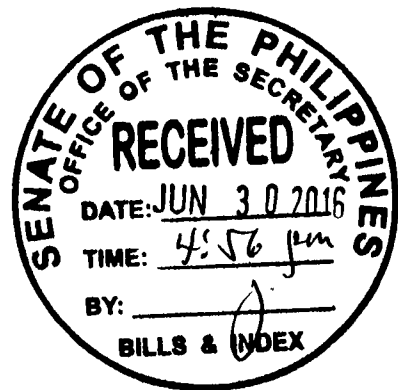


SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS)
OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



SENATE

S. No. 141

Introduced by Senator Cynthia A. Villar

AN ACT MANDATING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO PROMOTE URBAN AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRY'S METROPOLITAN AREAS, TO ADDRESS FOOD SECURITY, AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Urban agriculture has an important benefit to food security and quality of life. Although its impact might be small, it can be crucial for some groups in society, such as the urban poor as well as women of reproductive age and children. Urban agricultural production is generally geared towards consumption within the household. The food security benefits of engaging in urban agriculture materialize mostly through better access to additional and more nutritious food. Indeed, urban households engaged in farming activities tend to consume greater quantities of food, sometimes as much as 30 percent more. They also seem to have a more diversified diet, as indicated by an increase in the number of food groups consumed. Relatively higher consumption of vegetables, fruits and meat products translates into an overall higher intake of energy as well as higher calorie availability. Towns and cities are growing rapidly in developing countries. This process is often accompanied by high levels of poverty and hunger, leading many urban dwellers to engage in farming activities to help satisfy their food needs is a positive step towards food security. (Fighting Poverty and Hunger, FAO, 2010)

While urbanization is associated with improvements in public hygiene, sanitation and access to health care, it also entails changes in occupational, dietary and exercise patterns. (Foster, 2008) It can have mixed effects on health patterns, alleviating some problems and accentuating others. (Kohler, 2014) For instance, in children urbanization is associated with a lower risk of under-nutrition but a higher risk of overweight. Easier access to non-traditional foods may lead to less healthy dietary patterns. In general,

major risk factors for chronic diseases are more prevalent in urban environments. The numbers of poor and hungry city dwellers are rising rapidly along with the world's total urban population.

The 2013 National Nutrition Survey reveals how far the Philippines has gone in its fight against hunger. Not much has changed in the nutritional status of Filipino children in the past 5 years, the latest National Nutrition Survey (NNS) revealed the number of Filipino children aged 0-5 who are “wasted” – too thin for their height – even increased from 6.9% in 2008 to 7.9% in 2013. Slight improvements, however, were observed among “stunted” – too short for their age – and underweight children. The same report shows that two out of 10 children under 5 years old are underweight, while 3 out of 10 are too small for their age – or stunted, an indication of chronic malnutrition.

As of last year, while the percentage of self-reported hunger among households fell from 19.5% in 2013 to 18.3% in 2014, to 13.4% in 2015. We still have to improve further our statistics on hunger. For a country to have a low hunger index, it must fall below 5%.

Hunger incidence in PH households based on location

	2013	2014	2015
Luzon	18.3%	19.3%	16.5%
Visayas	16.1%	16.6%	9.3%
Mindanao	22.1%	19.2%	21.7%

The latest survey from the Department of Science and Technology's Food and Research Institute showed little progress in eliminating malnutrition among the poor Filipinos. The global hunger index (GHI), the country's data has been improving in the past two decades. GHI is calculated based on a country's data on undernourishment, child underweight, and child mortality. Accordingly, the data shows that in 1990 the Philippine Global Hunger Index in 1990 is 20.1%, in 2000- 17.9% and in 2014 – 13.1%. With a score of 20.1 in the 2015 Global Hunger Index, the Philippines is above the regional average, meaning, the level of the hunger problem is higher. The progress through the years although significant remains to be in the serious level from the previously alarming category. (Source: IFPRI). The Philippines also ranks 51st among 117 countries measured. In Southeast Asia, the Philippines lags behind Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam and Indonesia.

