

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES.
First Regular Session

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SENATE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

04 JUN 30 10:30

SENATE

RECEIVED BY: *Ordo*

S. No. 720

INTRODUCED BY HON. MANUEL B. VILLAR JR.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The speedy attainment of economic development depends largely on the construction of roads in the countryside, linking urban centers to far-flung barrios and barangays. Besides being vital conduits for agricultural and industrial products, roads foster the creation of a close-knit national community. Indeed, no economic prosperity is possible without an extensive network of roads and highways.

However, the construction of roads creates more threatening problems: that of environmental destruction and ecological imbalance. To pave the way for more roads, ancient forests have to be cleared, mountains blasted, and rivers canalled and dammed. With more roads comes an influx of human activities that disrupt the cycles that have sustained life through the ages. As more vehicles traverse areas hitherto unexplored, we witness with dismay the gradual tilt of the environment toward pollution, floods, dry spells and a general warming of our planet.

This bill requiring the planting of trees along roads and highways seeks to bring a more positive tilt to the environmental imbalances. Trees, being nature's workhouses, purify the air and provide food, shelter and wood to our expanding population. The planting of trees along roads would shade weary travelers from the oppressive heat of our tropical sun and protect our highways from perennial floods. By requiring only the cooperation of existing agencies in government, this program as envisioned, is an inexpensive means toward a fruitful end.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly prayed for.


MANUEL B. VILLAR, JR.

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**AN ACT REQUIRING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO PLANT TREES ALONG
NATIONAL AND LOCAL HIGHWAYS WITHIN ITS TERRITORIAL BOUNDARIES
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

SECTION 1. This Act shall be known as "The Greening of Philippine Highways Act of 2004."

SECTION 2. It shall be the policy of the State to advance and promote the conservation of the environment through the planting of trees along national and local roads and highways, to minimize and contain the adverse effects of road-building in the countryside.

SECTION 3. It shall be the primary responsibility of local government, with the cooperation of the Department of Interior and Local Government, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Public Works and Highways and other concerned government agencies, to plant and maintain indigenous Philippine trees along national and local highways within their respective territorial boundaries.

SECTION 4. The Department of Interior and Local Government shall prescribe the implementing rules and guidelines within thirty (30) days after the effectivity of this Act.

SECTION 5. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources, particularly the Bureau of Forest Management, shall provide the necessary seedlings and expertise in planting and maintaining the trees.

SECTION 6. The amount necessary to implement this Act is hereby appropriated out of any funds in the National Treasury not otherwise appropriated, and shall form part of the budgetary allocation of the concerned department or agency in the ensuing fiscal year.

SECTION 7. The local executives and legislative bodies shall supervise the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 8. The Department of Interior and local Government in coordination with the various departments and agencies concerned shall submit an annual report on the status of implementation of this program to Congress.

SECTION 9. All laws, decrees, acts, regulations and executive order which are contrary or inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 10. If any provision of this Act or any part thereof is declared unconstitutional, such declaration shall not affect the other provisions of this Act.

SECTION 11. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in two (2) newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,