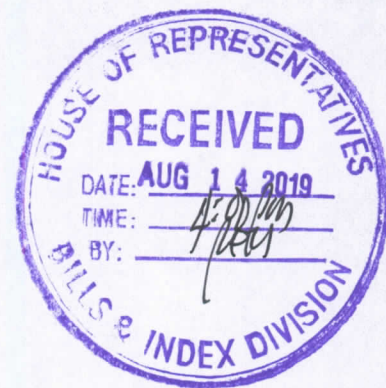


Republic of the Philippines  
House of Representatives  
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3953



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**INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ALFRED VARGAS**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Recent developments have pointed out the inadequacy of the local fish market to supply the increasing demand of a growing populace. Such is the situation that the low supply has contributed to the historically high inflation rate.

On the supply side, we have, scattered along coastal communities in the country, large numbers of small scale fisher folk, subsistence fisherman and fry-gatherers, whose individual and collective efforts are dwarfed by the more organized work of big and commercial fishing operations.

Empowering these marginal fishermen must be an urgent objective of the national government. As is the situation today, these small fishermen have inadequate and substandard fishing gear and equipment that could only allow them to fish limited distances using dilapidated bancas and overused fishing nets. On worse days when inclement weather prevents them from venturing out to sea, their families suffer. On better days when catch is abundant, they have no access to cold storage facilities that would enable them to preserve their catch to sell for better prices.

Organizing these marginal fishermen into cooperatives would help tremendously. Having strength in numbers they could, through small gradual individual contributions and pool resources to acquire the needed fishing gear and equipment. Governmental action can also facilitate for them the acquisition of motorized bancas, cold storages, and market linkages once they are organized.

Thus, the approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

  
ALFRED VARGAS

Republic of the Philippines  
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HOUSE BILL NO. 3953

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**AN ACT**  
**PROVIDING FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF COOPERATIVES FOR FRY GATHERERS,**  
**SMALL SCALE FISHERMEN AND FISHFARMERS**

*Be it enacted by the senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled.*

**SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy** - It is policy of the State to promote the growth of cooperatives among fry gatherers, small-scale fishermen, and small fish farmers to enable them to receive an equitable share in the benefits delivered from the fishing industry. Such cooperatives shall receive the support and assistance of the government.

**SECTION 2. Definition** - For purposed of the Act, the following definitions shall apply.

- A. **Fry gatherer**- shall refer to an individual, usually self-employed who is engaged in the catching, gathering or collecting of fish, utilizing for the purpose fishing boats of three gross tons or less or using gear without the use of such boats.
- B. **Small scale fishermen** - shall refer to an individual, either self-employed or employed by others who is engaged in fishing, utilizing for the purpose fishing boats of three gross tons or less or using gear without the use of such boats.
- C. **Small fish farmer** - shall refer to an individual who owns not more than one of fishpond or leases not more than three hectares or fishponds or owns not more than one-half hectare of fish pens.
- D. **Cooperative** - shall mean an association of fry gatherers, small farmers organized and registered pursuant to Presidential Decree Numbered One Hundred Seventy-Five, as amended.
- E. **Organization of Cooperative** - fry gatherers, small-scale fishermen and small farmers shall be organized as cooperatives and be registered under Republic Act Numbered Six Thousand Nine Hundred Thirty-Nine under the supervision of the Cooperative Development Authority.



**SECTION 3.** The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of the Department of Agriculture and the Cooperative Development Authority under the Office of the President shall initiate and develop programs to promote, encourage, and assist the organization of such cooperatives.

**Section 4. *Privileges of Cooperatives*** – In addition to the privileges granted to cooperatives under Presidential Decree Numbered One Hundred Seventy-Five, as further amended by Republic Act Numbered Six Thousand Nine Hundred Thirty-Nine, fishery cooperatives organized under this Act shall have the following fishery privileges:

- a. Availment of the privilege of constructing and operating oyster culture beds; gathering fish fry in municipal waters; operating fish fry in municipal water operating fishing boats of three gross or less in municipal waters, or fishing in municipal waters with nets, traps or other fishing gear not prohibited by Republic Act No. 8500, as provided in Section Twenty-Nine of Presidential Decree Numbered Seven Hundred Four, subject to the conditions imposed thereof;
- b. Availment of training programs, measures and studies conducted by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and other government agencies and instructions; and
- c. Availment of technical assistance provided by government agencies and private institutions.

**SECTION 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations*** – The Cooperative Development Authority shall, in coordination with the Bureau of Fisheries and Resources promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

**SECTION 6. *Repealing Clause*** - All law decrees order rule and regulation or part thereof inconsistent with the provision of this act hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

**SECTION 7. *Effectivity*** – This shall take effect upon its approval.

*Approved,*