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SENATE

S.B. No. 1254

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Introduced by **SENATOR IMEE R. MARCOS**

AN ACT
URGING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT,
AND EXPORT PROMOTION OF THE DRAGON FRUIT,
AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II, Section 21 of the 1987 Constitution provides that, "The State shall promote comprehensive rural development" Moreover, Article II, Section 15 states that *"The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them."*

The dragon fruit, locally known as *"Saniata"* or *"Pitahaya"* in Asia, is a high value crop that is rapidly gaining a reputation as a "superfood". The dragon fruit is rich in fiber, phytoalbumins, and antioxidants, and as such is being evaluated as a potential tool for cancer prevention and diabetes management.

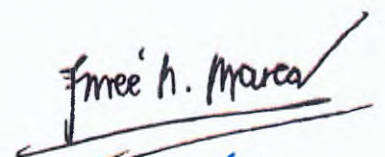
Due to its recognition as a superfood, the global dragon fruit industry is on the upswing. From 2016 to 2019, year-on-year growth was at twenty percent (20%) per annum with an estimated size of one billion six hundred million US Dollars (US\$ 1,600,000,000.00). Today, the global CAGR is pegged at 3.7%. The major producers of the dragon fruit are Viet Nam, China, Mexico, Colombia, Thailand, Malaysia, Taiwan and the Philippines. The main producing regions of the Philippines are Ilocos Norte,

Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon and Calabarzon, with a total of five hundred (500) hectares devoted to the crop.

Despite the industry's potential, dragon fruit farming suffers from relatively low productivity of eleven (11) metric tons per hectare per year, compared to Viet Nam's production of up to thirty-five (35) metric tons per hectare per year. This is due to our dragon fruit farmers lacking the needed training, technology and overall knowledge of production to maximize their yield. In particular, there is a need to develop a standard planting protocol, establish an accredited source of healthy planting material, provide training programs for local farmers, support the establishment of post-harvesting facilities equipped with the necessary sanitary and phytosanitary processing and packaging machines, secure funding for the development of processing areas, facilitate market access for both domestic and international markets, and assist local government units in promoting the production, process, and trading of dragon fruit.

This bill seeks to address the concerns mentioned above by providing the mechanism for the establishment of programs for efficient production, processing, marketing, and distribution of dragon fruit to ensure growth in production and export.

Given the abovementioned circumstances, the immediate passage of this bill is necessary.


IMEE R. MARCOS

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

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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 "*Dragon Fruit*
2 *Development Act.*"

3
4 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
5 develop and promote a globally competitive dragon fruit industry with the objective of
6 increasing dragon fruit farmers' income, addressing the nutritional and health needs of
7 our people, and encouraging trade and industry.

8
9 **SEC. 3. Development of Dragon Fruit.** – The Department of Agriculture (DA), in
10 consultation with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR),
11 Department of Science and Technology (DOST), dragon fruit growers' cooperatives and
12 organizations, local government units, and the private sector, shall formulate a one-
13 year framework to be validated and updated annually. Such framework shall serve as
14 guide to the formulation and implementation of plans, programs and projects for the
15 production, marketing, processing and distribution of dragon fruit for food and
16 commercial needs, as envisioned in this Act. The framework shall likewise provide for
17 the following:

- 18 a. National Framework - The DA, DOST, state universities and colleges (SUCs)
19 and other stakeholders shall strengthen the conduct of researches on dragon

1 fruit particularly on areas of crop improvement, crop protection, harvesting
2 and postharvest handling, supply chain analysis, marketing and promotion;

3
4 b. Investment Promotion and Facilitation - The DA and DTI shall develop
5 programs establishing links between stakeholders in the dragon fruit industry
6 and Government Financial Institutions (GRs) and other financial
7 cooperatives. The DA and DTI shall likewise develop and implement
8 programs that would establish reasonable and innovative Investment
9 incentives to attract more players in the dragon fruit industry;

10
11 c. Export Promotion Support. – An integrated and strategic export promotion
12 program for dragon fruit industry shall be created. The export promotion
13 program shall be responsive to market conditions, needs of the exporters,
14 and possibilities offered by new products and technologies. It shall likewise
15 provide foreign trade and export promotion activities through trainings,
16 technical assistance, capacity building, generating awareness on export
17 opportunities, and export planning assistance;

18
19 d. Strengthen Trade Policies and Support Network. - The DA shall be
20 responsible in coordinating a consultative approach for the various stages of
21 the trade policy making process. The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)
22 shall lead the negotiation of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) to provide a
23 competitive environment for dragon fruit exports abroad; and

24
25 e. Monitoring and Evaluation. - The DA shall continuously monitor, track, and
26 analyze the progress and outcomes of the programs to be implemented to
27 determine over-all effectiveness.

28
29 **SEC. 4. Appropriations.** – The amount necessary to implement this Act shall be
30 included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA). Thereafter, such funds as may
31 be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the
32 succeeding annual GAA.

33
34 **SEC. 5. Repealing Clause.** – All provisions of existing laws, orders and
35 regulations contrary to or inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified
36 accordingly.

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SEC. 6. *Separability Clause.* – If for any reason any part or provision of this Act shall be deemed unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions hereof shall not be affected and shall remain in force and effect.

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Sec. 7. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

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Approved,