
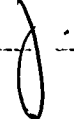


SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

 **Senate**
Office of the Secretary
16 JUL 19 10 52

SENATE
S.B. No. 448

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by SENATOR LOREN LEGARDA

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR URBAN AND COUNTRYSIDE GREENING IN THE PHILIPPINES THROUGH MANDATORY TREE PLANTING AND ADOPTION OF A FOREST SANCTUARY BY PUBLIC SCHOOLS UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Explanatory Note

The vital role of trees – in the midst of recurring landslides, loss of soil cover, water deficiency in watershed areas, soil erosion, loss of biodiversity and essential ecosystems as well as global warming, among others – is still not given the attention, much less the protection it rightly deserves from Government.

Data from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Forest Management Bureau (FMB) and the National Mapping and Resources Information Authority (NAMRIA) showed that of the country's total land area of about 30 million hectares, our forest cover is only 7.2 million hectares. The ideal should be at least 12 million hectares or 48% of the total land area.

This measure seeks to empower the youth as effective catalysts for change, as well as the academe as the best medium to disseminate information, as they adopt or create forest sanctuaries or gardens both in urban areas as well as in the countryside. With more than twelve million students in the public school sector planting trees the whole year round, the country's forests can surely be revived in the shortest time possible.

In light of the foregoing considerations, the immediate passage of this measure is sought.


LOREN LEGARDA
Senator

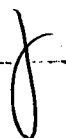
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Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

- 1 **SECTION 1. Title.** - This Act shall be known as the "Forest Sanctuaries Act."
- 2 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** - Recognizing the vital role of trees and plants
3 in ecological stability, it is hereby declared the national policy to ensure
4 sufficient greenery in urban and countryside areas and to promote the right of
5 the people to a balanced and healthy ecology.
- 6 **SEC. 3. Scope.** - This Act shall apply to all barangays, municipalities, cities,
7 and provinces, particularly in all public parks and public school grounds in
8 urban and rural areas, idle public lands, unless otherwise identified to be used
9 for other purposes, and privately-owned land whose proprietors voluntarily
10 subject their properties to the provisions of this Act, upon the creation of
11 appropriate agreements with the schools implementing this Act.
- 12 **SEC. 4. Objectives.** - Pursuant to the policy declared herein, it is the objective
13 of this Act:
14 (a) To build, adopt, develop and maintain forest parks or sanctuaries by
15 public elementary and secondary schools;
16 (b) To require the planting of trees and shrubbery as well as provision of
17 financial, physical, and technical support by national agencies and local
18 government units;
19 (c) To promote environmental consciousness by encouraging active
20 participation in tree-planting activities in the community, especially
21 among students, youth, other civic action groups, and the academe; and
22 (d) To protect trees from harmful human activity and increase the
23 country's forest cover.
- 24 **SEC. 5. National Forest Sanctuary Committee** - A National Forest Sanctuary
25 Committee is hereby created with the Secretary of the Department of Education
26 (DepEd) as Chairman and the respective secretaries of the Department of
27 Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Tourism (DOT),
28 Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the Department of
29 Agriculture (DA) as members.

1 The National Forest Sanctuary Committee shall promulgate the pertinent rules
2 and regulations as may be necessary to fully implement the objectives and
3 purposes of this Act not later than ninety (90) days after the approval of this
4 Act.

5 The National Forest Sanctuary Committee shall convene every quarter to hear
6 the reports or performance from the Regional Committees.

7 **SEC. 6. Specific Functions of the Executive Department.** The DENR shall
8 provide the technical, scientific, and physical support in: 1) determining of the
9 suitable species of trees and provision of seeds or saplings to be planted in
10 existing forest/mangrove sanctuaries or areas where a forest/mangrove
11 sanctuary or urban garden is to be established, 2) classifying and determining
12 of existing forest/mangrove sanctuaries, proposed forest/mangrove sanctuaries
13 and urban gardens, and 3) tree-planting activities.

