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INTRODUCED BY SEN. MANNY VILLAR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The continuous usage of chemical or inorganic fertilizers, pesticides, and other farm inputs has caused environmental deterioration and pollution. Detrimental to fresh water sustenance, it has adversely affected also the farmers who are exposed during chemical application in their respective farms. Moreover, it saps soil fertility, thus, decrease agricultural production.

Application of bio-organic farming is an alternative way to address the above concern. Bio-organic farming is an agricultural production system which avoids or minimizes the use of chemical or inorganic farm inputs, pesticides, weeddecides and uses biological means to condition and enrich the soil and control pests and diseases. The agricultural farms have vast resources of biomass which can be converted into fertilizer given the appropriate technology and efficient mechanization facilities for its processing and handling.

Bio-organic farming is now being partly practiced through the balanced fertilization program of the Department of Agriculture. It needs to be enhanced and further accelerated towards enriching soil fertility and improved agricultural productivity.

To accelerate bio-organic farming activities in the country, there is a need to put in place a program that would be carried out by the government and supported with conducive and enabling policies.


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3. Establishment of facilities, equipment and processing plants that would accelerate the production and distribution of bio-organic fertilizers, pesticides, weeddecides and farm inputs.

SECTION 5. Bio-Organic Farming Program - There is hereby established a Comprehensive Bio-Organic Farming Program which shall continuously develop appropriate technologies, adopt and develop the promotion of bio-organic cultivation and production methods in the countryside through the provision of support services such as training and extension, credit, facilities and equipment and technical assistance.

SECTION 6. Research, Development and Extension - The Bureau of Soils and Water Management shall coordinate with the Bureau of Agricultural Research, Philippine Coconut Authority, Department of Science and Technology, Local Government Units and State Colleges and Universities for the formulation and implementation of a unified and integrated Bio-Organic Farming Research, Development and Extension (RDE) Plans and Programs from the national to the field level.

The Bio-Organic Farming RDE Plans and Programs shall include but not limited to the following:

- a. Development, pilot testing and commercialization of appropriate and efficient bio-organic farming technologies;
- b. Massive promotion of developed and commercially viable bio-organic fertilizers, pesticides and farm inputs through techno-demo centers;
- c. Promotion on the domestic utilization of coconut peat in bio-organic farming;
- d. Development and promotion appropriate mechanization technologies to accelerate bio-organic fertilizer and pesticide production and distribution; and
- e. Conduct of training to farmers, manufacturers, planner, extension workers, professionals in the agriculture sectors and other stakeholders.

SECTION 7. Bio-Organic Farming RDE Network - A Bio-Organic Farming Research, Development and Extension (RDE) network is hereby organized, composed of research and educational institutions, Local Government Units, non-government agencies and the recognized association of bio-organic fertilizer manufacturers and distributors, agricultural engineers, agriculturists, soil technologists farmers and groups/associations.

SECTION 8. Research, Development and Extension Centers - National, Regional and Provincial Bio-Organic R&D and Extension Centers shall be organized and established within ninety (90) days following the approval of this Act, which shall be integrated as a major component of the existing RDE Centers of DA, DOST, DENR, SCUs and LGUs. These will be strengthened to spearhead an integrated program to develop and promote bio-organic farming throughout the country.

SECTION 9. Bio-Organic Fertilizer and Pesticide Production and Processing Centers - Bio-Organic Fertilizer and Pesticide Production and Processing Center shall be established in Strategic Agricultural and Fishery Development Zones and the Agrarian Reform Communities.

SECTION 10. Implementing Mechanism - The Bureau of Soils and Water Management is hereby restructured and strengthened to serve as the implementing Agency of the National Bio-Organic Farming Program and shall be tasked to provide the over-all supervision, coordination, monitoring of its implementation at the national to the local levels.

The Regional Offices of the Department of Agriculture shall be the implementing unit of the program at the regional level, while the local Government Units through their Provincial, City and Municipal Agriculturist Offices and Agricultural Engineering Officer shall be the implementor at the provincial, city and municipal levels.

SECTION 11. Bio-Organic Farming Council – A Bio-Organic Farming Council, whose main function is to formulate policies and program on bio-organic farming is hereby organized of the composed of nine (9) members, as follows:

- a. The Secretary of Agriculture as Chairperson;
- b. The Director of Bureau of Soil and Water Management as Vice Chairperson;
- c. The Secretaries of DENR, DAR, DOST, DTI as members; and
- d. Three Representative of the farmers who shall be appointed by the President based on the nomination and recommendation of the sectors that they respectively represent - as members

SECTION 12. Incentives – The Government shall extend incentives for the manufacture and propagation of bio-organic farm inputs by maximizing their use in all government and government-supported agricultural production, research and demonstration program. The Department of Agriculture, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Education, Department of Interior and Local Government, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Finance, Land Bank of the Philippines and other government lending institutions, shall assist bio-organic input producers through the provision of adequate financial, technical, marketing and other support services.

SECTION 13. Implementing Rules and Regulations – The Department of Agriculture together with Department of Agrarian Reform, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Trade and Industry and in consultation with duly recognized organization of farmers, agricultural machinery dealers and manufacturers, agricultural engineers shall promulgate and implements rules and regulations within ninety days following the approval of this Act.

SECTION 14. Appropriations – The sum of Fifty Million pesos (P50,000,000.00) shall be appropriated for the initial implementation of this Act which shall be incorporated in the Annual Budget of the Bureau of Soils and Water Management, and thereafter the amount necessary to carry out the program implementation shall be incorporated in the General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 15. Separability Clause – The provisions of this Act are hereby declared separable, and if any clause, sentence, provision or section hereof, should be declared invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the other provision of this Act which can be given and effect without the provisions which have been declared invalid.

SECTION 16. Effectivity - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,