

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. 919

Introduced by Honorable Czarina D. Umali

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This Bill aims to address the needs of farmers, fishermen and local entrepreneurs in the countryside by making the appointment of municipal agriculturist **mandatory for agricultural municipal government**.

Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, provides for the transfer of agricultural services from the national government. It mandates that the agriculturist should be in the frontline when it comes to the delivery of basic agricultural services, particularly those needed for the survival of the inhabitants during and in the aftermath of man-made and natural disasters and calamities.

It also cites the important role of the agriculturist in formulating measures for approval of the Sanggunian and in providing technical assistance and support to ensure the delivery of adequate facilities relative to agricultural services.

However, studies conducted in areas outside Metro Manila reveal that the absorption and adoption of the devoted functions vary from one unit to another depending on the priority concerns of the local government unit's agenda and the relevance of such functions to their existing community problems and needs.

As a result of the optional appointment, agricultural problems still abound in the rural areas. If the appointment is made mandatory, the municipal government is assured that it can rely on the expertise of the agriculturist at all times as he shall be tasked to steer the office for agricultural service and to perform the duties and functions prescribed by law.

The mandatory hiring of a municipal agriculturist can help solve and avert a number of agricultural problems. The municipal agriculturist can be tapped to provide special service to farmers, including technical information and advice, to improve the quality and yield of crops and livestock.

There is therefore, a need to recognize the crucial role of the municipal agriculturist in the light of President Arroyo's agenda of having a modernized agricultural sector.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

Zarina D. Umali
Hon. ZARINA D. UMALI
Representative
3rd Dist., Nueva Ecija

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AN ACT

MAKING THE POSITION OF THE MUNICIPAL AGRICULTURIST MANDATORY, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 482 OF REPUBLIC ACT 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 482 of Republic Act 7160, otherwise known as the "Local Government Code of 1991," is hereby amended to read as follows:

"Qualifications, Power and Duties – (a) No person shall be appointed agriculturist unless he is a citizen of the Philippines, a resident of the local government unit concerned, of good moral character, a holder of a college degree in agriculture or any related course from a recognized college or university and a first grade civil service eligible or its equivalent. He must have practiced his profession in agriculture or acquired experience in a related field for at least five (5) years in the case of the provincial or city agriculturist and three (3) years in the case of the municipal agriculturist.

The position of the agriculturist shall be mandatory for the provincial and AGRICULTURAL MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS and optional for the city and OTHER municipal government(s).

SECTION 2. The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law and every thereafter.

SECTION 3. All laws, decrees, regulations or issuances inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved.