;
- (d) **“Metropolitan Cebu”** refers to the highly urbanized cities of Cebu, Mandaue, and Lapu-Lapu, and the component city of Talisay.

SECTION 4. *Creation of the Metropolitan Cebu Integrated Water Resources Management Board.* – There is hereby created a body corporate, to be known as the Metropolitan Cebu Integrated Water Resources Management Board (MCIWRMB), hereinafter referred to as the "Board," which shall be primarily responsible for the strategic oversight, policy coordination, and integrated planning, development, and management of water resources and related infrastructure for Metropolitan Cebu.

SECTION 5. *Scope and Coverage.* – The Board shall exercise jurisdiction over the highly urbanized cities of Cebu, Mandaue, and Lapu-Lapu, and the component city of Talisay at its creation. Other cities or municipalities in Cebu Province may join the jurisdiction of the Board following a resolution of their respective Sanggunian and concurrence by the Board.

SECTION. 6. *Powers and Functions of the Board.* – The Board shall be the primary, centralized, and authoritative inter-LGU body for water governance, infrastructure development, and resource management in Metropolitan Cebu. It shall exercise the following powers and functions:

- (a) **Strategic Planning and Policy Formulation.**
 - i. Formulate and periodically update the Metropolitan Cebu Integrated Water Resources Master Plan;
 - ii. Develop policies and standards for the allocation, use, and protection of all water resources within its jurisdiction, including groundwater, surface water, and alternative sources;

- iii. Recommend or set service and performance standards for water service providers, when necessary.

(b) Resource Exploration, Development, and Utilization.

- i. Identify, evaluate, and develop new and alternative water sources, including but not limited to rainwater, floodwater, reclaimed water, and desalinated seawater;
- ii. Plan, initiate, and coordinate the construction, operation, and maintenance of metro-wide water infrastructure projects, including storage, conveyance, distribution, and treatment systems.

(c) Floodwater Management and Multi-Purpose Use.

- i. Develop strategies, infrastructure, and policies for the capture, storage, and productive use of stormwater and floodwaters;
- ii. Integrate flood-control investments with water-supply planning to reduce disaster risks and enhance water security;
- iii. Promote large-scale rainwater harvesting and urban water catchment systems.

(d) Water Security and Sustainability.

- i. Protect and rehabilitate watersheds, aquifer recharge zones, and other critical water sources;
- ii. Implement demand-management programs, including leakage reduction, conservation measures, and public education;
- iii. Develop and implement climate adaptation and disaster-resilient water strategies.

(e) Sanitation and Sewerage Integration.

- i. Plan, develop, and/or operate regional wastewater treatment systems in coordination with national agencies, LGUs, and service providers;
- ii. Promote water recycling and resource recovery from sanitation systems.

(f) Institutional Coordination and Regulatory Oversight.

- i. Lead and sustain an interagency and inter-LGU platform for water governance;
- ii. Oversee, audit, and monitor the performance of water districts and utilities within its jurisdiction, in coordination with regulatory agencies;
- iii. Levy fines, and impose fees and charges for services rendered or violations committed.

(g) Public-Private Partnerships and Financing.

- i. Enter into contracts, joint ventures, or public-private partnership (PPP) arrangements for infrastructure development, subject to existing laws;

- ii. Contract loans and exercise borrowing authority for major capital projects, subject to applicable laws, rules, and regulations;
- iii. Accept grants, donations, and other lawful income to support operations and projects.

(h) Capacity Building, Research, and Development.

- i. Mobilize resources for research, pilot projects, and technology adoption in sustainable water management;
- ii. Provide technical assistance and capacity-building to LGUs, water districts, and service providers;
- iii. Promote participatory governance, stakeholder engagement, and public transparency.

- (i) Other Functions.** Exercise all other powers as necessary or incidental to carry out the objectives of this Act.

SECTION. 7. *Composition of the Board.* – The Board shall be composed of the following:

- (a) Chairperson from among the Mayors of the component cities. The Chairmanship shall be rotated every two years;
- (b) The Mayors of Metropolitan Cebu's principal cities;
- (c) Additional City/Municipal Mayors who join the Board;
- (d) The Regional Directors of the Department of Environment and Natural Resource (DENR), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev), and Department of Internal and Local Government (DILG);
- (e) The General Manager or Chairperson of the Metropolitan Cebu Water District (MCWD), as ex-officio member;
- (f) Two independent experts in water resources management, flood control, or urban planning, nominated by the LGUs and appointed by the Board.

SECTION 8. *Secretariat.* – The Board shall establish a Secretariat headed by an Executive Director who shall be appointed by the Board. The Secretariat shall provide technical and administrative support for the implementation of the Board's policies and programs.

SECTION 9. *Voting and Quorum.* – Each city/municipality represented on the Board has one vote. All resolutions, policies, and major actions of the Board shall require an

affirmative vote of at least a majority of the members present, provided that there is a quorum composed of at least 2/3 of the total voting members.

SECTION 10. *Provisions for Expansion and LGU Membership.* – Any city or municipality in Cebu Province may petition to join the Metropolitan Cebu Integrated Water Resources Management Board. Such petition shall be:

- (a) Accompanied by a Sanggunian resolution endorsing adherence to the Board's governing framework and acceptance of proportionate obligations, including funding and regulatory responsibilities;
- (b) Subject to evaluation and approval by a 2/3 vote of existing Board members;
- (c) Provided the Board, upon inclusion of new member LGUs, may reorganize representation and apportionment, and may designate new jurisdictional boundaries for resource planning.

The Board may also organize subcommittees or local water management clusters to address the specific needs of groups of municipalities.

SECTION 11. *Funding and Resource Mobilization.* – For its initial operations, in order to properly carry out the mandate of this Act, an amount necessary for the operations shall be appropriated by the National Government for the Board through the General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, the annual expenditures, including but not limited to - capital expenditures, maintenance expenses, organizational expenses, operating expenses, personnel expenses including capital outlays - shall be provided for in the General Appropriations Act.

The operations of the MCIWRMB shall likewise be supported through financial contributions and technical assistance from member LGUs, NGAs, and GOCCs and the private sector, and other local and international organizations in the form of grants, donations, contributions, payments, penalties, fees and charges. In case of grants, in cash or in kind, from foreign governments or their agencies and instrumentalities, or multilateral institutions or organizations, acceptance thereof shall be subject to prior clearance and approval of the Council and the President of the Philippines or the authorized representative, based on the recommendation of the Secretary of Finance. In case of donations, in cash or in kind, from foreign governments, acceptance thereof shall require prior clearance and approval by the Council and the President of the Philippines, or the authorized representative, based on the recommendation of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs.

The Board is likewise empowered to levy fines, and impose fees and charges for various services rendered.

The Board shall undertake continuing negotiations among the member LGUs and GOCCs to commit annual financial contributions for the operations of the Board.

SECTION 12. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within one hundred eighty (180) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Board, in consultation with relevant national government agencies, LGUs, and concerned stakeholders shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations for the implementation of this Act: Provided, That, the Board may revise such implementing rules and regulations as it deems necessary: Provided, however, That such revised implementing rules and regulations shall only take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

SECTION 13. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 14. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, or issuances inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 15. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

