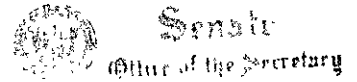


SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC )  
OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
Second Regular Session )



14 DEC -9 P2:44

SENATE  
S. No. 2492

RECEIVED BY: *Jr*

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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AN ACT  
ESTABLISHING A NEW OFFICE UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE TO INCREASE THE EMPHASIS ON URBAN AGRICULTURAL  
ISSUES AND TO EFFECTIVELY ENCOURAGE LOCAL AGRICULTURAL  
PRODUCTION AND INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF FRESH FOOD IN  
URBAN AREAS, PARTICULARLY UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES  
EXPERIENCING HUNGER, POOR NUTRITION, OBESITY, AND  
FOOD INSECURITY

EXPLANATORY NOTE

“Food deserts” are areas with limited access to affordable and nutritious food. In many Philippine cities and rural areas, economic, demographic and land use changes over the past several years have created communities where supermarkets are non-existent and where poor quality food, limited choices, and lack of affordable food impact large segments of the population.

This bill proposes to create an office under the Department of Agriculture focused on strengthening the Philippine agriculture by diversifying food production – moving from reliance on globally consolidated and industrial food chains to a system that includes local production.<sup>1</sup>

The objective of the bill is to pursue better coordination to empower communities to eliminate food deserts, purchase and produce food locally, create sustainable food

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.maryknollogc.org/newsnotes/35.3/greening\\_urban\\_food\\_deserts.html](http://www.maryknollogc.org/newsnotes/35.3/greening_urban_food_deserts.html).

systems, and connect better the existing programs that can and should be used to alleviate pockets of hunger and severe food insecurity.<sup>2</sup>


*Miriam Defensor Santiago*  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO  
PP

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=h111-4971>.

14 DEC -9 P2 :44

SENATE  
S. No. 2492

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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

1 AN ACT  
2 ESTABLISHING A NEW OFFICE UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF  
3 AGRICULTURE TO INCREASE THE EMPHASIS ON URBAN AGRICULTURAL  
4 ISSUES AND TO EFFECTIVELY ENCOURAGE LOCAL AGRICULTURAL  
5 PRODUCTION AND INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF FRESH FOOD IN  
6 URBAN AREAS, PARTICULARLY UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES  
7 EXPERIENCING HUNGER, POOR NUTRITION, OBESITY, AND  
8 FOOD INSECURITY

9 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This law shall be known as the “Greening Food  
10 Deserts Act”.

11 SECTION 2. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the term:

- 12 (A) “Department” refers to the Department of Agriculture.  
13 (B) “Secretary” refers to the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture.  
14 (C) “Underserved community” refers to a community that, as determined by the  
15 Secretary, has:
- 16 (1) limited access to affordable, healthy foods, including fresh fruits and  
17 vegetables;
  - 18 (2) a high incidence of a diet-related disease (including obesity) as  
19 compared to the national average;
  - 20 (3) a high rate of hunger or food insecurity; or
  - 21 (4) severe or persistent poverty.

1           SECTION 3. *Office of Urban Agriculture.* – The Secretary shall establish within  
2 the Department an office to be known as the Office of Urban Agriculture.

3           (A) Purpose. – The Office of Urban Agriculture is established for the purpose  
4 of coordinating activities throughout the Department related to urban  
5 agriculture and nutrition.

6           (D) Specific Responsibilities. – The Office of Urban Agriculture shall be  
7 responsible for coordinating Department activities and conducting oversight in  
8 the following mission areas:

9                   (1) Ensuring that Department authorities are used to effectively encourage  
10 agricultural production in underserved communities to combat hunger,  
11 poor nutrition, obesity, and food insecurity.

12                   (2) Ensuring that Department authorities are used to empower communities,  
13 especially communities with a large percentage of low-income  
14 residents, to eliminate shortages of affordable, fresh food products,  
15 increase the local production and sale of food, and create sustainable  
16 food systems.

17                   (3) Developing a unified strategy to link the agricultural production and  
18 nutrition programs administered by the Department as a tool for  
19 economic development in underserved communities in a manner that  
20 addresses local conditions and engages local residents through  
21 agricultural economic development.

22                   (4) Conducting systematic and regular reviews of Department authorities  
23 and making policy recommendations to Congress and the Secretary on  
24 new authorities or regulation changes to assist underserved communities  
25 to combat hunger, poor nutrition, obesity, and food insecurity.

1 (5) Ensuring that the programs established by this Act are implemented in a  
2 manner consistent with the goal of eliminating underserved  
3 communities.

4 SECTION 4. *Natural Resource Conservation Service Technical Assistance in*  
5 *Support of Backyard Conservation and Community Gardening Programs.* –

6 (A) *Authority to Provide Assistance.* – The Secretary shall provide technical  
7 assistance in support of backyard conservation and community gardening  
8 programs involving small-scale subsistence and personal-use agriculture for  
9 the purpose of achieving expanded and improved production; and  
10 implementing conservation methods related to small-scale and personal-use  
11 production.

12 (B) *Use of Botanical Gardens.* – To provide technical assistance under this Act, the  
13 Secretary shall seek to certify botanical gardens as third-party providers.

14 SECTION 5. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act shall be declared  
15 unconstitutional, any other provision not affected thereby shall remain in full force and  
16 effect.

17 SECTION 6. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations,  
18 or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

19 SECTION 7. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
20 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,