

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

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 713
03 MAR 2011

Submitted by the Special Committee on Reforestation on _____

Re: House Bill No. **4330**

Recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill Nos. 204 and 971

Sponsors: Representatives Victor J. Yu, Luis R. Villafuerte and Augusto L. Syjuco Jr.,

Mr. Speaker:

The Special Committee on Reforestation to which were referred House Bill No. 204, introduced by Rep. Luis R. Villafuerte, entitled:

"AN ACT TO PROVIDE THE REVIVAL OF ARBOR DAY BY VESTING IN PROVINCIAL, CITY AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS WITH THEIR COMPONENT BARANGAYS THE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CELEBRATING THE DAY FOR TREE PLANTING AS AN ANNUAL EVENT"

and House Bill No. 971 introduced by Rep. Augusto "Boboy" Syjuco, entitled:

"AN ACT TO PROVIDE THE REVIVAL OF ARBOR DAY BY VESTING IN PROVINCIAL, CITY AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS WITH THEIR COMPONENT BARANGAYS THE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CELEBRATING THE DAY FOR TREE PLANTING AS AN ANNUAL EVENT"

4330

has considered the same and recommends that the attached House Bill No. _____, entitled:

"AN ACT REVIVING THE OBSERVANCE OF ARBOR DAY BY VESTING IN PROVINCIAL, CITY AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS WITH THEIR COMPONENT BARANGAYS THE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CELEBRATING THE DAY FOR TREE PLANTING AS AN ANNUAL EVENT"

be approved in substitution of House Bill Nos. 204 and 971 with Reps. Luis R. Villafuerte, Augusto L. Syjuco Jr., Victor J. Yu, Cesar V. Samiento, Mylene Garcia-Albano, Roger G. Mercado, Jeci Lapus, Florencio C. Garay Maximo Dalog, Susan A. Yap, Edgar S. San Luis, Joel Roy R. Duavit, Mercedes Alvarez, Raymond Democrito C. Mendoza, Angelo B. Palmones, Jose S. Aquino II and Jesus "Boying" Celeste as authors thereof.

Respectfully submitted,


VICTOR J. YU
Chairman

Special Committee on Reforestation

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3 Republic of the Philippines
4 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
5 Quezon City

6 FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

7 First Regular Session

8 HOUSE BILL NO. 4330

9 (Substitute to H.B. Nos. 204 and 971)

10 -----
11 Introduced by Representatives Luis R. Villafuerte, Augusto L. Syjuco Jr.,
12 Victor J. Yu, Cesar V. Sarmiento, Mylene Garcia-Albano, Roger G. Mercado,
13 Jeci Lapus, Florencio C. Garay, Maximo Dalog, Susan A. Yap, Edgar S. San
14 Luis, Joel Roy R. Duavit, Mercedes Alvarez, Raymond Democrito C.
15 Mendoza, Angelo B. Palmones, Jose S. Aquino II and Jesus "Boying"
16 Celeste
17 -----

18 AN ACT REVIVING THE OBSERVANCE OF ARBOR DAY BY VESTING IN
19 PROVINCIAL, CITY AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS THE
20 RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CELEBRATING THE DAY FOR TREE PLANTING
21 AS AN ANNUAL EVENT
22

23 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the*
24 *Philippines in Congress assembled:*
25

26 **SECTION 1.** In order to maintain ecological balance and to encourage the
27 beautification of communities, all provinces, cities and municipalities with their
28 component barangays shall revive, by appropriate proclamation of their
29 respective local chief executives, an Arbor Day at an appropriate fixed date
30 each calendar year as deemed suitable by forestry experts based on the proper
31 time and season for planting trees in the locality. Although adoption of uniform
32 dates for each province and its component municipalities and cities shall be
33 encouraged, varying dates for Arbor Day celebrations may be permitted in order
34 to afford flexibility in planning and implementing tree-planting programs based
35 on the proper time of the year for planting tree species selected to be planted,
36 and as local budgetary allotments shall allow.
37

38 **SEC. 2.** To implement the objectives of this Act, there shall be created in
39 each province, city and municipality, an Arbor Day Celebrations Committee, the
40 composition of which shall be set by the local chief executive concerned. The
41 members of the said committee shall consist of officers based in the locality,
42 representing, but not limited to:
43

- 44 a. The local *sanggunian*;
45 b. The Department of Environment and National Resources Office;
46 c. The Department of Environment and National Resources;
47 d. The Department of Education;
48 e. The Department of Interior and Local Government;

- f. The Department of Agriculture;
- g. The Department of Agrarian Reform;
- h. The Department of Public Works and Highways;
- i. The Department of Tourism;
- j. Commission on Higher Education;
- k. The Philippine National Police;
- l. The Armed Forces of the Philippines;
- m. The Philippine Coconut Authority;
- n. civic organizations;
- o. youth organizations;
- p. *Liga ng mga barangay*; and
- q. Media associations.

