

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1746



Introduced by: **REP. PROSPERO A. PICHAY, JR.**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines had been described, quite accurately, as an ecological time bomb waiting to explode. From a robust three-fourths of the archipelago a generation ago, the area of virgin forest had shrunk to less than three percent. The reduction of the size of the country's "lungs" tolled heavily on the creatures living in it, pushing many of our wildlife to the endangered list.

The country's rich biodiversity, which, in its tropical splendor, was the envy of many, had been reduced gradually as forest lines beat a retreat from the logger's ax. With the forest depleted, soil soon eroded, lopping off precious topsoil and dumping it on rivers and seas, choking the corals in the process, and thus robbing fish and marine creatures of their habitat.

Meanwhile, cities reel under the pressure of rural poverty-driven migration and irrational industrialization. Half of the country's population now breathe "leaded air", bathe in dirty water and pack themselves in filthy slums which serve as a petri dish of disease and sickness.

Bad environment results in less and expensive food, a sickly people and a nation with lower economic productivity. The fragile situation of our ecology alone should have prodded past policymakers to make its protection the number one priority of government. But in the so-called Magna Carta of local governments, the designation of the officer responsible for the care of the environment was not given paramount importance. In a case of oversight, if not insensitivity, the naming of an environment and natural resources officer was reduced into an option.

This bill attempts to correct this oversight by making it mandatory for city, provincial and municipal governments to appoint an environment and natural resources officer. Hopefully, the installation of a full-time caregiver to the ecology would halt, if not reverse, the degradation of our ecosystem.

PROSPERO A. PICHAY, JR.



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AN ACT
TO STRENGTHEN LOCAL ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION BY MAKING THE
APPOINTMENT OF AN ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES OFFICER
MANDATORY FOR PROVINCIAL, CITY AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS,
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 484 (A) OF REPUBLIC ACT
NUMBERED 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CODE OF 1991"

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

SECTION 1. Section 484 (a) of Republic Act No. 7160 is hereby amended
to read as follows:

"SEC. 484. *Qualifications, Powers and Duties.*—(a) XXX

The appointment of the environment and natural resources officer
is [optional] MANDATORY for the provincial, city and municipal
governments."

SEC. 2. This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its
publication either in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation
in the Philippines.

Approved,