



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila



**Thirteenth Congress
Third Regular Session**

HOUSE BILL NO. 5805

Introduced by Honorable Roger Gaviola Mercado

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Forests are essential to human development. Trees absorb water and the watersheds ensure the continuous supply of water. The canopies of trees act as "sink" absorbing the harmful carbon dioxide while also releasing life-giving oxygen. More importantly, forests serve as sanctuaries and breeding grounds for our diverse flora and fauna species.

The sad state of our forest ecosystem requires immediate action. The 17 million hectares of forests we had in 1934 went down to 10.4 million hectares in 1969. Our forest cover decreased from 70% of land area in 1900 to 18% in 2000. If deforestation continues unabated, less than 10% of our forest cover will be left by 2010.

The recent landslide tragedy in Southern Leyte, mainly in the municipalities of Saint Bernard and Anahawan has caused damaged not only to agricultural crops, properties and infrastructure, but also to the thousands of lives in these landslide-hit municipalities.

This measure seeks to reforest denuded areas inside a timberland area situated in Barangay Lepanto, Saint Bernard. The area to be reforested is one hundred (100) hectares of open and denuded land.

The area will be reforested by means of the Community Based Approach, wherein a group of people are bound together to form into an association of common interest and concrete objectives of assisting the government in all the phases of the said reforestation.

Along with the vigorous implementation of reforestation programs, the reforestation of Barangay Lepanto, Saint Bernard, in the Lone District of Southern Leyte will be a significant step to arrest future landslides and continued degradation of Southern Leyte's remaining forests. This will also allow us to move towards the sustainable development and protection of the forest ecosystem.

The early passage of this measure is, therefore, earnestly requested.


ROGER GAVIOLA MERCADO
Lone District
Southern Leyte



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**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE REFORESTATION OF ONE
HUNDRED (100) HECTARES OF PUBLIC LAND IN BARANGAY
LEPANTO, MUNICIPALITY OF SAINT BERNARD, PROVINCE OF
SOUTHERN LEYTE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.**

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

SECTION 1. The public land situated in Barangay Lepanto, Municipality of Saint Bernard, Province of Southern Leyte, covering an area of one hundred (100) hectares, shall be reforested under the supervision of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

SECTION 2. The amount of six million pesos (₱6,000,000) is necessary for the implementation of this Act and will be charged to the appropriations for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources under the current General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for the protection and preservation of the forest shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,