

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

**SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2926**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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**Introduced by REP. PANTALEON D. ALVAREZ and REP. RUWEL PETER S. GONZAGA**

#### EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is primarily an agricultural country. Its vast natural resources propel the economy in terms of livelihood and food security.

One of the major agricultural crops that the country has benefited a lot from is banana. The banana industry has generated earnings amounted to an average of USD 720 million a year, provides employment to 240,000 workers and contributes PHP 830 million in taxes to local government units. On top of that, it also supports 30,000 agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) and small landowners under various contract-growing arrangements or lease arrangements.

For almost five decades the banana industry has been a significant player in the socio-economic landscape of Southern Philippines and of the entire country. According to the Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA), there are 13 out of 26 provinces in Southern Philippines which are dedicated to banana production.

However, the industry has suffered from setbacks brought about by a lot of factors such as the economic embargo of the US over Iran, the El Nino phenomenon, the devastation of Typhoon Pablo and the recurrence of the uncontrollable spread of Panama disease. Banana producers and stakeholders have voiced out their concerns regarding the industry's sustainability. There has been a strong clamor for a specialized banana research center which will undertake scientific research to further develop the industry and address the issue of sustainability.

Hence, this bill. It seeks to establish Philippine National Banana Research Center in Panabo City, Province of Davao del Norte, to be known as Antonio O. Floirendo, Sr. Banana Research Center in recognition of the valuable contribution of the industry's prime mover, the late Antonio O. Floirendo, Sr. who was popularly known as "banana king."

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

  
REP. PANTALEON D. ALVAREZ

  
REP. RUWEL PETER S. GONZAGA

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Introduced by Representatives **PANTALEON D. ALVAREZ** and **RUWEL PETER GONZAGA**

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**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANANA RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER IN THE CITY OF PANABO, PROVINCE OF DAVAO DEL NORTE, TO BE KNOWN AS THE ‘ANTONIO O. FLOIRENDO, SR. BANANA RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER’ AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

**SECTION 1. Title.** – This Act shall be known as the *“Philippine National Banana Research and Development Center Act.”*

**SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote industrialization and full employment based on sound agricultural development and agrarian reform through industries that make full and efficient use of human and natural resources, and which are competitive in both domestic and foreign markets. Towards this end, the establishment of a national banana research and development center is necessary in order to develop a more balanced and integrated national program for the banana industry and to have a specialized institution which shall undertake research and development programs and provide relevant, efficient, and strategic approaches to enhance banana productivity in the country and improve the livelihood of small hold banana farmers.

**SECTION 3. Philippine National Banana Research and Development Center.** – The Philippine National Banana Research and Development Center, hereinafter referred to simply as the ‘Center’, is hereby established in Panabo City, Province of Davao del Norte, under the Department of Agriculture to provide research and development techniques for crop improvement, protection, production, post-harvest handling, and the maintenance of germplasm collection and gene bank that are capable of producing good quality varieties of banana.

The Center shall be known as the “Antonio O. Floirendo, Sr. Banana Research and Development Center” in recognition of the many great and singular contributions made by Antonio O. Floirendo, Sr. to the now thriving and nationally vital banana industry in the country.

**SECTION 4. Duties and Functions.** – The Center shall exercise the following duties and functions:

- a) Integrate, collate, and support research and development programs and studies on the banana industry;
- b) Conduct continuing research on developing productive, high yielding, disease-resistant, and good varieties of banana.
- c) Conduct comprehensive studies and research on banana diseases and how to efficiently and effectively address the same;
- d) Undertake research and generate relevant, efficient, cost-effective, and scientifically viable approaches to achieve greater sustainability in banana farming;
- e) Establish, upgrade and maintain germplasm collection and gene bank for banana and banana strains;
- f) Accelerate the transfer of improved banana technologies to farmers and other stakeholders through on-farm research; and scale-up best practices to effectively develop and strengthen the banana supply/value chain.
- g) Upgrade the skill of development facilitators and banana farmers through training courses, seminars, and workshops on farming techniques, banana production, and post-harvest handling and processing;
- h) Establish linkages and collaborate with national, regional, and international research institutions for banana research, development, and production activities, including germplasm exchange;
- i) Coordinate with local government units, non-government organizations, and private sector groups and interests involved in the development of the banana industry; and

- j) Receive and manage grants, aid, donations, or any kind of assistance or gratuity from donors, either foreign or domestic, to better achieve the Center's objectives.

