

SENATE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
First Regular Session

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SENATE

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S. No. 729

INTRODUCED BY HON. MANUEL B. VILLAR JR.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

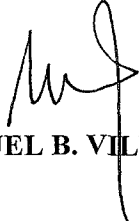
The continuing and alarming deterioration of the environment necessitates a more aggressive effort at environment rehabilitation, conservation, protection and preservation which involves the collective participation of all sectors society.

In line with the popular idiom being propagated by environmentalists around the globe, "Think Globally, Act Locally," this Bill seeks to generate and institutionalize the role and participation of cultural indigenous communities in the effective utilization, management, protection and conservation of the country's remaining forests and their resources as well as in rehabilitating degraded forests.

Indigenous cultural communities in the country have proven their effectiveness in such efforts through the employment of indigenous customs and practices. Thus, the proposed establishment of forest management centers in provinces predominantly populated by members of indigenous cultural communities. This aims to enhance forest rehabilitation, protection, and conservation by building on indigenous practices of doing the same.

At the same time, such Centers are also expected to play major roles in the continuing efforts to uplift the conditions of indigenous cultural communities with the creation of additional sources of livelihood through an effective and sustainable utilization of their forest resources.

Considering the great impact this could make on environmental conservation efforts and in the uplift of the conditions of our indigenous cultural communities, approval of this proposed measure is earnestly sought.


MANUEL B. VILLAR, JR.

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**AN ACT ESTABLISHING FOREST MANAGEMENT, UTILIZATION,
CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION CENTERS IN PROVINCES INHABITED
PREDOMINANTLY BY MEMBERS OF INDIGENOUS CULTURAL COMMUNITIES
AND UPLAND FAMILIES**

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

SECTION 1. There is hereby created a Forest Management, Utilization, Conservation and Preservation Center hereinafter referred to as the Center, under the direct supervision of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in every province inhabited predominantly by members of indigenous cultural communities and upland families.

SEC. 2. The Center shall exercise the following powers and functions:

- (a) Design and implement a forest management, utilization, conservation and preservation program appropriate to the locality, incorporating therein indigenous and traditional customs and practices pertaining to the proper utilization of forests and its resources and to the effective protection, conservation, preservation and sustainable management of forest resources;
- (b) Develop and implement a continuing education program for leaders and members of indigenous communities aimed at building awareness of the importance of proper utilization of forest resources as well as the effective conservation, protection, preservation and sustainable management of the same;

- (c) Serve as a clearing house in the awarding of reforestation project contracts and all other related livelihood projects designed to promote natural resources conservation and protection in the locality;
- (d) Enter into contract of any kind to enable it to manage its own activities and carry out its objectives and functions;
- (e) Develop a fund mobilization and generation program directed to any department, bureau, office, agency or instrumentality of the government as well as other local and foreign donor agencies/organizations focusing on environment conservation and protection with the aim of generating/securing the necessary resources for projects aimed at promoting environment conservation, protection, rehabilitation and preservation;
- (f) Formulate and recommend measures and programs designed to achieve effective forest management among indigenous cultural communities;
- (g) Undertake other activities as may be necessary to ensure the attainment of its objectives; and
- (h) To provide support in the implementation of the Strategic Environmental Plan for Palawan pursuant to Republic Act No. 7611 and other political subdivisions as may be similarly situated.

SEC. 3. Except in the Province of Palawan, as governed by Republic Act No. 7611, the DENR shall carry out the provisions of this Act and shall constitute the necessary administrative and organizational set-up of the Center which shall be headed by the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) and promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act, taking into consideration indigenous laws, customs and practices: *Provided*, That a center may also be established in any other province as may be recommended by a member of Congress.

SEC. 4. The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the budget of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 5. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,