14 The Local Government Units (LGUs) shall: (1) in partnership with the DENR
15 and DA, aid in the determination of suitable areas for the proposed
16 forest/mangrove sanctuaries/urban gardens, (2) mobilize all concerned local
17 agencies and communities to ensure prompt and effective implementation of
18 this Act in all public schools within their jurisdiction, (3) mobilize non-
19 government organizations, foundations and other private entities or
20 corporations to provide financial, physical or other kinds of support for the
21 implementation of this Act, and (4) effect the apprehension for the consequent
22 prosecution of all persons violating the penal provisions of this Act;

23 The DILG shall coordinate all local government units to ensure prompt and
24 effective implementation of this Act;

25 The DOT shall assist in the conceptualization and site-evaluation and
26 cooperate in the maintenance or creation of forest/mangrove sanctuaries and
27 urban gardens and provide additional funding from its resources;

28 The DA shall aid in the determination of suitable areas for the proposed
29 forest/mangrove sanctuaries/urban gardens and provide the technical and
30 scientific support i.e. the necessary tools, equipment, and manpower to effect
31 the implementation of this Act; and

32 The DepEd, as lead agency of this Act, shall coordinate all tree-planting
33 activities of all public elementary and high schools and integrate the tree-
34 planting activities into the school curriculum to promote environmental
35 consciousness. It shall also undertake relevant projects for the promotion of
36 these activities.

37 **SEC. 7. Tree planting Guidelines** - Tree planting in duly qualified areas shall
38 comply with the following guidelines:

- 39 (1) Considering the classification and condition of the soil and the total
40 land area of the site, suitable species of forest trees or fast-growing trees
41 shall be planted in the identified areas;
42 (2) In cases where multiple trees can be planted, the trees should be
43 planted in clusters not more than four (4) meters apart from one another;
44 (3) The DepEd and DENR shall facilitate and supervise all the tree
45 planting activities and the consequent maintenance of the same within

1 its jurisdiction. The government agencies concerned shall perform their
2 duties and responsibilities as indicated in Section 6 of this Act.

3 **SEC. 8. Prohibited Acts** - All forest/mangrove parks or sanctuaries or urban
4 gardens established under this Act shall be protected and maintained by all
5 concerned public schools, the DENR, DepEd, and other government agencies
6 and local governments. These forest/mangrove sanctuaries shall not be cut or
7 destroyed, except when the cutting and destroying of the same is necessary for
8 public safety.

9 **SEC. 9. Penalties** - Any person found guilty of violating Section 8 of this Act
10 shall be punished with imprisonment of not less than six (6) months to not
11 more than one (1) year or a fine of not less than Three Thousand Pesos
12 (P3,000.00) to not more than Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00), or both
13 imprisonment and fine, at the discretion of the court.

14 **SEC. 10. Submission of Reports.** The National Forest Sanctuary Committee
15 shall, within ninety (90) days after the approval of this Act, submit periodic
16 reports to both houses of Congress of the Philippines.

17 **SEC. 11. Funding** - The fund needed for the implementation of this Act shall
18 be taken from any available appropriation in the General Appropriations Act
19 (GAA) of the year of its implementation; *Provided*, that funds for this purpose
20 shall also be included in every annual GAA; *Provided further*, that there shall be
21 equitable and proportionate appropriations of funds annually for this purpose
22 for all barangays, municipalities, cities and provinces. In addition, adequate
23 portions of financial grants and concessional loans extended by foreign
24 governments and multilateral agencies every year, the amount to be
25 determined by the President, shall be allocated to augment the annual
26 appropriations until this Act is fully implemented.

27 **SEC. 12. Separability Clause.** All laws, decrees, rules and regulations, or
28 parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified
29 accordingly.

30 **SEC. 13. Effectivity Clause.** This Act shall take effect upon its publication in
31 at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.
32

33 Approved,