SEC. 3. The local Arbor Day Celebrations Committee shall specify the area within the local government unit to be planted or reforested. If the area to be planted or reforested is a protected area or a protection forest, the Committee shall encourage the use of endemic or indigenous species during the observance of the Arbor Day designated by the local government unit.

SEC. 4 In order to ensure the active participation of students, out-of-school youth and public and private sector employees, the Arbor Day designated each calendar year by every local government unit may be declared as a public holiday through a proclamation by the local chief executive.

SEC. 5. The local *sanggunian* shall promulgate the rules and regulations, including the allocation of resources pertinent to the implementation of this Act at their respective local government level. For information and monitoring purposes, the respective local government units shall submit to the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), copy furnished the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the official date of the specified Arbor Day.

SEC. 6. The DILG, in coordination with the DENR, shall promulgate the rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 7. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

204

HOUSE BILL NO.

Introduced by HONORABLE LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill reenacts House Bill No. 233 which was approved by the 14th Congress of the House of Representatives on 11 June 2008 and was transmitted to and received by the Senate on 17 June 2008.

The denudation and inordinate exploitation of our forests has been a subject of serious concern of government, such that elementary and high school graduates are encouraged to plant a specified minimum number of trees every year as a condition for graduation.

Nevertheless, tree planting has not been given the importance that it deserves by way of setting aside a specific day every year to be dedicated to tree planting and to celebrate Arbor Day.

This bill proposes the revival of Arbor Day in the Philippines not necessarily as a national holiday for commemoration of the day, but seeks to vest in the local government units the responsibility for celebrating Arbor Day as an annual event.

The origin of Arbor Day dates back since the last century as a day for tree planting when standing trees were deemed insufficient for beautification and ecological purposes. In recent years, Arbor Day has been made the occasion for emphasizing the importance of conservation of forest resources. The date declared for Arbor Day has, however, been made flexible from place to place to permit local authorities to select an appropriate date, according to the proper time for planting and the budgetary requirements shall allow for specific trees and other plants that are sought to be planted according to the peculiar needs of a given locality.

Considering the significance of Arbor Day and the current relevance of giving impetus to forest conservation, early approval of this bill is earnestly requested.


LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO.

211A

Introduced by HONORABLE LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE

**AN ACT TO PROVIDE THE REVIVAL OF ARBOR DAY BY VESTING IN
PROVINCIAL, CITY AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS WITH
THEIR COMPONENT BARANGAYS THE RESPONSIBILITIES
FOR CELEBRATING THE DAY FOR TREE PLANTING AS AN
ANNUAL EVENT**

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

1 **SECTION 1.** In order to emphasize the imperative necessity for
2 maintaining proper ecological balance, for encouraging the beautification
3 of communities and creating more healthful environments, it is hereby
4 mandated that all provinces, cities and municipalities with their
5 component barangays shall be required to revive, by appropriate
6 proclamation of their respective local chief executives, an Arbor Day at an
7 appropriate fixed date every calendar year as shall be deemed suitable
8 according to the proper time and season for planting trees in the
9 respective provinces and their respective component municipalities or
10 cities concerned. Although adoption of uniform dates for every province
11 and its component municipalities and the cities shall be encouraged,
12 varying dates for Arbor Day celebrations may be permitted in order to

1 afford flexibility in planning and implementing tree-planting programs to
2 adjust to the proper time and period of the year most suited to the trees
3 selected to be planted, and as local budgetary allotments shall allow.

