

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

*Sixteenth Congress
First Regular Session*

House Bill No. 234



Introduced by Honorable Roy M. Loyola

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill was first introduced at the First Regular Session of the Fifteenth Congress. It seeks to amend the Local Government Code by making it mandatory for all provinces, cities, and municipalities to appoint an environment and natural resources officer.

As we face the effects of climate change, global warming, environmental degradation, land, air and water pollution, resource depletion, rising sea levels, and other equally disturbing environmental crisis, the need to make immediate and drastic actions to address them now, more than ever becomes apparent.

In today's era of rapid growth, development, and industrialization, concerns for the environment oftentimes take the back seat. As a result, countless times, we have seen our countrymen fall victim to man-made disasters which could have easily been prevented had there been sound environmental plans, policies, and programs at the local government unit level.

Under Section 484 of the Local Government Code of 1991, an environment and natural resources management officer shall be (1) a citizen of the Philippines; (2) resident of the local government unit; (3) of good moral character; (4) holder of a college degree, preferably in environment, forestry, agriculture or any related course; (5) a first grade civil service eligible; and (6) must have acquired experience in environmental and natural resources management, conservation, and utilization of at least five (5) years for provinces and cities, and three (3) years for municipalities.

The environment and natural resources officer shall:

(1) Formulate measures for the consideration of the sanggunian and provide technical assistance and support to the governor or mayor, as the case may be, in carrying out measures to ensure the delivery of basic services and provision of adequate facilities relative to environment and natural resources services as provided for under Section 17 of this Code;

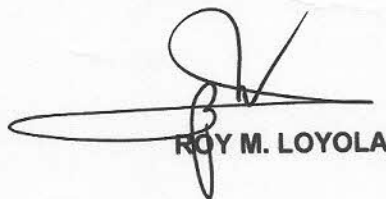
(2) Develop plans and strategies and upon approval thereof, by the governor or mayor, as the case may be, implement the same, particularly those which have to do with environment and natural resources programs and projects which the governor or mayor is empowered to implement and which the sanggunian is empowered to provide for under this Code;

(3) In addition to the foregoing duties and functions, the environment and natural resources officer shall:

- (i) Establish, maintain, protect and preserve communal forests, watersheds, tree parks, mangroves, greenbelts and similar forest projects and commercial forest, like industrial tree farms and agro-forestry projects;
 - (ii) Provide extension services to beneficiaries of forest development projects and technical, financial and infrastructure assistance;
 - (iii) Manage and maintain seed banks and produce seedlings for forest and tree parks;
 - (iv) Provide extension services to beneficiaries of forest development projects and render assistance for natural resources-related conservation and utilization activities consistent with ecological balance;
 - (v) Promote the small-scale mining and utilization of mineral resources, particularly mining of gold;
 - (vi) Coordinate with government agencies and non-governmental organizations in the implementation of measures to prevent and control land, air and water pollution with the assistance of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources;
- (4) Be in the frontline of the delivery of services concerning the environment and natural resources, particularly in the renewal and rehabilitation of the environment during and in the aftermath of man-made and natural calamities and disasters;
- (5) Recommend to the sanggunian and advise the governor or mayor, as the case may be, on all matters relative to the protection, conservation maximum utilization, application of appropriate technology and other matters related to the environment and natural resources; and
- (6) Exercise such other powers and perform such other duties and functions as may be prescribed by law or ordinance.

In light of the foregoing and taking into consideration the qualifications, duties and responsibilities of an environment and natural resource officer, it could be said that his appointment is not only necessary but indispensable. At all times, there should be a responsible officer equipped with the required expertise to watch over the environment. Sadly, as our law stands today, the appointment of an environment and natural resources officer still remains optional. The tendency then becomes that local government units opt to not make such appointment.

For these reasons, I earnestly urge my esteemed colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in seeking immediate approval of this Bill.



ROY M. LOYOLA

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2018-2019 **234**
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AN ACT MAKING THE APPOINTMENT OF AN ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES OFFICER MANDATORY IN ALL PROVINCES, CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES, AMENDING SECTION 484 (a) OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160 AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991"

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

SECTION 1. Section 484 (a) of Republic Act No. 7160 as amended, otherwise known as the "Local Government Code of 1991" is hereby further amended 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."

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

Approved,