

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

'22 JUL 26 P 6 :37

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SENATE
S. No. 895

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR RONALD "BATO" DELA ROSA

AN ACT
PROMOTING INTEGRATED URBAN FARMING TO ADDRESS FOOD SECURITY
CONCERNS AND LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Undoubtedly, food security is among the chief issues that confronts us today. For a long time, it appears as though Filipinos have gotten used to the idea that food is a matter to be determined by purchasing power; if one can afford to eat, then one can eat. However, what we ought to acknowledge is that access to good and healthful food is a right that we all share, and if the old ways of providing and securing food are no longer as accessible as before, then perhaps it is time to explore other alternative ways of doing so.

No less than the Philippine 1987 Constitution provides, in Article II, Section 15, that the State shall protect and promote the right to health of its people. In addition to this, the Philippines has also adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, along with its seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹ Along these lines, our country has therefore made it its commitment not only to end hunger once and for all, but also to promote food security, improve agricultural productivity, and promote food production systems that are sustainable and resilient.

¹ Retrieved from: www.philippines.un.org/en/sdgs, retrieved on 16 July 2022.

The question of food availability is also largely a question of space and how to manage it. With the limited space in the urban areas of the Philippines, it would appear as though the only possible space for food production would be in the farms in the rural areas. However, with a little imagination and a lot of political will, managing the urban space for the sake of food security can certainly be done. Here is where the aim of this bill becomes of paramount importance.

This bill seeks to promote an integrated approach to urban agriculture in order to address problems of food security head on. Government agencies, in cooperation with the Local Government Units (LGUs), shall engage in community gardening and vertical farming. The Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development shall also ensure that urban agriculture is integrated into urban planning, harmonizing it with the Comprehensive Land Use Plans and zoning ordinances, among others. There shall also be an integration of urban agriculture into education, beginning in the elementary level up to the tertiary level of both public and private academic institutions.

With this proposal to integrate agriculture right into the very heart of urban life, we are therefore responding to the challenge of urbanity – the challenge not only to provide food, but also to better and more wisely manage our spaces, without compromising quality of life. Hence, I seek the swift passage of this bill into law, for the sake of this generation and the ones that will follow.


RONALD "BATO" DELA ROSA

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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This law shall be known as the "Integrated Urban
2 Agriculture Act."

3
4 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State shall promote and protect the
5 fundamental right of every person to adequate food and freedom from hunger.
6 Recognizing the challenges to food security and ecological balance in urban areas, the
7 State shall optimize the use and productivity of urban land resources and spaces to
8 support sufficient and sustainable food production. Towards this end, the State shall
9 promote the development of modern, cost-effective, space-efficient, and
10 environmentally safe agriculture technologies in urban areas to guarantee food
11 security, ensure public health and improve the quality of life of urban populations.
12 Accordingly, the State shall ensure the integration of principles, strategies, and
13 technologies on urban agriculture in urban planning.

14
15 Sec. 3 *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms are
16 used and defined:

- 1 (a) "Food security" refers to a situation wherein all people have access to
2 sufficient, safe, nutritious food, at all times, to maintain a healthy and active
3 life;
- 4 (b) "Integrated urban agriculture" refers to the development paradigm that
5 encompasses principles, management technologies, and the policies relating to
6 the practice and application of agricultural production of food and goods in
7 urban areas;
- 8 (c) "Vertical farming" refers to the method or practice of indoor agriculture,
9 or growing produce in vertically stacked layers in skyscrapers and modern
10 buildings using geponic, hydroponic or aeroponic growing methods.
- 11 (d) "Community gardens" refer to any piece of land cultivated by a group of
12 people using either individual or shared plots on public or private land with the
13 consent of the owner, to produce edibles, such as herbs, vegetables, fruits or
14 ornamentals. Community gardens may be found in neighborhoods and schools,
15 or connected to institutions such as hospitals or located on the grounds or roofs
16 of shared housing, such as, but not limited to, tenements and apartment
17 complexes.
- 18 (e) "Idle lands" refer to non-agricultural lands in urban and urbanizable
19 areas on which no improvements have been made by the owner, as certified
20 by the city, municipal or provincial assessor. Idle government lands refer to
21 lands owned by any government entity that have been idle and have not been
22 used for the purpose for which they have been reserved for the past 10 years;
- 23 (f) "Urban areas" refer to all cities regardless of their population density and
24 to municipalities with a population density of at least five hundred (500)
25 persons per square kilometer;
- 26 (g) "Urbanizable areas" refer to sites and lands which, considering the
27 present characteristics and prevailing conditions, display marked and great
28 potential of becoming urban areas within the period of five (5) years;
- 29 (h) "Urban planning" refers to multi-disciplinary art and science of analyzing,
30 specifying, clarifying, harmonizing, managing and regulating the use and
31 development of land and water resources, in relation to their environs, for the

