

Republic Of The Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila



SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. **5505**

Introduced by Hon. Eric D. Singson

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The massive degradation of our forest resources and other associated environmental abuses have recently come into focus. Resultant problems like ecological imbalance and frequent floodings of calamitous proportions during the rainy seasons are all primarily blamed on this malady. The government and all concerned citizens are therefore enjoined to adopt all possible measures to protect our trees and restore our forests in order to avoid a repeat of the Ondoy tragedy and the recent floods in areas in Ilocos Sur previously not prone to flooding wrought by the monsoon rains and to minimize damage to our agricultural products and properties.

Admittedly, the Virginia tobacco industry has its share in the unabated denudation of our forests and destruction of our trees. This is because said industry depends on trees and forest resources for the fuel inputs of flue-curing barns for Virginia tobacco leaves.

On the other hand, the Virginia tobacco industry is so vital to be cursed and phased out as millions of people depend on it for livelihood and constitutes a major source of government revenues.

This bill therefore seeks to offer a solution to the problem. It proposes the creation of a body, The Ilocos Forest Management Council, whose objective is to promote and regulate the planting and cutting of trees not only to prevent the unabated denudation of our forests and destruction of our trees but also to ensure the continuous supply of fuel wood for the flue-curing activities of the tobacco industry.

This bill mandates the council to sustain the growth of the tobacco industry while at the same time ample protection is afforded to our forests and trees.


ERIC D. SINGSON

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House Bill No. **5505**

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AN ACT CREATING THE ILOCOS FOREST MANAGEMENT COUNCIL TO PROMOTE AND REGULATE THE PLANTING AND CUTTING OF TREES IN THE VIRGINIA PRODUCING PROVINCES TO ENSURE THE CONTINUOUS SUPPLY OF FUEL WOOD FOR THE FLUE-CURING ACTIVITIES OF THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Be it enacted by the House of Representatives in session assembled:

Section 1. It is hereby declared a public policy to protect our trees from destruction caused by the unregulated use of fuel wood in the flue-curing process of Virginia tobacco leaf.

Section 2. Pursuant to this policy, the Ilocos Forest Management Council is hereby created to protect our forests and to ensure the continuous supply of fuel wood for the flue-curing of Virginia tobacco.

Section 3. Membership. - The Ilocos Forest Management Council shall be composed of the following members:

Chairman: The National Tobacco Administrator;

Vice Chairman: The Regional Director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources;

Members: The Governors and Congressional Representatives of the Tobacco Producing Provinces;

Section 4. Territorial Jurisdiction. – The council shall cover the four Virginia tobacco producing provinces, namely, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union and Abra.

Section 5. Purposes and Objectives. – The Council shall have the following purposes and objectives:

1. To formulate a comprehensive plan in coordination with the local government to designate a viable area in each municipality for planting fast-growing trees like ipil-ipil
2. To formulate and finance a massive plating/reforestation of the designated areas regulate the subsequent cutting of grown trees for fuel wood needed in the flue-curing of Virginia tobacco leaves.
3. To adopt a system of replanting of trees to replace and to increase the number of trees in the designated areas.
4. To collect a reasonable amount to be fixed according to the needs of the individual tobacco farmers using the fuel wood

Section. 6. Principal Office. – The Authority shall maintain its principal office in the City of Candon, Province of Ilocos Sur but it may have branch offices in such other places as are necessary for the proper conduct of its business.

Section 7. Meetings. - The Council shall meet preferably at its principal office, at least quarterly (four times a year) and as frequently as necessary to discharge its duties and responsibilities. The Board shall be convoked by the Chairman or upon the written request of, at least, three (3) of its members.

Section. 8. Supervision. – The Authority shall be under the supervision of the Office of the President. All policies and programs formulated; all orders, rules and regulations promulgated; and all appointments made by the Council, as well as all transactions subject to its authority and jurisdiction shall be subject to the approval of the President of the Philippines.

Section 9. Appropriation. - The amount of Fifty Million Pesos (P50,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated for the necessary initial operating expenses of the Authority out of any fund in the National Treasury not otherwise appropriated. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for the continued operation of the Authority shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. This amount shall be used exclusively for the development of the designated forestation areas.

Section 10. Powers and Functions. - The Council shall have the following powers and functions:

1. To formulate policies, develop programs, and establish projects and promulgate rules and regulations to govern the conduct of the affairs of the Council;
2. To adopt and approve the annual or supplemental budget of the Council to cover its financial operation;
3. To appoint and fix the compensation and allowances of all the officers and employees of the Council
4. To submit an annual report to the President and render such special reports as may be required or deemed necessary; and
5. To perform such other functions as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

Section. 11. Duties and Functions of the Chairman. - The Administrator shall perform the following duties and functions:

1. Submit, for the consideration of the Council, the policies and measures which he believes to be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act;
2. Execute and administer the policies and measures approved by the Council;
3. Direct and supervise the operation of the Council, but may, for efficiency and effectiveness, delegate certain responsibilities to other officers of the Council.
4. Represent the Council in all dealings with other offices, agencies and instrumentalities of the government with all other persons, entities or enterprises, whether public or private,

Section 12. Auditing. - The Auditing Department shall be headed by the duly appointed representative of the Commission on Audit whose salary shall be determined and paid according to law. All personnel of the auditing department shall be appointed and their number and salaries fixed by the Commission on Audit.

Section 13. Separability Clause. - Should any provisions of this Act be declared unconstitutional, no other provision shall be affected thereby.

Section 14. Repealing Clause. - All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

Section 15. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days.

Approved,