4 **SEC. 2.** In implementing the intents of this Act, there shall be
5 created in every province, city and municipality an Arbor Day Celebrations
6 Committee, the composition of which shall be selected or designated by
7 the local chief executive concerned. The members of said committee shall
8 preferably consist of officers based in the locality, representing, but not
9 limited to:

- 10 a. The local sanggunian;
- 11 b. The local Environment and Natural Resources Office;
- 12 c. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources;
- 13 d. The Department of Education;
- 14 e. The Department of the Interior and Local Government;
- 15 f. The Department of Agriculture;
- 16 g. The Department of Agrarian Reform;
- 17 h. The Department of Public Works and Highways;
- 18 i. The Department of Tourism;
- 19 j. The Philippine National Police;
- 20 k. The Armed Forces of the Philippines;
- 21 l. The Philippine Coconut Authority;
- 22 m. Civic organizations;
- 23 n. Youth organizations;
- 24 o. Liga ng mga barangays; and

1 p. Media associations.

2 **SEC. 3.** In order to assure active participation of students, out-of-
3 school youths and employees of the government and private sectors, the
4 Arbor Day designated every calendar year by each and every local
5 government unit may be declared as a public holiday and such declaration
6 may be embodied in the appropriate proclamation that local chief
7 executives are in this Act authorized to do.

8 **SEC. 4.** The local sanggunian shall promulgate the rules and
9 regulations, including the allocation of resources pertinent to the
10 implementation of this Act at their respective local government level. For
11 information and monitoring purposes, the respective local government
12 units shall submit to the Department of the Interior and Local
13 Government (DILG), copy furnished the Department of Environment and
14 Natural Resources (DENR), the official date of the specified Arbor Day.

15 **SEC. 5.** The DILG, in coordination with the DENR, shall promulgate
16 the rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this
17 Act.

18 **SEC. 6.** This Act shall take effect immediately upon its approval.

Approved,

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. 971

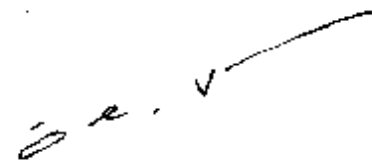
Introduced by REP. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is well endowed of natural resources, both land and water. But because of human activities that abuse and neglect the beauty and wealth of our nature, we now face the problem of imbalanced ecosystem. Such problem is the denudation of our forests and destruction of our mountains which can be attributed to unregulated loggings and the practice of slash-and-burn farming. This problem is contributory to the various calamities the country has been experiencing for the past years that brought destructive landslides and flashfloods causing major devastation to lives and properties.

It is time that we care about our environment and the future of the next generation. This measure seeks to revive Arbor Day by vesting in the local government units with their component barangays the responsibilities of celebrating Tree Planting Day annually. This bill encourages the beautification of the communities while promoting healthful and greener environment. The bill further promotes the participation of students, out of school youth, government employees and the private sector in protecting the environment.

With the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly requested.


AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO
2nd District, Province of Iloilo

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. 971

Introduced by REP. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO

**AN ACT TO PROVIDE THE REVIVAL OF ARBOR DAY BY VESTING IN
PROVINCIAL, CITY AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS WITH THEIR
COMPONENT BARANGAYS THE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CELEBRATING
THE DAY FOR TREE PLANTING AS AN ANNUAL EVENT**

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

SECTION 1. In order to emphasize the imperative necessity for maintaining proper ecological balance, for encouraging the beautification of communities and creating more healthful environments, it is hereby mandated that all provinces, cities and municipalities with their component barangays shall be required to revive, by appropriate proclamation of their respective local chief executives, an Arbor Day at an appropriate fixed date every calendar year as shall be deemed suitable according to the proper time and season for planting trees in the respective provinces and their respective component municipalities or cities concerned. Although adoption of uniform dates for every province and its component municipalities and the cities shall be encouraged, varying dates for Arbor Day celebrations may be permitted in order to afford flexibility in planning and in implementing tree-planting programs to adjust to the proper time and period of the year most suited to the trees selected to be planted, and as local budgetary allotments shall allow.

SEC. 2. In implementing the intents of this Act, there shall be created in every province, city and municipality an Arbor Day Celebrations Committee, the composition of which shall be selected or designated by the local chief executive concerned. The members of said committee shall preferably consist of officers based in the locality, representing, but not limited to:

- (a) The local sanggunian;
- (b) The local Environment and Natural Resources Office;
- (c) The Department of Environment and Natural Resources;
- (d) The Department of Education;
- (e) The Department of the Interior and Local Government;
- (f) The Department of Agriculture;
- (g) The Department of Agrarian Reform;

- (h) The Department of Public Works and Highways;
- (i) The Department of Tourism;
- (j) The Philippine National Police;
- (k) The Armed Forces of the Philippines;
- (l) The Philippine Coconut Authority;
- (m) Civic organizations;
- (n) Youth organizations;
- (o) Liga ng mga barangays; and
- (p) Media associations.