Trends and Prevalence of Malnutrition among children in the Philippines

	Age 0-5.0 years old Underweight %	Age 0-5.0 years old Wasting %	Age 0-5.0 years old Prevalence of Stunting %	Age 0.-5.0 years old overweight-for-height %	
2008	20.7	6.9	32.3	3.3	
2011	20.2	7.3	33.6	4.3	
2013	19.9	7.9	30.3	5.0	

	Age 5.08-10.0 years old Underweight %	Age 5.08-10.0 years old Wasting %	Age 5.08 -10.0 years old Stunting %	Age 5.08-10.0 years old overweight-for-height %	
2008	32.4	8.1	33.9	6.6	
2011	32.0	8.5	33.6	7.5	
2013	29.1	8.5	29.9	9.1	
	Age 10.08-19.0 years old Underweight %	Age 10.08 -19.0 years old Wasted %	Age 10.08-19.0 years old Stunting %	Age 5.08-10.0 years old overweight - obese %	
2008		12.4	35.6	6.1	
2011		12.7	35.7	6.7	
2013		12.7	31.5	8.3	
				Prevalence of Malnourished adults age 20.0 years old and over Overweight/Obese %	Prevalence of Malnourished adults age 20.0 years old and over With Chronic Energy Deficient %
2008				26.6	11.6
2011				28.4	10.0
2013				31.1	10.0

Although there are improvements in the nutritional status with regards to undernutrition, the problem are still persistent in specific age groups and selected areas. Overweight and obese prevalence among the 0-5 year-old is going up at an average of 0.17%-points per year for the past 3 years.

Among the school-age and adolescent groups, overweight prevalence increases at an average of 0.33%-points and 0.34%- points per year, respectively for the past 3 years. The lowest/poorest quintiles have higher prevalence of undernutrition while the wealthiest/highest quintiles have higher prevalence of overnutrition across age groups.

According to Ed Olney of Save the Children, poverty creates malnutrition and malnutrition keeps people in poverty. The existence of poverty worsens malnutrition conditions in the Philippines. The latest National Nutrition Survey results showed that malnourishment largely affects children in poor households or communities. The lack of resources from their end hinders them from getting the right nutrients.

Urban Agriculture provides three policy perspectives – 1. Social (inclusive city) for food security and nutrition, poverty alleviation, social inclusion and community building, 2. Economic (productive city) for income generation, food expense savings, employment generation, enterprise development and market chain development and 3). Ecological perspective (healthy city) or for the promotion of urban greening, recreation, productive use of urban wastes, reduction of ecological footprint, improve urban micro-climate and management of landscape and biodiversity.(Ruaf Foundation)

Urban agriculture is an important source of environmental and production efficiency benefits. The use of best management practices and integrated farming systems protect soil fertility and stability, prevent excessive runoff, provide habitats for a widened

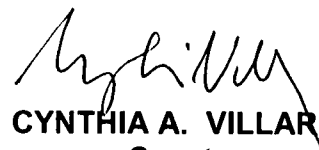
diversity of flora and fauna, reduce the emissions of CO2, increase carbon sequestration, and reduce the incidence and severity of natural disasters such as floods and landslides. Decorative or scenic agriculture landscapes, waterways, and buildings provide numerous benefits including recreational activities, scenic views, and open space qualities.

