



Senate
Office of the Secretary

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

'22 JUL 14 P3:37

SENATE
S. B. No. 629

RECEIVED BY:

Introduced by Senator SONNY ANGARA

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE URBAN AND COUNTRYSIDE GREENING IN THE PHILIPPINES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In support of and complementary to the government's National Greening Program, this bill seeks to ensure the sufficient greenery in urban and countryside areas by making it mandatory to plant trees in urban and countryside parks, as well as, in school grounds, vacant lots and other urbanized sites all over the country.

The Philippines was once known for its vast and lush forests. Through decades, the environmental situation of the country has undergone a transformation. In 1990, forests covered 35.5 percent of the country's land area.

However, the country's deforestation has resulted in the loss of 151,000 hectares (1.5 billion square meters) of humid primary forest, making up 12 percent of the Philippines' total tree cover loss, from 2002 to 2020 according to the Global Forest Watch (GFW), an online open-access platform that offers forestry data. Further, an editorial column of the Philippine Daily Inquirer dated November 7, 2021 disclosed that the country has lost 1.29 million hectares of tree cover or equivalent to more than 22,000 Rizal Parks from 2001 to 2020.

The Philippines, as a signatory to the *Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use* that commits to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation, must immediately undertake actions to fulfill the objectives of the Declaration. Hence, this measure aims to improve the country's environmental conditions by building, developing and maintaining forests parks in local areas, educational institutions and

public roads, promoting environmental consciousness among the Filipinos, and protecting the existing trees from further harm.

This proposed measure will establish a National Greening Committee to be headed by the DENR Secretary. To guarantee the proper nationwide implementation of the programs, the respective secretaries of other departments such as the Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), and Department of Agriculture will serve as the committee's members. Among the dealings the committee has to undertake are the strict implementation of the requirements of the tree planting along national roads and mandatory planting of trees in urban and countryside parks, public vacant lots and other permissible areas.

Finally, this bill protects existing trees and plants by prohibiting cutting and destroying without the necessary permit. The penalties against violations have been included and specified.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



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

- 1 **SECTION 1. Title.** – This Act shall be known and cited as the "*Greening Act*
- 2 *of 2022.*"
- 3 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – Recognizing the vital role of trees in
- 4 ecological stability, it is hereby declared the national policy to ensure sufficient
- 5 greenery in urban and countryside and to promote the right of the people to enjoy
- 6 the benefits of a balanced and healthy ecology.
- 7 **SEC. 3. Scope.** – This Act shall apply to all barangays, municipalities, cities
- 8 and provinces.
- 9 **SEC. 4. Objectives.** – Pursuant to the policy declared herein, it is the objective
- 10 of this Act:
- 11 a) To build, develop and maintain forest parks in provincial, city and municipal
- 12 plazas, elementary school grounds and by the planting of trees in national,
- 13 provincial, municipal or barangay roads and other public open spaces where
- 14 appropriate;
- 15 b) To require from the national agencies and local government units the planting
- 16 of trees and shrubbery in specified areas;

- 1 c) To promote environmental consciousness among the community members, i.e.
2 students, youth, other civic action groups, by encouraging active participation
3 in tree-planting activities; and
4 d) To protect trees from various human activities.

5 **SEC. 5. National Greening Committee.** – A National Greening Committee
6 is hereby created with the Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural
7 Resources (DENR) as Chairperson and the respective Secretaries of the Department
8 of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Tourism (DOT), Department
9 of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Education (DepEd) and the
10 Department of Agriculture (DA), as members.

11 The National Greening Committee shall have the power to promulgate the
12 pertinent rules and regulations as may be necessary to fully implement the objectives
13 and purposes of this Act within a period not later than ninety (90) days after the
14 approval of this Act.

15 It shall have the power to rule on dispute involving the Regional Greening
16 Committee created under Section 6 and to appoint or form an ad-hoc committee when
17 the Regional Greening Committee is unable to perform its duties.

18 The National Greening Committee also convenes every quarter to hear the
19 reports or performance from the Regional Greening Committee.