SEC. 3. In order to assure active participation of students, out-of-school youths and employees of the government and private sectors, the Arbor Day designated every calendar year by each and every local government unit may be declared as a public holiday and such declaration may be embodied in the appropriate proclamation that local chief executives are in this Act authorized to do.

SEC. 4. The local sanggunian shall promulgate the rules and regulations, including the allocation of resources pertinent to the implementation of this Act at their respective local government level. For information and monitoring purposes, the respective local government units shall submit to the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), copy furnished the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the official date of the specified Arbor Day.

SEC. 5. The DILG, in coordination with the DENR, shall promulgate the rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 6. This Act shall take effect immediately upon its approval.

Approved,

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila
15th Congress
First Regular Session

**MINUTES OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING HELD ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2010
AT THE MINORITY CONFERENCE ROOM, NORTHWING BASEMENT, HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES, QUEZON CITY**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

HON. VICTOR J. YU	- Chairperson
HON. ROGER G. MERCADO	- Vice-chairperson
HON. MAXIMO DALOG	- Member
HON. FLORENCIO GARAY	- Member
HON. JOEL ROY DUAVIT	- Member
HON. RAYMOND D.C. MENDOZA	- Member
HON. ANGELO PALMONES	- Member
HON. SUSAN YAP	- Member
HON. ANNA CRISTINA SIQUIAN GO	- Member
HON. CARLOS PADILLA	- <i>Ex-Officio</i> Member

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE:

Department of Environment and Natural Resources	- Undersecretary Manuel Gerochi
	- Assistant Secretary Regidor De Leon
Forest Management Bureau	- Director Marlo Mendoza
River Basin Control Office-DENR	- Director Vicente Tuddao
Special Concerns Office-DENR	- Director William Ragos
Society of Filipino Foresters	- Forester Ricardo Umali
Philippine Wood Producers Association	- Mr. Joel Lorenzo
Bantay Kalikasan	- Mr. Valerio Mendoza
Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau	- Dr. Antonio Manila
Tanggol Kalikasan	- Atty. Arnie Rabe-Manuel
Philippine Forest Corp.	- Forester Celso Diaz
Ecosystems Research Development Bureau	- Rafael Cadiz

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:53 p.m. and presided over by the Chairman of the Special Committee, the Honorable Victor J. Yu

II. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Chairman acknowledged the presence of the following Committee Members:

Vice-Chairman:

Hon. Roger G. Mercado

Members:

Hon. Maximo Dalog

Hon. Florencio Garay

Hon. Joel Roy Duavit

Hon. Raymond D.C. Mendoza

Hon. Angelo Palmones

Hon. Susan Yap

Hon. Anna Cristina Siquian Go

Hon. Carlos Padilla

III. OPENING REMARKS OF THE CHAIRMAN

In his preliminary statement the Chairman welcomed the members to the organizational meeting of the Committee and enjoined them to work together with the Special Committee to be able to restore Mother Earth and to encourage reforestation.

IV. ADOPTION OF THE PROPOSED COMMITTEE RULES OF PROCEDURE

The Chairman suggested the adoption of the Committee Rules of Procedure. Hon. Palmones moved for the adoption of the Committee Rules of Procedure which was duly seconded by Hon. Mercado. There being no objection, the Committee approved the Special Committee Rules of Procedure.

V. PRESENTATION OF THE COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION

The Chairman presented the Committee Organization by citing Section 28 of the Rules of the House which provides that the Special Committee on Reforestation has "jurisdiction over all the matters directly and principally relating to policies and programs on reforestation, including the effects of forest denudation and other actions to ensure the implementation of a sustained community-based nationwide reforestation program."

Having such jurisdiction, the Chairman envisioned the Special Committee to be one working to respond to the people's demand for sustainable management of watershed and forest resources. He said the Committee intends to realize the vision by passing laws, serving as a venue for active consultation and by acting as a conduit for information dissemination on matters relating to forest resources management.

