

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 2657



Introduced by Representatives
DIOSDADO MACAPAGAL ARROYO and GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO

AN ACT
TO CONSERVE AND PROTECT PHILIPPINE PUBLIC FORESTS,
MANGROVES AND WILDLIFE THROUGH A COMPREHENSIVE
ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM OF RENEWAL, REPLANTING AND
REFORESTATION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Our fundamental law enjoins us to "conserve and develop our patrimony." By "patrimony" we mean our public forests, mangroves, wildlife, and flora and fauna.

This bill is submitted with the view of honoring this mandate. Thus, it aims to establish a mechanism that can help rehabilitate public forest lands and revert areas presently denuded and eroded to become living thriving forest reserves. In addition, the bill seeks to formulate a national renewal program of public forests, mangroves and to activate various sectors, most especially the youth in carrying out these objectives.

Considering the lofty purposes of this bill, we enjoin our colleagues to help us pass the same into law.


DIOSDADO MACAPAGAL ARROYO
Second District, Camarines Sur


GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO
Second District, Pampanga

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 2657

Introduced by Representatives
DIOSDADO MACAPAGAL ARROYO and GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO

AN ACT
TO CONSERVE AND PROTECT PHILIPPINE PUBLIC FORESTS,
MANGROVES AND WILDLIFE THROUGH A COMPREHENSIVE
ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM OF RENEWAL, REPLANTING AND
REFORESTATION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as and cited as the “Comprehensive Environment Program Act of 2013.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of National Policy and Program Framework.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to conserve, protect, and support the renewal program of public forests, mangroves and the wildlife. To this end, the State hereby adopts the following comprehensive program frameworks:

- (a) The specific limits of public forests, national parks and other forest reserve areas, including mangroves with forest cover, shall be determined, by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in consultation with various stakeholders including individuals, non-governmental organizations and public associations representing environmental management, local governments, academic community and others. Public consultations shall be conducted.
- (b) Public forests under lease and/or which have been denuded and deforested due to logging shall be reforested, with tree species of

its original forested state or similar species, and reclassified protection and conservation forest.

- (c) Mangroves without forest cover which have been utilized and cut to the detriment of ecological balance and to the destruction of marine, air and other wildlife which take sanctuary shall be replenished with the mangrove and other species of plants and reseeded with the wildlife which would naturally thrive therein.
- (d) Virgin forests and public parks and forest reserves declared as such shall in no case be opened for exploitation or reclassification and shall remain so unless otherwise declared by law.
- (e) The protection of marine, air and wildlife, including the endangered species of Philippine fauna shall be the ultimate objective of the government.
- (f) Philippine flora, both natural to our forests and those which would enhance ecological balance and the productivity and aesthetic value of our public forests, shall be replanted and maintained in the public forests.
- (g) Areas of the public forests leased or tolerated for use for social forestry or agro-forestry shall be limited to the area and percentage of the total public forests as may be indicated in the implementing rules and regulations that will be issued for the purpose.

SECTION 3. *Coordinating Council for the Conservation, Protection and Renewal of the Nation's Patrimony.* – There is hereby created a Coordinating Council for the Conservation, Protection and Renewal of the Nation's Patrimony. The Council shall be headed by the Secretary of Environmental and Natural Resources as Chairman, with the Undersecretaries of Agriculture and of Education as Vice-Chairmen. The members shall include three (3) representatives from the government sector and three (3) representatives from the private sector appointed by the President of the Philippines upon the recommendation of the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources and from the list of nominees submitted by the sectors themselves.

The Council shall formulate policies and develop projects to implement the national policy and program framework as defined in this Act. It shall also promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the purposes of this Act and adopt a code of services and guidelines to conserve, protect and renew the nation's patrimony.

To assist the Council, the Chairman shall designate an Executive Secretary and a Secretariat from among the staff of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, with such allowances as may be approved by the Council. The per diems

and allowances of the Council shall be approved by the Council, subject to the existing rules and regulations and auditing and accounting laws.

SECTION 4. *Reforestation and Renewal Program by the Youth.* – Subject to such rules and regulations as the Council may promulgate, students and community youth below the age of twenty-five (25) years, shall be harnessed for the reforestation and renewal of public forests, mangrove and wildlife. Students who will render service as provided in this Act may be credited with the required units for the National Service Training Program.

SECTION 5. *Coordination with Agricultural and Fisheries Schools.* – Subject to such rules and regulations as the Council may promulgate, agricultural and fisheries schools, both public and private, shall be encouraged to participate in the programs envisioned in this Act.

SECTION 6. *Comprehensive Program.* – In consultation with all stakeholders and various sectors comprising the entire agriculture and fisheries sectors, agro-business and the concerned academic communities, a comprehensive program including the projects that may be supported by the Council shall be formulated to serve as guide for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 7. *Conservation, Protection and Renewal Fund.* – There is hereby authorized the amount of One Million Pesos (P1,000,000.00) for the operations of the Council, and Ten Million Pesos (P10,000,000.00) for the projects under this Act to conserve, protect and renew public, forests, mangroves, and the wildlife under the comprehensive program framework of this Act.

Thereafter, the operating expenses of the Council and the projects planned and implemented under this Act shall be included in the budget of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources as part of its annual appropriation.

The Council may receive donations from national and international sources for the implementation of this Act or for a specific project or projects.

Donations received shall be placed in a trust fund for specific purposes and projects, as approved by the Council, subject to existing auditing and accounting regulations and for purposes of this Act.

The program harnessing youth for reforestation shall be funded by project funds of the Council or from donations earmarked for the purpose.

SECTION 8. *Separability Clause.* – If any part of provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, other parts or provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, decree, rule, regulation, executive order or part thereof inconsistent with this Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 10. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall be effective upon its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation, whichever comes earlier.

Approved,