

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

H. No. 1553



Introduced by Representative Estrellita "Ging" B. Suansing

EXPLANATORY NOTE

On February 23, 1995, Republic Act No. 7900, otherwise known as the "High-Value Crops Development Act of 1995" was enacted. The law seeks to accelerate the growth and development of agriculture in the country; enhance productivity as well as profits of farmers and improve the country's investment climate, augmenting its foreign exchange earnings in the process.

Under the law, "High Value Crops" are crops other than traditional crops which include, but are not limited to the following:

- a) coffee and cacao;
- b) fruit crops such as citrus, cashew, guyabano, papaya, mango, pineapple, strawberry, jackfruit, rambutan, durian, mangosteen, guava, lanzones, and watermelon;
- c) root crops like potato and ubi;
- d) vegetable crops such as asparagus, broccoli, cabbage, celery, carrots, cauliflower, radish, tomato, bell pepper, and patola;
- e) legumes and pole sitao like snap beans, garden pea;
- f) spices and condiments such as black pepper, garlic, ginger, onion; and
- g) cutflower and ornamental foliage plants like chrysanthemum, gladiolus, anthuriums, orchids, and statice.

Eighteen (18) years after the passage of the said law, there is an imperative need to amend the same in order to finally realize the objective of the law. Hence, this proposed bill.

The proposed amendment under Section 3 of R.A. No. 7900 intends to broaden even further the coverage of the application of the law as modern society, not surprisingly, is comprised of a lot more sectors/groups which could significantly contribute to the growth and development of agriculture in the country

As to the proposed amendment under Section 5 of the same law, the bill aims to make use of the initiatives emanating not only from the government sector, but from the private sector as well. Philippine society is replete with numerous private benefactors that are just so eager to share their wealth; much more if the initiative will contribute to benevolent deeds for the motherland.

Under Section 7 of yet the same law, the proposed bill envisages the inclusion of landholdings not covered under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP). Although the concept will rely on the good graces of landowners pursuant to R.A. 7900's principle that land has a social function and land ownership has a social responsibility, still it bears noting that the legislative intent of developing the country's agricultural sector, specifically "High Value Crop" products, would be more zealously addressed.

At the same time, the proposed bill envisions the landless farmers (beneficiaries of the amendment) to adopt a cooperative system in establishing economically-sized farms for high value crops farming. The farmer members shall collectively manage individual farms which include the contracting process, means of production, planning and coordinating crop varieties, and raising breed hectareage.

It is submitted that the amendments to R.A. No. 7900 as proposed by this bill will underscore further the obligation of owners and lessees of agricultural lands, as well as portions of landholdings not covered by CARP, among others; to cultivate the lands they own or lease and make the land economically productive on a sustainable and environmentally friendly manner.

Needless to state, the proposed amendment will further heighten the development of high value crops resulting in a significantly more competitive free market, a more developed agriculture in general, improved investment climate, better competency and efficiency in agribusiness and capacity to develop high value crops as exporters; substantially expanding the foreign exchange earnings of the country as a consequence.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is highly recommended.


Rep. ESTRELLITA "GING" B. SUANSING
1st District, Nueva Ecija

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AN ACT
AMENDING SECTIONS 3, 5, AND 7 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7900, OTHERWISE
KNOWN AS THE HIGH VALUE CROPS DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1995 AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Sections 3, 5, and 7 of Republic Act No. 7900, otherwise known as
the High Value Development Act of 1995 and or other purposes is hereby amended
to read as follows:

"Section 3. Scope of Application -This Act shall cover, **BUT SHALL NOT BE LIMITED TO**, upland dwellers as well as lowland tenant, indigenous and cultural communities, Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) beneficiaries, upland farm owners, farmers, organization/associations/cooperatives, community associations and farm workers, and to the extent herein provided, the departments, offices, agencies, subdivisions, branches of instrumentalities in the areas.

"Section 5. Site Identification - The Department of Agrarian Reform and the Department of Agriculture, in coordination with the Department of Environment and Natural resources, and the municipal government concerned, **ALONG WITH PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVE OR VOLUNTEERS**, shall identify the broad areas suitable for high value crops production within six (6) months after the effectivity of this Act. Provided, that such identification shall be reviewed at appropriate intervals to ensure consistency with agrarian reform program and the national land use policy.

"Section 7. Farm Model - For the program, [farmers may adopt] **PORTIONS OF LARGE LANDHOLDINGS NOT COVERED UNDER CARP MAY BE MADE AVAILABLE TO LANDLESS FARMERS FOR THE ADOPTION OF** the cooperative system in putting up economically-sized farms for high value crops farming. Farmers-members shall collectively manage an individual farm which includes the contracting process and means of production; planning and coordinating crop varieties; and raising breed hectarage, distribution and some measures with reference to the market it shall serve. Said farm models may be replicated by farmers' organizations all over the country."

SECTION 2. Repealing Clause - All laws or parts thereof, decrees, orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly; Provided, however, That nothing in this Act shall construed or applied as amending the CARE' and other laws on Agrarian Reform.

SECTION 3. Separability Clause - If any of the provisions of this Act is declared invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain full force and effect.

SECTION 4. Effectivity Clause - This Act shall be effective fifteen (15) days after completion of its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.