VI. APPROVAL FOR THE CONSOLIDATION OF HB NOS. 204 AND 971

Hon. R. Mendoza moved for the consolidation of H.B. Nos. 204 and 971, both relating to the Revival of Arbor Day and the approval of its substitute bill. The Chairman agreed saying that the bill was deliberated upon extensively in the 14th Congress, was passed on third reading, approved by the House and transmitted to the Senate in June 2008. Hon. Dalog seconded the motion. Hon. C. Sarmiento of Catanduanes manifested that he wants to be a co-author of the measure even if he is not a member of the Special Committee approving the bill. Hon. Palmones moved that all members of the Special Committee be made co-author of the consolidated Revival of Arbor Day Bill.

VII. BRIEFING BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Manuel Gerochi, DENR Undersecretary for Staff Bureaus and Project Management, outlined in his presentation the vision, mission and direction of the Forest Management Bureau, the state of the Philippine forests and status of the FMB's Reforestation and Upland Development Programs.

Undersecretary Gerochi stated that the thrust of Philippine Forestry is 1) to establish a permanent forest land limits as required by the Constitution; 2) to

ensure stability and health of forest eco-systems; 3) manage forest lands and resources for common good; 4) to ensure continuous flow of forest products and services; 5) to conserve biological diversity; 6) to enhance role of forest in soil conservation and water resource management; 7) to promote participation of local communities, indigenous people and other stakeholders; and 8) to promote private investment and trade in the forest.

As to the state of the Philippine forests, Undersecretary Gerochi related that classified lands comprise 30 million hectares. Out of these classified lands, there is 1.34 million hectares of national parks, .17 million hectares civil reservations, A&D lands of 14.92 million hectares, timberland of 10.22 million hectares, military reservations of .13 million hectares, fishponds of .09 million hectares and 76 million hectares of unclassified lands. He said mangroves consist of 247.36 million hectares, closed forests comprise 2.5 million hectares, open forests are 4,030,588 million hectares and plantations, around 329,520 hectares. He added that the remaining forest cover is 7.2 million hectares.

Based on the presentation, reforestation is focused on climate change mitigation and adaptation, water supply security, biodiversity conservation and sustainable supply of forest-based raw materials. Reforestation efforts in the government sectors consist of Community Based Forest Management, watershed rehabilitation, DENR foreign-assisted and regular projects, urban and roadside forestry program and other government agencies initiatives. In the private sector, there are 145 Integrated Forest Management Agreements (IFMAs), 1,803 Socialized Industrial Forest Management Agreements (SIFMAs), 17 Agro-forestry Farm Lease Agreements, 88 Tree Farm Lease Agreements, 364 Forest Land Grazing Management Agreements (FLGMAs), 198 Special Land Use Permits (SLUPs) and 18 Special Land Use Lease Agreements. The rest of reforestation efforts in the private sector are Forest Land Agreement for Tourism Purposes (FLAGTs), Special Forest Land Agreement, CBFM, Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title, PACBRMA, arrangements with PNOC, NPC and the NIA and co-management agreements with LGUs. The total area under tenurial arrangement is 11 million hectares while untenured area is 4.1 million hectares.

Undersecretary Gerochi described the Upland Development Program as the government's response to the need for a continuing reforestation program. Its framework consists of 1) sustainable forest management; 2) economic resiliency plan; 3) comprehensive livelihood and emergency employment

program; 4) accelerated hunger mitigation program; and 5) climate change mitigation and adaptation program. He added that it is not only a reforestation but a poverty reduction program as well. He concluded by saying that the program is being opened up for private initiatives inasmuch as the government cannot afford to provide more funding than the 10-year average of P200 million per year.

VIII. PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN REFORESTATION

Hon. Mercado commented that the DENR processing of private initiatives in reforestation in his district is very slow. Undersecretary Gerochi promised to look into the matter.

Hon. Padilla inquired if the DENR can readily identify areas for private sector investment. Undersecretary Gerochi replied that the department is shifting from the demand-driven to the portfolio approach by requiring its regional offices to identify a minimum of 200 hectares per province for reforestation investments by end of 2010 to be bidded out by early 2011. He said the department will provide soil analysis and crop matching. Hon. Padilla asked which agency will attend to prospective investors. Undersecretary Gerochi said the convergence center at the DA will take care of marketing under the "One Province, One Product" principle.

When asked if the clonal nursery in Nueva Vizcaya is just on experimental stage, Forester Celso Diaz of Philippine Forest Corp. replied in the affirmative but added that the nursery can already produce seedlings on a small scale basis. Hon. Padilla queried whether the clonal seedlings are of good quality. Mr. Rafael Cadiz replied in the affirmative and added that the good quality applies even to the second generation.