1 development of sustainable communities and ecosystems in urban and
2 urbanizable areas; and,

3 (i) "Social preparation" refers to the series of activities designed to prepare
4 the underprivileged and homeless families to cope with the changes brought
5 about by government development projects.

6
7 Sec. 4. *Scope.* - This Act shall apply to all urban spaces, such as, but not limited
8 to, idle government or private lands, subdivisions/villages, public housing, and open
9 spaces, in all urban areas and urbanizable areas in the country.

10
11 Sec. 5. *Community Gardening and Vertical Farming.* - Local government units
12 shall identify and develop idle government and/or private lands, without prejudice
13 to the rights of owners of private lands, and open spaces, within their jurisdiction,
14 for full or partial conversion to community gardens; *Provided,* That, spaces allocated
15 for urban agriculture shall not be prime lots. LGUs, in coordination with the
16 Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Cooperative Development Authority, shall
17 capacitate neighborhood associations and people's organization, and/or facilitate the
18 organization and registration of community-based cooperatives, to undertake
19 community gardening.

20 The Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) shall
21 ensure the provision of adequate spaces for community gardens and/or vertical
22 farms in the design and development of subdivision, condominium and public
23 housing projects. Towards this end, the DHSUD, in coordination with the DA, shall
24 capacitate homeowners' association to undertake community gardening and/or
25 vertical farming.

26 The DA shall provide the necessary technical assistance and support services,
27 including, but not limited to, provision of seeds and seedlings, and gardening tools,
28 access to loans from government financial institutions, and agricultural training, to
29 ensure the full productivity of community gardens and vertical farms.

30
31 Sec. 6. *Urban Agriculture in Urban Planning.* - The DHSUD shall ensure the
32 integration of urban agriculture in urban planning. Towards this end, the DHSUD

1 shall promulgate guidelines for the harmonization of Comprehensive Land Use Plans
2 and zoning ordinances of local government units with urban agriculture policies,
3 frameworks, strategies, and standards.

4 LGUs are hereby mandated to incorporate urban agricultural development in
5 their respective Annual Development Plans, Annual Investment Plans, Physical
6 Framework Plans, and Development Master Plans.

7
8 *Sec. 7. Urban Agriculture Education.* - Urban agriculture shall be integrated in
9 the academic curriculum for elementary, secondary and tertiary level students of
10 both public and private academic institutions offering courses in Agriculture,
11 Practical Arts, Home Economics and/or other subjects related to agriculture. A
12 course curriculum on gardening shall be developed and included in the regular
13 curriculum of elementary and secondary education. Instructional materials shall
14 likewise be developed.

15 The Department of Education (DepEd) shall strengthen the implementation of
16 Gulayan sa Paaralan Program in elementary and secondary schools, establishing
17 school gardens to ensure continuous supply of vegetables for school feeding, in
18 accordance with Republic Act No. 11037.

19 For universities and colleges, urban agriculture shall form part of the required
20 period of time spent by students in the National Service Training Program or the
21 Citizens' Military Training. A plan for the utilization or maximization of space occupied
22 by schools shall be formulated specifically for urban agriculture purposes.

23
24 *Sec. 8. Research and Development.* - The DA and the Department of Science
25 and Technology (DOST), as well as relevant state universities, government research
26 and development institutions, and the private sector, shall intensify research on
27 methods and technologies to support urban agriculture, including the development
28 and operation of demonstration urban community gardens and vertical farms.

29
30 *Sec. 9. Incentives for Real Estate Developers and Local Government Units.* -
31 Compliance by subdivision and condominium developers and/or owners with Section
32 5 of this Act may qualify them for incentives provided for under Republic Act No.