20 **SEC. 6. Regional Greening Committee.** – A Greening Committee for every
21 region in the country, in cooperation with the various local government offices, is
22 hereby created to initiate and oversee all the tree-planting activities to be done in
23 barangays, municipalities, cities and provinces in the respective regions.

24 The Regional Director representing the Secretary of the Department of
25 Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the lead official of the concerned
26 local government unit (LGU) shall both serve as Co-Chairpersons of the Committee.
27 Members of the Committee, representing the respective secretaries, will be the
28 regional directors of the Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Interior and
29 Local Government (DILG), Department of Education (DepEd) and the Department of
30 Agriculture (DA) and at most three (3) representatives from civic action groups
31 appointed by the Chairperson.

1 The Regional Greening Committee shall coordinate with all the concerned
2 government agencies, non-governmental organization (NGOs), people’s organizations
3 (POs), and other civic action groups for assistance and cooperation in the
4 implementation of this Act.

5 **SEC. 7. *Specific Functions of the Executive Departments.*** – Aside from
6 the Committee responsibilities,

- 7 a) The DENR shall determine the suitable species of trees and provide seeds or
8 saplings to be planted along or on major thoroughfares, suited to the kind,
9 classification, and condition of the area and shall provide technical support
10 involving tree-planting activities;
- 11 b) The LGU shall:
 - 12 1. Mobilize all local concerned agencies and communities to ensure prompt
13 and effective implementation of this Act in every barangay, municipality,
14 city and province;
 - 15 2. Provide for effective measures and ways for the optimum maintenance
16 and sustainability of trees and shrubbery;
 - 17 3. Coordinate with the police for the apprehension and with the DOJ for
18 the prosecution of all persons violating Sections 8 and 9 of this Act;
- 19 c) The DPWH and DA shall provide the technical support including the necessary
20 tools, equipment and manpower for the implementation of this Act;
- 21 d) The DOT shall assist in the conceptualization and site-evaluation and cooperate
22 in the maintenance of parks and specified areas and provide additional funding
23 from its resources;
- 24 e) The DILG shall coordinate the local government units to ensure prompt and
25 effective implementation of this Act; and,
- 26 f) The DepEd shall integrate the tree-planting activities into the school curriculum
27 to raise awareness and to promote environmental consciousness.

28 **SEC. 8. *Requirements for Tree Planting along National Roads.*** –
29 Projects concerning to the construction and development of national roads shall
30 comply with the following standard requirements:

- 1 a) The trees that will be planted along the national roads shall be of the varieties
2 of the root systems which grow downward rather than sideward to avoid road
3 and sidewalk slabs destruction;
- 4 b) Trees shall be planted in a neat row, within the road right-of-way (ROW) and
5 as close as possible to the ROW limit, with sufficient allowance so that fully
6 grown trees will not encroach on the adjoining property or touch electric and
7 other overhead utility lines;
- 8 c) The center-to-center spacing between trees shall be 10-20 meters (m). For
9 road sections with a generally north-south alignment, the trees on one side of
10 the road shall be planted alternately with trees on the other side, thus ensuring
11 adequate sunlight needed for drying the road;
- 12 d) For roads without curbs, the trees shall be planted with minimum clear distance
13 of 0.60 meters beyond the edge of the shoulder, but in no case less than 0.30
14 meters from the edge of the pavement;
- 15 e) For roads with curbs, particularly in urban areas, the trees shall be planted with
16 a minimum setback of 1.00 meters beyond the face of the curb;
- 17 f) Where there are longitudinal drainage canals, the trees shall be planted on the
18 outer side of such canals;
- 19 g) On roadway curves and intersections, the pertinent design standards on sight
20 distance shall be concerned;
- 21 h) Non-traversable hazards (ravine, waiting shed and the like) along the line of
22 trees shall be provided with appropriate clearly marked barriers so that these
23 do not pose hazards to motorists; and,
- 24 i) The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) shall, within ninety
25 (90) days after the approval of this Act and every one hundred eighty (180)
26 days thereafter, submit periodic reports to the National Greening Committee.