IX. COMMITTEE SUPPORT FOR H.R. No. 438

Hon. Dalog asked the Committee for support on H.R. No. 438 authored by himself, Rep. Padilla and Rep. Baguilat which seeks to declare 26 September, the date when Typhoon Ondoy struck the country in 2009, as "Save Sierra Madre" Day to increase the people's awareness of the effects of forest denudation. Hon. Siquian-Go objected saying that there is no proof that the forest denudation in Sierra Madre aggravated the damage wrought by Typhoon Ondoy in Metro Manila. Atty. Rabe-Manuel of Tanggol Kalikasan explained that the resolution's premise refers to the southern part of Sierra

Madre where forest denudation contributed to the flooding in Region IV. Inasmuch as it was already past 4:00 pm, Hon. Padilla agreed to postpone the discussion of HR No. 438.

Hon. Siquian-Go inquired whether a budget for Sierra Madre reforestation has been included in the DENR budget. Undersecretary Gerochi promised to furnish the congresswoman a copy of the budget for Region II reforestation projects.

SEEDLINGS AND PLANTING MATERIALS

Hon. Mercado asked Undersecretary Gerochi how much was allocated by the DENR for planting materials in 2011. The former expressed dismay when the latter replied that they are allotting only P25 million. FMB Director Mendoza said that the P25 million is to be distributed to regions at the rate of P350,000 per province. He said that under the Upland Development Program the budget for seedlings is P95 million while that of planting materials is around P300 million. He added that there is also P200 million allotment for planting materials under the Agroforestry Program.

Hon. Palmones asked what species are being used for clonal propagation and what are the problems being encountered in the process. Forester Diaz replied that the DENR has clonal facilities in seven areas, namely, CAR, Davao, Malaybalay, Nueva Vizcaya, Butuan, Region IV-A and Los Banos. He said they have completed the protocol or guidelines for 12 or 13 species but added that there is a need to improve the clonal facilities.

Hon. Palmones asked how can they help DENR in terms of legislation. Undersecretary Gerochi suggested that about P25 million be appropriated by Congress per nursery. Hon. Palmones promised to task his staff to draft a resolution inquiring how 15 percent of the revenues sourced from the VAT and meant for reforestation activities by the LGUs are spent.

CARBON TRADING

Hon. Mercado asked DENR what carbon trading is all about. Undersecretary Gerochi replied that it refers to development of climate change mitigation projects, like reforestation, for which the proponent gets carbon emission reduction credit which can be traded. When asked if there are guidelines available for such endeavors, Undersecretary Gerochi replied that the DENR

has already endorsed the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) Plus Strategy for the Philippines. He said that a pilot REDD Plus project is the reforestation project in Sierra Madre being undertaken by the Conservation International in collaboration with Toyota Motors Corp.

PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVE IN REFORESTATION

Mr. Valerio Mendoza of Bantay Kalikasan shared his experience on the ABS-CBN initiative in reforesting La Mesa Watershed which has a 92 percent survival rate for 84 indigenous species. He said reforestation is imperative because the country's top soil is dwindling and this, in turn, affects filtration and water supply of the country.

According to Mr. Mendoza, reforestation has to be done in six stages to ensure success: 1) Watershed Management Framework Planning; 2) Capacity building; 3) Watershed Management Planning; 4) Implementation of the Watershed Management Plan; 5) Benefit-sharing; and 6) Monitoring and Control. He said the ABS-CBN mobilized local people, collaborated with them in watershed management, focused on the grassroots, built capacities for watershed rehabilitation and sustainable management and established management zones (30 percent for plantation, 30 percent for maintenance and 40 percent for protection)

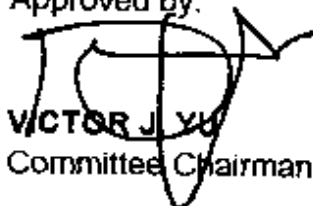
ADJOURNMENT

There being no other matters to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 4:23 pm.

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing minutes.


