

Comments on House Bill No. 69: “An Act Establishing a Framework for Blue Economy, Promoting Stewardship and Sustainable Development of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems and Resources” by Representative Jose Francisco “Kiko” B. Benitez, Ph. D

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COMMENTS:

1. The crafting of a comprehensive policy and management framework for the Blue Economy is very much welcome. It is timely given the array of concerns that the country is experiencing in both marine-based and marine-related sectoral and cross-sectoral economic activities and other anthropogenic occupations.
2. Clarification is required on whether the transition to the National Maritime Council/Office (in place of the National Coast Welfare Council/secretariat) include oversight on the related functions of law enforcement units covering the Navy, Coast Guard, PNP maritime group, DOJ, BoC, Immigration, NBI, BFAR, and PCTC. The operational framework and arrangement for such also needs to be firmed-up.
3. Priority strategies under the Blue Economy frame should include Ocean pollution, and waste water and solid waste management, particularly the management of plastic pollution and microplastics (although such was referred to in the IMCAM frame).
4. Clarification is also required on the difference between the Policy Framework on Blue Economy and the Integrated Marine and Coastal Management Framework (IMCAM). The two will be very similar in content, unless properly defined though a clarificatory guide/note.
5. A National Action Plan on Blue Economy, including the required public investment program from all relevant bureaucratic department/agencies must also be crafted. This should cover both medium and long-term timelines.

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