1 10771, subject to rules and regulations promulgated by the Department of Finance
2 (DOF) and the DHSUD.

3 The commitment and performance of LGUs in the implementation of this Act
4 shall be included in the criteria for the awarding of the Seal of Good Local
5 Governance and the provision of incentives, provided for under Republic Act No.
6 11292.

7
8 *Sec. 10. National Convergence Program on Urban Agriculture.* - There is hereby
9 established a National Convergence Program on Urban Agriculture. The Department
10 of Agriculture is hereby designated the Secretariat of the Convergence Program. The
11 following agencies shall perform duties and responsibilities in order to develop and
12 sustain concerted action to promote urban agriculture:

- 13 a) The Department of Agriculture shall provide technical assistance and
14 support services to local government units, community-based cooperatives,
15 homeowners' associations, neighborhood associations and people's
16 organizations to ensure the viability and cost-effectiveness of urban
17 agriculture projects;
- 18 b) The Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development shall
19 ensure the integration of urban agriculture principles, policies, strategies,
20 frameworks and standards in the design and development of subdivision,
21 condominium and public housing projects, and in the preparation or
22 updating of development and investment plans, CLUPs and zoning
23 ordinances of LG Us, promulgate rules thereof and monitor their compliance
24 therewith. The DHSUD shall provide assistance to homeowners' associations
25 to strengthen their capacity to undertake urban agriculture projects in their
26 neighborhoods and communities;
- 27 c) The Department of Interior and Local Government shall monitor the
28 compliance of LGUs with the provisions of this Act in order to determine
29 their qualification for incentives provided for under Republic Act No. 11292;
- 30 d) The Department of Education (DepEd) shall integrate the principles and
31 practice of urban agriculture into primary and secondary education
32 curricula, including the establishment of school gardens under the Gulayan

- 1 sa Paaralan Program. DepEd shall ensure the adequate training of teachers
2 and the development of appropriate instructional materials for this purpose;
- 3 e) DOST shall conduct research on modern, cost-effective methods and
4 technologies to support urban agricultural production, as well as post-
5 harvest handling of surplus produce from urban agriculture projects;
- 6 f) Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) shall provide technical assistance
7 in processing and packaging of surplus produce from urban agriculture
8 projects and ensure access of local government units, cooperatives,
9 homeowners' associations, and people's organizations to markets;
- 10 g) DOF shall administer the grant of incentives under Section 9 of this Act to
11 qualified persons based on their compliance to Section 5 of this Act;
- 12 h) Department of Budget and Management (DBM) shall ensure adequate
13 funding for the functions and programs provided for by under this Act;
- 14 i) The Commission on Higher Education shall develop and implement
15 curriculum and related standards and instructional materials in support of
16 urban agriculture;
- 17 j) The Cooperative Development Authority shall provide guidance and
18 assistance to LGUs in the development of cooperatives within their
19 jurisdiction;
- 20 k) The Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor shall undertake social
21 preparation activities to encourage participation and empower poor and
22 underprivileged communities from the preparation and planning to
23 implementation and evaluation of urban development projects; and,
- 24 l) Philippine Information Agency shall undertake a nationwide information
25 campaign, utilizing all forms of media, to raise awareness and encourage
26 participation of the public in the implementation of this Act.

27
28 *Sec. 11. Periodic report to Congress.* - The Department of Agriculture and
29 partner agencies in the National Convergence Program on Urban Agriculture shall
30 submit annual performance reports to Congress.

31

1 Sec. 12. *Appropriations.* - The funds necessary to carry out the initial
2 implementation of this Act shall be charged against the respective budget of
3 concerned agencies for the current year. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary
4 for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General
5 Appropriations Act.

6
7 Sec. 13. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within six (6) months from the
8 effectivity of this Act, the agencies under the National Convergence Program on Urban
9 Agriculture shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations to
10 implement the provisions of this Act.

11
12 Sec. 14. *Separability Clause.* - If any part or provision of this Act is held
13 unconstitutional or invalid, other parts or provisions hereof which are not affected
14 shall continue to remain in full force and effect.

15
16 Sec. 15. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, executive orders, issuances, rules and
17 regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby amended, repealed or modified
18 accordingly.

19
20 Sec. 16. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
21 publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,