ROMMEL M. REYES
Committee Secretary

Approved by:


VICTOR J. YU
Committee Chairman

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REFORESTATION
MEETING 14 December 2011**

APPROVAL OF THE COMMITTEE REPORT ON REVIVAL OF ARBOR DAY

- The Chairman, Rep. Yu, moved for the approval of the committee report on the substitute bill to HB Nos. 204 and 971 or the bills on "Revival of Arbor Day." Rep. R. Mendoza of TUCP-Party List suggested that the coverage of the bill be limited to endemic or indigenous species to prevent the onslaught of invasive species.
- Rep. Arnaiz inquired why exotic species was allowed by the DENR to be introduced in the country. Forester Wilfrido Pollisco, former director of the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB), explained that Gemelina and Mahogany were introduced in reforesting denuded areas because they are fast-growing. However, he said, they were not allowed to be planted in protected areas based on the prohibition under the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Law.
- Rep. Yu pointed out that both government and commercial nurseries propagate exotic species. Rep. R. Mendoza suggested that for protected areas, only indigenous species should be allowed to be planted. Rep. Arnaiz said the suggestion will pose a problem inasmuch as the DENR is propagating exotic species. Rep. Dalog suggested that the Arbor Day Committee specify the areas to be planted only with endemic species.
- Rep. Garcia-Albano recalled former DENR Secretary Elisea Gozun saying that the plants being planted along the EDSA were inappropriate. She suggested the inclusion of a provision ensuring that only appropriate species be planted in each area.
- Mr. Ronaldo Liveta of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) suggested that the CHED be represented in each Arbor Day Committee to be constituted.
- Rep. Pichay moved for the approval of the Committee Report on the substitute bill to HB Nos. 204 and 971, subject to suggested amendments and style. Rep. Arnaiz seconded the motion. The body approved the Committee Report.

APPROVAL OF HB Nos. 2177 and 3225 "REQUIRING STUDENTS TO PLANT TREES"

- Rep. Palmones of AGHAM-Party List suggested that the word "plant" be changed to "grow" to highlight the need to ensure that the trees planted grow into maturity. Rep. M. Rodriguez, one of the authors, disagreed saying that, from the students' point of view, the act of planting is more important than the maintenance of the trees planted.
- Rep. Pichay asked who will provide the seedlings to be used by the students. Forester Jesus Javier of the Forest Management Bureau said the bureau can provide technical assistance but does not have the budget for the planting materials. Rep. Pichay said that in his district, the LGUs can provide the

seedlings. Rep. Arnaiz said that in his province, St. Paul's and Silliman Universities use their own money for tree planting of their students.

- Director Joey Pelaez of the Department of Education (DepEd) said that the DepEd has already issued an order for public school students to plant trees. However, he said, in NCR and HUCs, there is not much space for planting. He added that it is also risky to bring students to areas outside of Metro Manila. Forested Remedios Evangelista said that the FMB is already drafting a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the DepEd and the DENR.
- Mr. Ronaldo Liveta of the CHED suggested that the requirement be incorporated in the NSTP Law with a program for maintenance of the trees planted and technical assistance from the DENR.
- Rep. M. Rodriguez of ABANTE MINDANAO-Party List suggested that a Technical Working Group (TWG) be constituted to fine tune the bills.
- Rep. Yu estimated the requirement for students to cost P600 million annually and asked the FMB how they intend to finance it. Forester Javier of the FMB replied that the Private-Public Partnership (PPP) modality can be explored in the bill so as not to burden the government.
- DepEd Director Pelaez said that the 10 trees requirement per student is a tall order and suggested that the requirement be limited to graduating students. Rep. M. Rodriguez said that the suggestion will defeat the purpose of instilling environmental consciousness among students. Forester Joey Austria of the DENR agreed with Director Pelaez saying that the bill's requirement will need vast tracts of land which may not be readily available.
- Rep. R. Rodriguez asked the agency representatives to submit their written position papers on the bills and moved for the creation of a TWG to fine tune the bills. Rep. R. Mendoza seconded the motion. The body approved the constitution of a TWG.

APPROVAL OF HB No. 1398 "REFORESTING 3,000 HAS. OF PUBLIC LANDS IN CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY."

- Rep. R. Rodriguez enjoined the body to approve his local bill which had already been approved in the 14th Congress under Committee Report No. 2659 on 3 February 2010. He said it is aimed at averting another flashflood in the city of Cagayan de Oro.
- Rep. Palmones of AGHAM Party List moved for the approval of the bill. Rep. R. Mendoza of TUCP Party List seconded the motion. The Special Committee approved HB No. 1398.
- The Chairman, Rep. Yu, thanked everyone for attending the meeting despite the holiday rush and wished them all a Merry Christmas.