**SECTION 5. Executive Director.** – The Center shall be headed by an Executive Director who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines upon the recommendation of the Secretary for Agriculture. The Executive Director shall be a recognized agriculturist with extensive experience in banana research and development or a widely acknowledged specialist banana grower actively involved in banana farming and production technologies.

All other officers and employees of the Center shall be appointed by the Secretary for Agriculture upon recommendation of the Executive Director and in accordance with existing Civil Service laws, rules, and regulations.

**SECTION 6. Duties and Responsibilities.** – The Executive Director shall exercise the following duties and responsibilities:

- a) Exercise over-all supervision and direction over the implementation of all research and development programs of the Center and, in general, to supervise and direct its management, operation, and administration;
- b) Execute contracts, incur obligations, acquire and dispose of assets, and deliver documents on behalf of the Center;
- c) Approve the organizational structure, operational and staffing pattern, operating and capital expenditures of the Center;
- d) Recommend the appointment of the officers and employees of the Center on the basis of the highest standards of merit, probity, and fitness for public servants, subject to Civil Service laws, rules, and regulations;
- e) Implement and enforce policies, decisions, orders, rules, and regulations issued by the Department of Agriculture and the Governing Board; and
- f) Exercise such other powers and functions and perform such other duties or tasks as may be authorized, delegated, or assigned by law or its Governing Board and competent authority.

**SECTION 7. Governing Board.** – A Governing Board is hereby created, hereinafter referred to as the ‘Board’ which shall be chaired by the DA Secretary, with five (5) regular members which shall comprise of a member of the academe, a private sector representative from the banana industry, a representative of farmers’ groups, a representative from a government agency (either NEDA, or DTI, PCARRD) and a banana expert/scientist. The Executive Director of the Center shall be ex-officio member of the Governing Board, serving as Secretary of the Board.

The Board compositions shall be approved by the President of the Republic of the Philippines, upon recommendation of the Executive Director, and Board members shall serve for three years, renewable every three years, to be consistent with mid-term and five year performance reviews of the Center. The Board Chair and members shall be entitled to honoraria or incentives, covered in and sourced from the annual budget of the Center.

**SECTION 8. Duties, Functions, and Responsibilities of the Governing Board.** - The responsibilities of the Board are:

- a) Provide strategic directions, guidance and policies for the betterment of the banana industry;
- b) Approve its medium term roadmap for the banana industry, and annual budget and programs; and
- c) Undertake mid -term and five-year performance reviews of the Center.

**SECTION 9. Annual Report.** – The Executive Director shall submit to the President of the Philippines, through the Secretary of Agriculture, an annual report dealing generally with the activities and operations of the Center, accompanied by the audit report on the relevant accounts.

**SECTION 10. Donations and Solicitations.** – The Center may solicit and receive donations or endowments of money, property, or services which shall be exempt from income taxes, taxes on gifts or gratuities, and all other taxes, charges, or fees imposed by the government or any political subdivision or instrumentality thereof.

Government and public corporations are hereby authorized to give grants to the Center from the unimpaired surplus of funds at their discretion.

**SECTION 11. Appropriations.** – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged to and sourced from the appropriations for the Department of Agriculture. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for the operation and maintenance of the Center shall be automatically included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

**SECTION 12. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary for Agriculture shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

**SECTION 13. Separability Clause.** – If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid, void, or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

**SECTION 14. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent or incompatible with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

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

Approved,