

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 4611



Introduced by Hon. Agapito H. Guanlao

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Food security and food staples self sufficiency is challenged on many fronts. Today, the country's food and food staples production must meet the requirements to feed 100 million Filipinos, amid the challenges and pressures of shrinking agricultural lands, degradation of food resource bases and the looming threat of decimation of food ecosystems and biodiversity caused by extractive activities and climate change.

These in more than a way erode the economic viability of farming, rice farming for that matter, and further, due to inadequacies in government support to the agricultural sector - financial and credit, technological, skills transfer. Cuts and abolition of agricultural subsidies have kept production costs high eat away the viability of rice farming as a main source of livelihood.

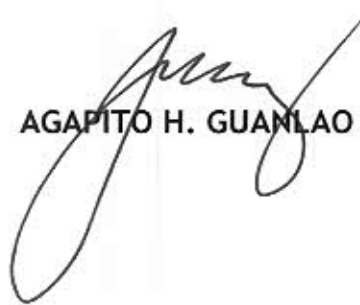
This legislative measure finds rational over attaining adequate focus on food staples self-sufficiency and food security.

The bill proposes the creation of a body that rationalizes the current organizational and programmatic initiatives of government in agriculture. As a body that shall be attached to the Office of the President, it shall be tasked to fine-tune the policy framework of government in the pursuit of food security thrusts and priorities. It seeks to attain focus by harmonizing the programs, functions, provide a single direction to the National Food Authority (NFA), the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), the Fertilizer and Pesticides Authority (FPA) and the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) without effecting changes in their Charters.

This measure also enables strengthen extension work employing the agencies' existing personnel complimentary to existing agricultural extension work carried out in a manner that is seeping.

Moreover, this bill takes cognizance of the need to strengthen through legislation the creation of the Office of the Presidential Assistant on Food Security and Agricultural Modernization or PAFSAM through the creation of the National Food Security Council, to work and coordinate closely with the Department of Agriculture.

Thus, passage of this piece of legislation is earnestly sought.


AGAPITO H. GUANLAO

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AN ACT
CREATING THE NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY COUNCIL,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR THEIR PURPOSES

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

Section 1. Creation. A body to be known as the National Food Security Council hereinafter referred to as the Council, is hereby created, and attached to the Office of the President.

Section 2. Definition. For purposes of this Act, food security shall mean “the availability, at all times, affordable, accessible, healthy and safe food, shared by all and by all future generations of Filipinos; produced with utmost care and protection of our food resource base and ecosystems; where food are produced under a policy of utmost support and where gains from its production are shared foremost by those who till and toil to make bountiful food possible for our people and others.

Section 3. The National Food Security Strategic Development Framework (FSSDF). A National Food Security Strategic Development Formulated herein referred to as the Framework, is being formulated to include a concerted and harmonized undertaking of both government and non-government organizations to ensure the adequate and continuous supply of rice, corn, grains and other key food products generated principally from domestic land- and fishery based agricultural activity distributed at reasonable and affordable prices at all times, especially in times of calamities and/or emergencies.

Towards this end, the State hereby recognizes all sectors, including national and local government agricultural and field extension workers, to participate in the sharing of resources, provide for the planning, marketing and institute marketing and control systems, to maximize agricultural production with the government providing the technical support, regulatory and monetary requirements while progressively minimizing its active participation in roles assigned to the private sector.

Section 4. Mandate. The Council shall be the primary body of the Executive Branch of Government tasked with policy making, planning, regulating and coordinating policies and directives concerning food and food staples production and all necessary complementary requirements that will promote food self-sufficiency and security. To carry out this mandate, the Council shall be guided by the following policies of:

- (a) Ensuring availability and affordability of food by closely monitoring the production of food such as but not limited to agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and mari-culture, and the like;
- (b) Rationalizing the utilization of infrastructure that complement food production such as irrigation facilities, pre and post-harvest machineries as well as those that support storage/warehousing and marketing;
- (c) Ensuring agricultural productivity by promoting, monitoring and utilizing environment-friendly production technologies and the development and application of pest-management methods, including the regulation of inputs for pest management and control;
- (d) Affording special support and ensure the economic viability of specific crops for of crop species such as, but not limited to coconuts, taking into consideration their the propagation, rejuvenation, promotion and marketing;
- (e) Rationalizing agriculture extension work and its development in the light of their role in the State's over-all food security thrusts and directions;
- (f) Integrating national and local food security directions and thrusts with the framework and operational guidelines of the National Convergence Initiative; and,
- (g) Ensuring the availability and accessibility of food grains, flour and other food commodities in the market and to closely monitor and regulate imports for the same, especially rice and corn.

Section 5. Composition. The National Food Security Council shall be composed of the National Food Authority (NFA), the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) and the Fertilizer and Pesticides Authority (FPA) as the Executive Committee.