Urban agriculture aims for food production, income generation, and recreational opportunities; it contributes to the prevention of micronutrient deficiencies, enrich the urban environment; improve access to consumer markets; imply less need for packaging, storage and transportation of food; create potential agricultural jobs and incomes; provide non-market access to food for poor consumers; increase availability of fresh, perishable food; improve proximity to services, including waste treatment facilities; create opportunities for waste recycling and re-use possibilities; contribute to preserve and improve biological diversity by integrating it in the ecosystem

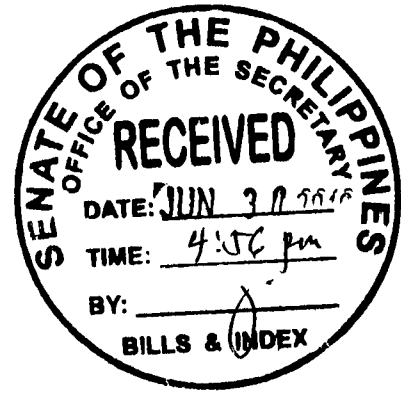
Urban agriculture can be found: in vacant plots, in home gardens, on verges, in containers, on balconies on roof tops, in fishponds, in school gardens, on open spaces, on road strips, along Railways, below power lines, on river banks, in rivers, on communal lands for community-based gardening.

This legislation is proposed to institutionalize, strengthen and promote urban agriculture and vertical farming in order to meet food sufficiency targets and address hunger, create agricultural jobs despite the rapid urbanization of many areas in the country and the development of innovative agricultural techniques and waste management.

In view of the foregoing, the undersigned urges the passage of this measure.


CYNTHIA A. VILLAR
Senator

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



SENATE
S.B. No. 141

Introduced by Senator Cynthia A. Villar

**AN ACT MANDATING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO PROMOTE
URBAN AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRY'S
METROPOLITAN AREAS, TO ADDRESS FOOD SECURITY, AND PROVIDING
FUNDS THEREFOR**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and 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 of 2016"**
- 3 **SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy** - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
4 reaffirm the fundamental right of every person to adequate food and to be free from
5 hunger. Towards this end, the state shall endeavor to achievement self-sufficiency in
6 food production and the building of climate resilient communities in metropolitan
7 areas through the promotion of key reforms for the development and promotion of
8 modern, appropriate, cost-effective and environmentally safe agriculture
9 technologies in order to ensure food security, promote a healthy citizenry and
10 advance an improve quality of life for urban dwellers.
- 11 **Section 3. Definition of Terms.** - For purposes of this Act, the term:
- 12 (A) **"Food Security"** refers to a situation wherein food staples are available at all
13 times, and where all people have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to
14 maintain a healthy and active life.
- 15 (B) **"Integrated urban agriculture"** refers to the developmental paradigm that
16 encompasses principles, management, technologies, and the policies relating to the
17 practice and application of agricultural production of food and goods in urban areas.

1 (C) **“Urban Agriculture”** refers to the practice of cultivating, processing and
2 distributing of food in or around a village, town or city including animal husbandry,
3 aquaculture, agro-forestry and horticulture.

4 (D) **“Urban Farming”** refers to any act of farming in a city using land or the space
5 of a building, including the roof of a building that is partially or completely covered
6 with vegetation through the use of any growing medium such as pots, plots, and
7 membranes.

8 (E) **“Vertical Farming”** refers to the method of farming that is brought to the
9 urban space by employing concepts of indoor agriculture in skyscrapers and other
10 modern buildings.

11 (F) **“Community Gardens”** refers to any piece of land gardened 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, or
15 connected to institutions such as hospitals or located on the grounds of shared
16 housing such as tenements, apartment complexes and shanty towns.

17 **SECTION 4. Office Urban Agriculture.** The Secretary of the Department of
18 Agriculture shall establish within the Department an office to be known as the Office
19 of Urban Agriculture

20 (A) Purpose. The Office of Urban Agriculture is established for the purpose of
21 coordinating activities throughout the Department related to urban agriculture.

22 (D) Specific Responsibilities. -- The Office of Urban Agriculture shall be responsible
23 for coordinating Department activities and conducting oversight in the following
24 areas:

25 (1) Ensuring that Department authorities are used to effectively encourage
26 agricultural production in urban communities to combat hunger and food insecurity.

