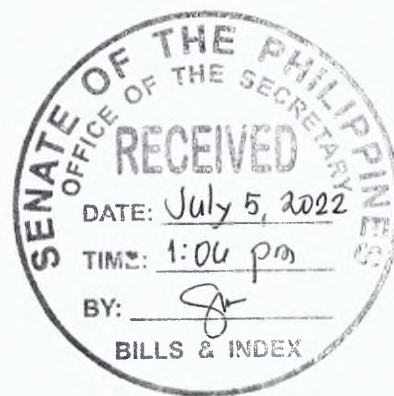


NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



SENATE

S. No. 16

Introduced by Senators **PIA S. CAYETANO**

**AN ACT
PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK ON WATER SUSTAINABILITY**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In the Philippines, around one in 10 people nationwide still do not have access to improved water sources.¹ The COVID-19 pandemic has also demonstrated the critical importance of sanitation, hygiene, and adequate access to clean water for preventing and containing diseases.² And as recently as 2019, Metro Manila experienced a water crisis that “has exposed shortfalls and delays in the region’s water infrastructure”.³

These issues remain despite the declared principles and policies under the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004, which includes pursuing a framework for sustainable development and the protection, preservation and revival of the quality of our fresh, brackish and marine waters. Water sustainability is also important to achieve the vision described by *AmBisyon Natin 2040*, which represents Filipinos' aspirations to live a strongly rooted, comfortable and secure life. The National Economic Development Authority has also created the Philippine Water Supply and Sanitation Master Plan to achieve universal access to safe, sufficient, affordable, and sustainable

¹ Water shortage in the Philippines threatens sustainable development and health. (2019, March 22). Retrieved March 5, 2020, from <https://www.who.int/philippines/news/feature-stories/detail/water-shortage-in-the-philippines-threatens-sustainable-development-and-health>.

² United Nations. (n.d.). Water and Sanitation - United Nations Sustainable Development. Retrieved July 3, 2022, from <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/water-and-sanitation/>.

³ Blomberg, M. (2019, May 17). As rains fall short, Manila trickles into a water crisis. Retrieved July 3, 2022, from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-climatechange-water-idUSKCN1SN11Z>.

water supply, hygiene, and sanitation by 2030.⁴ However, it is important to institutionalize these efforts in order to ensure their long-term continuity.

Further, as a party to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Philippines committed to the attainment of the seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are a global compact to create a future where nobody is left behind. One of these is SDG 6, which calls on the parties to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. These international commitments require urgent attention given the predictions on water scarcity — as many as 700 million people worldwide could be displaced by intense water scarcity by 2030.⁵

The above premises show the importance of water sustainability and how it directly impacts public health and quality of life. There is an urgent need to address water sustainability in Metro Manila and in the rest of the country to ensure that Filipinos will always have safe and clean sources of water. It is also incumbent to guarantee the availability of these resources for future generations through their responsible and sustainable management. The proposed measure seeks to address these issues through the creation of a framework on water sustainability, which institutionalizes SDG 6, provides yearly targets, and the corresponding annual budgetary requirements in order to achieve them.

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


PIA S. CAYETANO

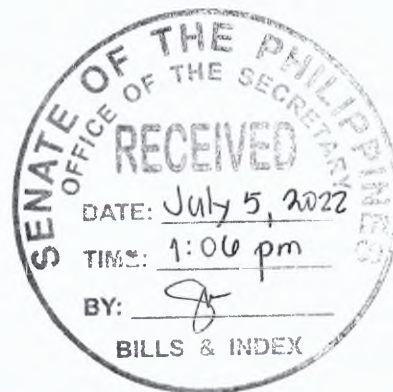
⁴ National Economic Development Authority. (2021, September 15). Philippine Water Supply and Sanitation Master Plan. Retrieved July 3, 2022, from <https://neda.gov.ph/pwssmp/>.

⁵ United Nations. (n.d.). Scarcity - UN Water. Retrieved July 3, 2022, from <https://www.unwater.org/water-facts/scarcity/>.

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S. No. 16



Introduced by Senators **PIA S. CAYETANO**

AN ACT
PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK ON WATER SUSTAINABILITY

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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "*Water Sustainability*
2 *Act.*"

3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State affirms the declared principles and
4 policies in Republic Act No. 9275, or the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004, which
5 includes pursuing a sustainable development framework for the protection,
6 preservation and revival of the quality of our fresh, brackish and marine waters.

7 The State also recognizes that water sustainability and providing clean water
8 and sanitation is inseparable from public health and hygiene, and directly impacts
9 quality of life. It acknowledges its importance in achieving the vision described by
10 *AmBisyon Natin 2040*, which represents Filipinos' aspirations to live a strongly rooted,
11 comfortable and secure life.

12 As a party to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,
13 the State remains committed to the seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals
14 (SDGs), particularly SDG 6 which calls on the State to ensure availability and
15 sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

16 It shall be the policy of the State to establish a framework for water
17 sustainability, which shall be used by the relevant agencies to ensure that Filipinos will
18 always have safe and clean sources of water, and guarantee the availability of these

1 resources for future generations through their responsible and sustainable
2 management.

3 *Sec. 3. Philippine Water Sustainability Framework.* – The Department of
4 Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in coordination with the National
5 Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and Department of Science and
6 Technology (DOST) and in consultation with other relevant agencies, shall update and
7 consolidate all existing frameworks prepared by all government agencies for water
8 management and sustainability into the *Philippine Water Sustainability Framework*.
9 The Framework shall provide policies and set annual targets to ensure the availability
10 and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all Filipinos pursuant to
11 sustainable development goal (SDG) 6 under the United Nations 2030 Agenda for
12 Sustainable Development. It shall also indicate the necessary annual budgetary
13 requirements to achieve the yearly targets for every component under Section 4 of
14 this Act.

15 *Sec. 4. Components.* – The Framework shall include policies and targets with
16 specific timelines on the following components, including the roles and responsibilities
17 of relevant government agencies:

18 (a) *Safe and Affordable Drinking Water* – The Framework shall ensure universal
19 and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water nationwide.

20 (b) *Sanitation and Hygiene* – It shall provide steps to achieve access to adequate
21 and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, and end open defecation, with
22 special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable
23 situations.

24 (c) *Water Quality, Wastewater Treatment, and Safe Reuse* – The Framework shall
25 also include measures to improve water quality, including reducing pollution,
26 eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and
27 materials, as well as halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and
28 substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse.

29 (d) *Water-Use Efficiency and Freshwater Supplies* – It shall substantially increase
30 water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and
31 supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the
32 number of people suffering from water scarcity.

1 (e) *Integrated Water Resources Management* – It shall provide measures for the
2 implementation of integrated water resources management at all levels,
3 including through inter-LGU cooperation as may be appropriate and practicable.

4 (f) *Water-Related Ecosystems* – The Framework shall encompass all water-related
5 ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes.
6 It shall prioritize and provide measures for their protection and restoration while
7 allowing for their use and development in accordance with existing laws, rules
8 and regulations.

9 (g) *International and Private Linkages and Cooperation* – The Framework shall
10 encourage cooperation and capacity-building support in partnership with other
11 countries and private stakeholders in water- and sanitation-related activities
12 and programs, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency,
13 wastewater treatment, recycling, and reuse technologies.

14 (h) *Local Engagement and Support* – It shall likewise encourage, support and
15 strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and
16 sanitation management.

17 Sec. 5. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared
18 unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, the validity of the other provisions shall not be
19 affected thereby.

20 Sec. 6. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations or
21 parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

22 Sec. 7. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days from its
23 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,