27 **SEC. 9. *Tree Planting in Urban and Countryside Parks, Public Vacant***
28 ***Lots, and Other Permissible Areas.*** – Planting of trees shall be mandatory in urban
29 and countryside parks as well as in school grounds, vacant lots, and other unutilized
30 sites identified with the quality of soil where different or certain species of trees can
31 thrive. This shall apply to all publicly-owned lands, without exempting the properties
32 of interested private individuals or institutions.

- 1 a) *Scope.* The areas covered by this provision shall include:
- 2 1. All Public parks in urban and rural areas;
 - 3 2. All public school grounds in the city and in the provinces;
 - 4 3. All idle public lands in urban and rural areas, unless otherwise identified
 - 5 to soon be used for other purposes such as agriculture, infrastructure-
 - 6 building, and others;
 - 7 4. Parks, schools and other pieces of land owned by private individuals,
 - 8 organizations, or institutions whose proprietor/s voluntarily and willingly
 - 9 subject their properties in this Act.

10 b) *General Guidelines.* Tree planting in the duly qualified areas shall comply with

11 the following general guidelines:

- 12 1. Considering the classification and condition of the soil and the total land
- 13 area of the site, suited species of forest trees or fast-growing trees shall
- 14 be planned in the identified areas;
- 15 2. In cases wherein multiple trees can be planted, the trees should be
- 16 planted in clusters wherein one is not more than four (4) meters apart
- 17 from one another;
- 18 3. The Regional Greening Committee shall facilitate and supervise all the
- 19 tree-planting activities in its jurisdiction. The government agencies
- 20 concerned shall perform their duties and responsibilities as indicated in
- 21 Section 7, Specific Functions of the Executive Department, of this Act;
- 22 4. The Regional Greening Committee shall, within ninety (90) days after
- 23 the approval of the Act and every one hundred eighty (180) days,
- 24 thereafter submit periodic reports to the National Greening Committee.

25 **SEC. 10. *Issuing of Permits.*** – The issuance of permit allowing a person or

26 company to cut, uproot and in any way, disturb the planted trees given by the DENR

27 should also be approved and co-signed by the Regional Greening Committee following

28 public consultations done by and the consensus of the Regional Greening Committee.

29 **SEC. 11. *Prohibited Acts.*** – No cutting and destroying of trees and plants

30 shall be permitted, except when the cutting and destroying of the same is necessary

31 for public safety, and subject to the issuance of permits.

1 **SEC. 12. *Persons Liable and Penalties Therefore.*** – Any person who
2 violates sections 9 and 10 shall be punished with imprisonment of not less than six
3 (6) months to not more than one (1) year or a fine of not less than three thousand
4 pesos to not more than ten thousand pesos, or both imprisonment and fine, at the
5 discretion of the court.

6 **SEC. 13. *Submission of Reports.*** – The National Greening Committee shall
7 within ninety (90) days after the approval of this Act and every one hundred eighty
8 (180) days thereafter submit periodic reports to both houses of Congress of the
9 Philippines for evaluation and consideration.

10 **SEC. 14. *Funding.*** – The fund needed for the implementation of this Act shall
11 be taken from any available appropriation in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) of
12 the year of its implementation: *Provided,* That funds for this purpose shall also be
13 included in every annual GAA: *Provided, further,* That there shall be equitable and
14 proportionate appropriations of funds annually for this purpose for all barangays,
15 municipalities, cities, and provinces. In addition, adequate portion of financial grants
16 and concessional loans extended to Philippines by foreign governments and
17 multilateral agencies every year, the amount to be determined by the President, shall
18 be allocated to augment the annual appropriations until this Act fully implemented.

19 **SEC. 15. *Separability Clause.*** – If any portion or provision of this Act is
20 subsequently declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions hereof which are
21 not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

22 **SEC. 16. *Repealing Clause.*** – All other laws, acts, presidential decrees,
23 executive orders, presidential proclamations, issuances, rules and regulations, or parts
24 thereof which are contrary to or inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act are
25 hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

26 **SEC. 17. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
27 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,