



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

**SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

**House Bill No. 1399**



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Introduced by **Honorable ERLPE JOHN "PING" M. AMANTE**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

This bill seeks to establish the Philippine Eel Research Center in the Municipality of Jabonga, Province of Agusan del Norte.

Global demand for eels has been growing dramatically. Between 1997 and 2007, around a million tons of eel commodities were exported worldwide valuing over USD 11 billion. It is estimated that 400,000 tons of live eels were exported during the same period reaching a peak of over 50,000 tons in the year 2004 (FAO, 2009). The mounting appetite is mainly driven by East Asia where eels are highly prized as a delicacy for its believed medicinal and aphrodisiac properties.

Eels command a premium price in the world market. In the Philippines alone, an adult eel could fetch P1,000 while a kilo of eel fries would cost P15,000. However, these tempting rewards have attracted many people to gather eels in the wild leading to serious deterioration of its population. In fact, the Anguillid eel found in the Philippines is now considered an endangered species.

Exacerbating the effect of over-gathering is the very nature on how eels grow and develop. Eels are catadromous, meaning in their life cycle they live partly in saltwater (spawning area) and freshwater (growth habitat). Currently, there is no method to reproduce eel larva for aquaculture due to these natural complexities; thus fishermen need to catch the wild eels when they enter the river and travel upstream, and farm them in ponds.

In order to ensure that Filipinos will be able to benefit sustainably in the lucrative global trade of eels, the government must build research and technological capabilities in the breeding of eels and development of eel fishery management measures.

The Municipality of Jabonga in the Province of Agusan del Norte is an ideal location for such research center for eels due to its proximity to both

Lake Mainit and Butuan Bay where these creatures thrive. There are no official records on the actual production in the province; however gathering of eels, known locally as casili, and its fries in the adjacent areas has been going on for a long time. Notably, the casili even grew to become closely associated with Agusan del Norte as a local delicacy.

In addition, the establishment of the first eel farm in the Philippines in the nearby City of Cabadbaran will be a boost to our bid to host this research center because this will foster public-private partnership in the effective transfer and application of technologies.

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

  
**ERLPE JOHN "PING" M. AMANTE**



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**AN ACT**  
**ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE EEL RESEARCH CENTER**  
**IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF JABONGA, PROVINCE OF AGUSAN DEL**  
**NORTE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF**

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

**SECTION 1.** *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the  
“**Philippine Eel Research Center Act.**”

**SECTION 2.** *Creation of the Philippine Eel Research Center.* —  
There is hereby created a Philippine Eel Research Center, hereinafter referred to as the PERC, which shall lead in the research and development related to the eel industry, and shall be under the supervision and control of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources. The PERC shall be located in the Municipality of Jabonga, Province of Agusan del Norte.

**SECTION 3.** *Objectives and Functions* – The PERC shall have the following objectives and functions:

- a. Undertake scientific research activities to support the development of the eel industry particularly in the areas of eel cultivation, processing, and conservation;
- b. Conduct training programs for farmers, entrepreneurs, and private corporations to transfer knowledge and technology on the proper reproduction and cultivation of eels, as well as processing for domestic and foreign consumption;

- c. Implement conservation and preservation programs for all indigenous eel species; and,
- d. Enter into memoranda of agreement and receive donations through the Department of Agriculture from local and foreign sources.

**SECTION 4.**      *Executive Director of the PERC.* — The Executive Director of the PERC shall be appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture.

**SECTION 5.**      *Personnel and Staff* – The PERC Executive Director shall appoint such other personnel and staff as may be necessary for the effective operation of the PERC subject to existing rules and regulations.

**SECTION 6.**      *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* The Secretary of Agriculture shall issue rules and regulations as he may deem necessary for the implementation of this Act.

**SECTION 7.**      *Appropriation.* — The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law and thereafter.

Any income from the sale of elver stocks and other valuable produce of the PERC shall be placed in a revolving fund to be used to support its operations.

**SECTION 8.**      *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

**SECTION 9.**      *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected hereby shall remain valid and subsisting.

**SECTION 10.**     *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

**Approved,**