The other members of the Council shall include the following:

- (1) Department of Agriculture
- (2) Department of Agrarian Reform
- (3) Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- (4) Department of Finance
- (5) Department of Interior and Local Government
- (6) Department of Trade and Industry
- (7) Department of Budget and Management
- (8) Land Bank of the Philippines
- (9) Two (2) Representatives each from the Senate and the House of Representatives (Chairs of the Committee on Agriculture and Food and the Special Committee on Food Security) as Ex-Officio member
- (10) Representatives from each of the following basic sectors:
 - (a) National Farmers Organization (1)
 - (b) National Organization of Backyard Farmers (1)
 - (c) National Organization of Grains Farmers (1)
 - (b) National Fishermen's Organization (1)
 - (c) Agri-business and agri-business enterprises (1)
 - (d) Indigenous cultural communities/indigenous peoples (1)
 - (e) Civil Society Organization (1)
 - (l) Non-government organizations (NGOs);

- (m) Cooperatives (1)
- (n) Consumers (1)
- (o) Private Sector (1)
- (p) Academe (1)

Section 5. The Presidential Assistant for Food Security and Agricultural Modernization shall be Chairman of the NCFS, shall be appointed by the President with the rank of a Cabinet Secretary and shall serve a term of six (6) years. The Chairman shall appoint a vice-chairperson for agricultural production and a vice-chairperson for organization and structural development. The latter shall have jurisdiction over agricultural and field extension workers.

Powers and Functions. To carry out its mandate, the Council shall govern and coordinate the existing tasks and functions of the National Food Authority, the National Irrigation Administration, Philippine Coconut Authority and the Fertilizer and Pesticides Authority and shall effect the harmonization of the mentioned agencies pursuant to Section 3 of this law.

The Council shall have the following functions:

1. To provide the Office of the President with policy inputs necessary data and information, based on extensive policy research, concerning food security and production trends and developments;
2. To coordinate with different national and local government agencies and the private sector in the pursuit of implementing national and local food security targets and directions within the ambit of the National Food Security Strategic Development Framework;
3. To formulate and recommend policy and other measures to effect the implementation of national and local food security policies and initiatives;
4. To strengthen, maximize and extend financial assistance to existing capacity-building initiatives extended to agricultural extension workers and establish their linkage and integration with local government units and like agencies, and to ;
5. To manage government, non-government and foreign sources of funds necessary for the implementation of food security programs aside from those already being implemented by other national government agencies;
6. To harmonize finance and credit facilities for farmers and agricultural workers such as, but not limited to crop insurance, multi-purpose and emergency loans, loans for mechanization purposes; and the like, PROVIDED that such facilities will be utilized to increase and improve food production;
7. To ensure the sustainability of agricultural productivity in an environmentally-friendly manner through integrated plant nutrients management and safe crop protection systems;
8. To develop facilities and develop policy and programs that will extend special attention and support for the coconut and other palm oil industry in all its aspects to include the implementation and sustainability of a nationwide coconut planting and replanting, fertilization and rehabilitation, and other farm productivity programs;
9. To rationalize and systematize infrastructure support for food security especially the water requirements in the form of irrigation facilities and managing the same for provision of services for farmers and farm workers.

10. To extend both financial and non-financial incentives for local government units that share counterpart resources for the effective implementation food security initiatives;
11. To regulate and manage food imports specifically but not limited to rice, their distribution and supply;
12. To regularly report to Congress the status of the Council's implementation and operations necessary for of including, but not limited to, all aspects of its operations and programs and project implementation, financial status and other relevant data as reflected by the basic reform indicator.

Section 6. Creation of a Congressional Oversight Committee in the Senate and House of Representatives. - There is hereby created a Congressional Committee in both house of Congress to monitor the implementation this Act.

Section 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* The Council shall formulate the implementing rules and regulations within 60 days from the enactment of this law.

Section 8. *Funding.* Upon enactment of this law, the current and available funds of the National Food Authority, National Irrigation Administration, Philippine Coconut Authority and Fertilizer and Pesticides Authority shall be used for the operations of the Council, subject to existing accounting and auditing laws and procedures. Furthermore, the Office of the President shall include in its yearly budget the funds necessary for the operation of the Council

Section 9. *Transitory Provision.* Upon enactment of this Act, the Presidential Assistant on Food Security and Agricultural Modernization shall immediately be appointed by the President of the Philippines to function as the Chairman of the Council and shall oversee the immediate implementation of this Act.

- a) The personnel and assets of the NFA, NIA, PCA and FPA are hereby retained and transferred to the Council to ensure the efficient and uninterrupted implementation of the programs and projects of the PCFS.
- (b) All regular or permanent employees who shall be affected by the executive order shall not suffer any loss of seniority or rank or decrease in emoluments.

Section 11. *Repealing Clause.* All presidential acts, letters of instruction, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Executive Order, are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

Section 12. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect immediately.

Approved,