27 (2) Ensuring that Department authorities are used to empower communities,
28 especially communities in urban areas with a large percentage of low-income
29 residents, to eliminate shortages of affordable, fresh food products, increase the
30 local production and sale of food, and create sustainable food systems.

31 (3) Developing a unified strategy to link the agricultural production and nutrition
32 programs administered by the Department as a tool for economic development in
33 urban communities in a manner that addresses local conditions and engages local
34 residents through agricultural economic development.

35 (4) Conducting systematic and regular reviews of Department's authorities and
36 making policy recommendations to Congress and the Secretary on new authorities
37 or regulation changes to assist urban communities to combat hunger, poor nutrition,
38 and food insecurity.

39 (5) Ensuring that the programs established by this Act are implemented in a manner
40 consistent with the goal of poverty reduction, food security and healthy eating habits
41 in urban communities.

1 **SECTION 5. Natural Resource Conservation Service Technical Assistance in**
2 support of backyard and community gardening programs. - Authority to Provide
3 Assistance. - The Secretary shall provide technical assistance in support of backyard
4 and community gardening programs involving 'small-scale subsistence and
5 personal- use agriculture for the purpose of achieving expanded and improved
6 production; and implementing conservation methods related to small-scale and
7 personal-use production.

8 **Section 6. Creation and Composition of Urban Agriculture Council (UAC).** To
9 carry out the purpose of this Act, there is hereby established an Urban Agriculture
10 Council of the Philippines (UACP) which shall be attached to the Department of
11 Agriculture. Its task is to promote urban agriculture in the country. The Council shall
12 meet every three (3) months or as often as necessary. The UAC shall be composed
13 of thirteen (13) members -

- 14 (a)The Secretary of the DA who shall serve as the Chair of the UACP;
- 15 (b)The Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);
- 16 (c)The Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST);
- 17 (d)The Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);
- 18 (e)The Director General of the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA);
- 19 (f)The Representative from the National Urban Poor Sector Council of the National
20 Anti-Poverty Commission; (NUPSC-NAPC)
- 21 (g)The National President of the League of Cities;
- 22 (h)The National President of the League of Municipalities;
- 23 (i)The Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Food of the Senate;
- 24 (j)The Chair of the Committee on Food Security of the House of Representatives;
- 25 (k)The Representative from the Academe;
- 26 (l)The Representative from the private sector who has the expertise in urban farming
27 and
- 28 (m)The Lead Convenor of the Urban Agriculture Practitioners Network of the
29 Philippines.

30 The Office of Urban Agriculture which shall be under the Office of the Secretary of
31 the Department of Agriculture shall be the secretariat of the Urban Agriculture
32 Council.

33 **Section 7. Powers and Functions of the Council** - The Council shall have the
34 following duties, powers and functions:

- 35 a. Formulate the implementing guidelines, programs, and operating principles of this
36 Act;

- 1 b. Study and make recommendations regarding the impact of urban farming in
- 2 metropolitan communities; .
- 3 c. Monitor and carry out the implementation of this Act;
- 4 d. Submit to Congress a report of its findings and recommendations;
- 5 e. To exercise all powers and functions necessary for the objectives and purpose of
- 6 this Act.

7 **Section 8. Comprehensive Research on Urban Agriculture.** - For the purpose of
8 this Act, the respective Secretaries of the Department of Agriculture and the
9 Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of Environment and
10 Natural Resources (DENR) and the academic community shall develop research
11 agenda on urban agriculture and vertical farming in the country's metropolitan areas
12 as an instrument to address food security concerns and regenerate ecosystem
13 functions in the country.

14 Towards this end, Idle and/or abandoned government lots and buildings owned by
15 either the national governments or local governments or available land resources in
16 state colleges and universities shall be considered for growing crops livestock and
17 producing food using the said methods.