FACT SHEET

House Bill Nos. 204 and 971

AN ACT TO PROVIDE THE REVIVAL OF ARBOR DAY BY VESTING IN PROVINCIAL, CITY AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS WITH THEIR COMPONENT BARANGAYS THE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CELEBRATING THE DAY FOR TREE PLANTING AS AN ANNUAL EVENT

Introduced by REPS. LUIS VILLAFUERTE AND AUGUSTO SYJUCO

Committee Referral: Special Committee on Reforestation (Primary)
Committee Chairperson: Rep. Victor J. Yu

Committee Report was approved on 14 December 2010 subject to amendment and style

OBJECTIVES:

- To emphasize the necessity of maintaining ecological balance;
- To encourage the beautification of communities;
- To create healthier environments.

KEY PROVISIONS:

- Mandates all LGUs to set, through a proclamation, a date for Arbor Day every calendar year deemed suitable based on the proper time and season for planting trees in each province or city;
- The dates for the celebration of Arbor Day may vary from one LGU to another depending on the species to be planted and the appropriate period for planting it in the locality;
- Provides for the creation of an An Arbor Day Celebration Committee in every province, city and municipality the composition of which shall be set by the local chief executive;
- Provides that the Arbor Day may be declared as a public holiday to assure active participation of students, out-of-school youth and government employees;
- Empowers the local *sanggunian* to promulgate the rules and regulations at the local level while the DILG, in coordination with the DENR, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations at the national level;
- Provides that the planting of endemic species shall be encouraged in protected areas or protection forests.

RELATED LAWS:

- Proclamation No. 643, series of 2004 or "...Declaring 25 June as Philippine Arbor Day"

What is Arbor Day and How did it Originate?

It is a day set aside by law in most States (of the USA) for encouraging the planting of shade and forest trees, shrubs, and vines about homes, along highways, and about public grounds of the State, thus contributing to the wealth and comforts of the American people.

In some States, the law specifies the date on which Arbor Day will be observed, while in others the date is specified by the Governor or another official of the State.

The observance of Arbor Day by schools, civic organizations, and clubs usually includes programs designed to stress the importance of trees and their effect in improving the appearance of school grounds, streets, parks, and highways and to encourage the planting, protection, and preservation of the trees and shrubs and an acquaintance with the best methods for the conservation and use of the natural resources like trees and forests.

Arbor Day was first observed, as such, in Nebraska in 1872. The plan was conceived and the name "Arbor Day" proposed by J. Sterling Morton, then a member of the State Board of Agriculture, and later United States Secretary of Agriculture and Governor of the State of Nebraska. At a meeting of the State Board of Agriculture of Nebraska, held at Lincoln, January 4, 1872, he introduced a resolution to the effect that Wednesday, the 10th day of April 1872, be especially set apart and consecrated to tree planting in the State of Nebraska and named Arbor Day. The resolution was adopted. Wide publicity was given to the plan, and more than a million trees were planted on the first Arbor Day.

The celebration and the significant, initial success of Arbor Day encouraged the passage of other tree planting acts by the US Congress that further stimulated tree planting that established extensive windbreaks and shelterbelts. An example is the 18,510 miles (about 30,000 kilometers/17.5 times the length of the Philippines) of tree belts planted in the Great Plains from North Dakota to Texas that owe their success to some government policies, such as tax-exemption laws that favored tree planting.

Governor Morton told the American Forestry Congress in 1885 that Nebraska had more than 700,000 acres (close to 285,000 hectares/4.5 times the entire size of Philippine NCR) of planted trees.

The available record through January 1, 1948 (this is more than 60 years back from to date, 2010) indicate that some 123,190 miles (about 198,000 kilometers) of windbreaks and shelterbelts have been planted since the middle of the past century of which 96,596 miles (more than 155,000 kilometers) through private initiative.

Parenthetically, the then celebration of Arbor Day in the Philippines was an American inheritance, the country having been once a colony of the USA.

Source: Trees. The Yearbook of Agriculture. USDA, (1949). Washington, D.C. pp. 35,192, 704

"Man seldom plant trees till they begin to be wise, that is till they grow old, and find, by experience, the prudence and necessity of it". John Evelyn, 17th Century English patriot and philosopher.