

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
First Regular Session )



'22 JUL 11 P6:34

**SENATE**  
S. No. 283

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**Introduced by SENATOR JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA**

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**AN ACT**  
**ADDRESSING FOOD SECURITY CONCERNS THROUGH INTEGRATING**  
**INSTRUCTIONAL GARDENS IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL**  
**CURRICULA AND PROMOTING THE USE OF URBAN AGRICULTURE, AND FOR**  
**OTHER PURPOSES**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

At the height of the novel Coronavirus pandemic, an unprecedented hunger incidence rate was recorded by the Social Weather Stations (SWS) on September 2020 – record-high of 30.7% or an estimated 7.6 million Filipino families went hungry due to lack of food at least once in the past three months<sup>1</sup>. Even at the early weeks of the public health crisis and the implementation of strict lockdown, hunger incidence rates rose across all localities in the country, but the sharpest increase was recorded in Metro Manila – from 9.3% in December 2019 to 20.8% by May 2020. This means that one out of five Metro Manila residents experienced involuntary hunger from February to April 2020<sup>2</sup>.

As the Covid-19 health emergency created another crisis in the form of food insecurity, it reminded us the importance of sufficient food production as a fundamental response against hunger. During this period, many families started

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<sup>1</sup> "Record-high 7.6 million families experienced hunger in past 3 months – SWS." September 27, 2020.  
<https://www.rappler.com/nation/hunger-philippines-sws-survey-september-2020/>

<sup>2</sup> "Number of hungry Filipinos almost doubles as pandemic rages – SWS." May 21, 2020.  
<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1279086/number-of-hungry-filipinos-almost-doubles-covid-19-pandemic-rages-sws>

growing vegetable crops in their backyard. Some barangays converted idle lands and any available space into community gardens, where fresh produce were sourced and given to households or used in their feeding programs. Some even repurposed container vans into plant nurseries and controlled environments which grow greens, mushrooms and other nutritious food.

This proposed legislation aims to ensure food security by promoting urban agriculture and integrating agricultural production in the primary and secondary school curricula. The Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) will be mandated to support the use of urban agriculture and vertical farming in the country's metropolitan areas, such as the National Capital Region.

This is to also keep the momentum going which commenced during the pandemic, wherein citizens and communities started growing their own food and began cultivating the soil, and to institutionalize the innovative agricultural practices being conducted within cities and urban settings. The success of this program can also address malnutrition among children, mitigate pollution through the setting up of more green spaces, and alleviate poverty as it ensures food access for low-income households.

This measure, which was reported out by the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform during the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress, is also consistent with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #2: End Hunger, Achieve Food Security and Improved Nutrition, and Promote Sustainable Agriculture.

In view of the aforesaid objectives and manifold benefits, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

  
**JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA**

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OTHER PURPOSES**

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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Instructional Garden*  
2 *and Urban Agriculture Act of 2022*”.

3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It shall be the policy of the State to promote  
4 food security, food quality, improved health, fight hunger and malnutrition, promote  
5 poverty alleviation, improved quality of environment through greening, reduction in  
6 pollution, and creation of savings in household expenditures. Towards this end, key  
7 reforms for the development of appropriate, cost-effective, and environmentally safe  
8 agricultural practices are hereby encouraged in order to ensure the food security of  
9 the country.

10 Sec. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall  
11 be defined as follows:

12 (a) *Instructional Gardens* refer to a program of instruction in all elementary  
13 and secondary schools, where knowledge and skills, not only in urban  
14 agriculture and vertical farming, but in agricultural food production in  
15 general, are imparted to school children through relevant theories and  
16 actual engagement in agricultural cultivation / production. These

1 theories and actual production shall revolve around the concepts of  
2 composting, waste management techniques, healthy and nutritious farm  
3 produce, sustainable farm practices, among others.

4 (b) *Urban Agriculture* refers to the practice of cultivating, processing and  
5 distributing of food in or around a village, town or city. Urban agriculture  
6 also involves animal husbandry, aquaculture, agro-forestry, and  
7 horticulture.

8 (c) *Vertical Farming* refers to the method of farming that is brought to the  
9 urban space by employing the concepts of indoor agriculture in sky  
10 scrapers and other modern buildings.

11 *Sec. 4. Promotion of and Comprehensive Research on Urban Agriculture and*  
12 *Vertical Farming.* – For purposes of this Act, the respective Secretaries of the  
13 Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Science and Technology  
14 (DOST) are hereby mandated to promote the use of urban agriculture and vertical  
15 farming in the country’s urban areas and in other areas in the country where such  
16 farming methods are suited, as an intervention mechanism for further addressing food  
17 security concerns of the country.

18 Idle and/or abandoned government lots and buildings owned by either the  
19 national government or local governments or available land resources in state  
20 universities and colleges shall be considered for growing crops, raising livestock, and  
21 producing food using the said methods.

22 *Sec. 5. Institutionalization of Instructional Gardens in School Curricula.* –  
23 Instructional Gardens program shall be integrated in the academic curricula for  
24 elementary and secondary level students of both public and private academic  
25 institutions, particularly in subjects in Agriculture, Practical Arts, Home Economics,  
26 and/or other related subjects.

27 The Department of Education (DepEd), in coordination with the DA, shall  
28 promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the implementation of this Section  
29 within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act.

30 *Sec. 6. Local Government Units’ Participation.* – Local government units shall  
31 formulate a policy on the practice of urban agriculture and vertical farming, utilizing  
32 unused spaces and idle lands. This shall require the enactment of local legislation

1 institutionalizing urban agriculture and vertical farming, utilizing unused spaces and  
2 idle lands. This shall require the enactment of local legislation institutionalizing urban  
3 agriculture in all levels of the LGU. Local government units shall also grant necessary  
4 incentives to their constituents who actively participate in urban farming activities.

5         *Sec. 7. Tax Incentives.* – All allocations of grants, endowments, donations, or  
6 contributions and technical assistance provided by private individuals or corporations  
7 to schools for the promotion and implementation of Institutional Gardens in the school  
8 curricula, as certified by the DepEd, shall be exempt from taxes and duties.

9         *Sec. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* – Within six (6) months  
10 from the effectivity of this Act, the DA and the DOST shall promulgate the necessary  
11 IRR to implement the provisions of this Act

12         *Sec. 9. Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of  
13 this Act shall be included and incorporated in the annual general appropriations of the  
14 DA, DOST, and the DepEd.

15         *Sec. 10. Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or  
16 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision or part not otherwise  
17 affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

18         *Sec. 11. Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive  
19 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to or  
20 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended  
21 accordingly.

22         *Sec. 12. Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
23 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved,*