18 Safety standards, good agricultural practices and good handling practices must be
19 emphasized and promoted at all times , such that DA, DOST and the Local
20 Government Units together with other pertinent agencies should see to its
21 implementation in the promotion of urban agriculture to minimize risks of microbial
22 food safety hazards.

23 **Section 9. Inclusion of Urban Agriculture in the Educational System.** - Urban
24 agriculture and vertical farming as used in agricultural production shall be integrated
25 in the academic curriculum for elementary, secondary and tertiary level students of
26 both public and private academic institutions for those studying in Agriculture,
27 Practical Arts, Flome Economics and/or other subjects related to agriculture.

28 A course curriculum on urban agriculture shall also be developed and included into
29 the regular curriculum of both elementary and secondary education.

30 All elementary and secondary schools - public and private shall implement urban
31 agriculture and include in its curriculum practical or hands-on application.

32 For universities and colleges, urban agriculture shall form part of the required period
33 of time spent by students in the National Service Training Program (NSTP) or the
34 Citizens Military Training (CMT). A plan therefore for the utilization or maximizing
35 space occupied by schools shall be formulated specifically for urban agriculture.
36 Instructional materials shall also be developed.

37 The Department of Education (DepEd), in coordination with the Commission on
38 Higher Education (CHED), shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for
39 the implementation of this Section within six (6) months from the date of effectivity of
40 this Act.

1 **Section 10. Local Government Units Responsibility.** -The local government units
2 shall formulate policy on the practice of urban agriculture, utilizing unused spaces
3 and idle lands consistent with its existing policy on the Comprehensive Land Use
4 Plan (CLUP) and zoning ordinances. This shall require the enactment of local
5 legislation institutionalizing urban agriculture in the LGU and also the enactment of
6 measures or ordinances that will include urban agriculture as a regular component in
7 the annual appropriations of the LGU.

8 All metropolitan LGUs are required to provide assistance in the form of training as
9 well as other benefits or incentives under this Act to residents who adopt urban
10 agriculture. Towards this end, a model or demonstration urban farm/garden shall be
11 developed and which shall be open to public for visitation and educational purposes.

12 All homeowners' association, neighborhood associations, community associations,
13 and people organizations including local business establishments shall be
14 encouraged by the LGU to participate in urban agriculture activities. The concerned
15 LGU shall grant necessary incentives under existing laws for the benefit of the
16 members of the concerned associations or organizations engaged in urban
17 agriculture.

18 **Section 11. Information and Education Campaign.** - In order to raise public
19 awareness, and provide education on urban farming, the Department of Agriculture
20 (DA) shall engage the Assistance of the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), the
21 Public Information Office of the urban cities and municipalities in coordination with
22 the DILG, the DepEd and the CHED to undertake a national education information
23 campaign.

24 **Section 12. Appropriations.** - The funds necessary to carry out the provisions of
25 this Act shall be included and incorporated in the annual general appropriations of
26 the Department of Agriculture under the Office of the Secretary. A minimum of
27 P50,000,000 million pesos shall be appropriated yearly for this program.

28 **Section 13. Tax Incentive and/or tax credits.** - The owner of the building or a
29 parcel of land utilized for urban agriculture, as defined in this Act, shall receive a real
30 property tax credit for every square meter, consistent with existing tax laws.

31 **Section 14. Implementing Rules.** - Within six (6) months from the date of effectivity
32 of this Act, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Science and
33 Technology shall promulgate such implementing rules and regulations necessary for
34 the proper implementation of this Act.

35 **SECTION 15. Separability Clause.** - If any provision of this Act shall be declared
36 unconstitutional, any other provision not affected thereby shall remain in full force
37 and
38 effect.

39 **SECTION 16. Repealing Clause.** - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders,
40 issuances, rules and regulations, or parts thereof contrary to or inconsistent with this
41 Act

1 are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

2 **SECTION 17. Effectivity.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
3 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation or in the Official
4 Gazette.

5 ***Approved***