



# LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICE QUICK NOTES

*Second Regular Session, 19<sup>th</sup> Congress*

## **Public Hearing of the Committee on Public Services Joint with the Committees on Civil Service, Government Reorganization, and Professional Regulation, Ways and Means, and Finance**

**Chairperson: Sen. Grace Poe**

**7 May 2024, Tuesday, 10:30 AM, Senators Laurel and Pecson Rooms, Senate**

**Re: Bills Creating the Department of Water Resources, Defining its Powers and Functions, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes, namely:**

- 1. S. No. 87—by Sen. Zubiri;**
- 2. S. No. 102—by Sen. Poe;**
- 3. S. No. 185—by Sen. Marcos;**
- 4. S. No. 268—by Sen. Lapid;**
- 5. S. No. 1021—by Sen. Estrada;**
- 6. S. No. 1244—by Sen. Legarda;**
- 7. S. No. 1395—by Sen. Tolentino;**
- 8. S. No. 1428—by Sen. Revilla Jr.;**
- 9. S. No. 2013—by Sen. Villanueva;**
- 10. S. No. 2412—by Sen. Dela Rosa; and**
- 11. H. No. 9663—by Rep. Romualdez (F. M.), et al.**

### **Background<sup>1</sup>**

- According to Water.org, a global nonprofit organization working to bring water and sanitation to the world, out of 109 million Filipinos, 3 million rely on unsafe and unsustainable water sources, and 7 million lack access to improved sanitation. On top of that, our water sources are constantly under tremendous pressure due to the ever-increasing demand of our population and a burgeoning economy. This is more pronounced during the dry season when many of our dams and water sources reach critical levels.
- Aside from water source problems, another issue that we face is the quality of water from our sources. The quality of water from many areas continues to deteriorate due to several factors, among them is pollution. These problems and

---

<sup>1</sup> Paraphrased from Explanatory Note of S. No. 87

issues are difficult to resolve when the government has more than 30 different agencies or units that have water-related functions or deal with water issues.

- To effectively implement the Philippines' roadmap to achieve universal water and sanitation services coverage by 2028 and achieve synergy and close coordination among agencies with water-related functions, it is imperative to have a department that will house all these agencies with water-related functions.

### **Highlights of the Bills**

- These bills seek to create the Department of Water Resources. This Department once created, will be the lead agency to implement the country's policies and programs on water. It will have a whole-of-government approach in dealing with water issues. It will provide synergy, and close coordination among government agencies and synchronize all the government's policies and programs on water.
- The amount necessary to carry out the initial implementation of this Act shall be sourced from any available funds of the National Treasury and appropriated and authorized to be released for the organization of the Department and its initial operations.

### **Possible Points for Discussion**

1. What overarching objectives guide water resources planning and management, and how do they address the various needs of communities and ecosystems?
2. What primary factors pose the most significant risks to the sustainability and availability of water resources, and how can they be mitigated or managed effectively?
3. Why is effective water resources management crucial for societal well-being and environmental sustainability, and how does the concept of sustainability inform its importance and implementation?
4. In the pursuit of sustainable water resources management, what key obstacles and complexities must be navigated, and how can they be overcome to ensure long-term viability?
5. How do human and company activities and behaviors exert pressure on water resources, and what strategies can be employed to minimize negative impacts and promote responsible stewardship?
6. What strategic approaches can governments adopt to address challenges related to water supply, including infrastructure development, policy frameworks, and community engagement?
7. What exemplifies successful water management strategies, and how can these best practices be adapted and scaled to diverse contexts and regions facing water-related challenges?

8. What are the primary contributors to water pollution, and how can comprehensive prevention, mitigation, and remediation strategies be implemented to safeguard water quality and ecosystem health?
9. What comprehensive assessment has been conducted regarding the financial implications of establishing a Department of Water, encompassing not only initial setup costs but also ongoing operational expenses?
10. Which existing governmental bodies, departments, or agencies would be consolidated or placed under the purview of this new department, and how would this consolidation streamline water governance and enhance coordinated management efforts across various sectors?