

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. **5597**



Introduced by Representative ESTRELLITA "GING" B. SUANSING

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Agriculture is the perennial backbone of the Philippine economy. Using contemporaneous Philippine statistics, the sector employs a substantial 65-70% of our work force. While farming has always been associated with rural areas and done on vast farmlands, farming can also be done in cities - a practice called urban agriculture. In fact, urban agriculture is now being practiced in many countries all over the world, and in recent years, has been introduced in the country.

This proposed measure seeks to institutionalize integrated urban agriculture and vertical farming in the highly urbanized cities and municipalities nationwide. This, in turn, will help address food security concerns and regenerate ecosystem functions.

The world population will double in 50 years. Studies have shown that new land will be needed to grow enough food for everyone. Urban agriculture and vertical farming will not only clean our environment and avoid further climate change, but also provide residents with safer, healthier food, at the same time keeping farmers in business. Furthermore, urban agriculture and vertical farming will help reduce poverty.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


ESTRELLITA B. SUANSING
1st District, Nueva Ecija

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AN ACT

**PROMOTING INTEGRATED URBAN FARMING TO ADDRESS FOOD
SECURITY CONCERNS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE
PURPOSE**

*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 the “Integrated Urban
Agriculture Act.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the
State to reaffirm the fundamental right of every person to adequate food and
to be free from hunger. The achievement of self-sufficiency in food
production and building climate resilient communities is therefore adopted
as primary state policy. Towards this end, key reforms for the development
of modern, appropriate, cost-effective and environmentally safe agriculture
technologies are hereby encouraged in order to ensure the food security of
the country.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For the purposes of this Act, the term:

- (A) “Integrated urban agriculture” shall refer to the practice of
cultivating, processing and distributing of food in, or around a

village, town or city. Integrated urban agriculture also involves animal husbandry, aquaculture, agro-forestry and horticulture.

- (B) "Vertical farming" shall refer to the method of farming that is brought to the urban space by employing the concepts of indoor agriculture in skyscrapers and other modern buildings.

SECTION 4. *Comprehensive Research on Integrated Urban Farming.* – For the purpose of this Act, the respective Secretaries of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) are hereby mandated to promote the use of integrated urban agriculture and vertical farming in the country's metropolitan areas as an instrument to address food security concerns and regenerate ecosystem function of the Philippines.

Idle and/or abandoned government lots and buildings owned by either the national and local governments or available land resources in state universities and colleges shall be considered for growing crops, raising livestock, and producing food using the said methods.

Safety standards must be followed such that the DOST and other pertinent agencies should include research and development of appropriate technologies necessary in promoting integrated agriculture technologies.

SECTION 5. *Inclusion of Urban Agriculture and Vertical Farming in Agricultural Training.* – Urban agriculture and vertical farming are used in agricultural production shall be integrated in the academic curriculum for secondary and tertiary level students of both public and private academic institutions studying courses on Agriculture, Practical Arts, Home Economics, and other subjects related to agriculture. A course curriculum on gardening/urban gardening shall also be developed and included into the regular curriculum of both elementary and secondary education.

All public and private elementary and secondary schools and state universities and colleges shall implement urban gardening/agriculture and include in its regular curriculum its practical or hands-on application.

For state universities and colleges, urban gardening/agriculture shall form part of the required period of time spent by students in the National Service Training Program (NSTP) or the Citizen Military Training (CMT). A plan, therefore, for the utilization and maximizing the space occupied by schools shall be formulated specifically for urban gardening/agriculture. Instructional materials shall also be developed.

The Department of Education (DepEd), in coordination with the Commission in Higher Education (CHED) shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the implementation of this section within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act.

SECTION 6. *Creation and Composition of the Urban Farming Council (UFC).* – There is hereby established an Urban Farming Council (UFC) which shall be attached to the Department of Agriculture. The UFC shall compose of the following members:

- (A) The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture who shall serve as Chairperson of the UFC;
- (B) The Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources;
- (C) The Secretary of the Department of Finance;
- (D) The Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology;
- (E) The Representative from the People's Organizations;
- (F) The Representative from the Non-Governmental Organizations;
- (G) The Representative from the National Urban Poor Sector Council of the National Anti-Poverty Commission;
- (H) The National President of the League of the Cities of the Philippines;
- (I) The National President of the League of the Municipalities of the Philippines; and
- (J) The Representative from the private sector who have an expertise in urban farming and/or vertical farming.

SECTION 7. *Local Government Units Participation.* – The local government units shall formulate policy on the practice of urban farming, utilizing

unused spaces and idle lands. This shall require the enactment of local legislation institutionalizing urban gardening/agriculture in all levels of the LGU. This also shall require LGUs to enact measures or ordinances that will include urban gardening/agriculture as a regular component in budget appropriations of the LGU.

All cities and urbanized municipalities where urban farming activities are conducted shall extend whatever assistance is necessary for the urban farmers to exercise urban farming and benefit from any incentives under this Act.

All homeowners associations, neighborhood associations, community associations, and people's organizations are encouraged to participate in urban farming activities within their areas of operation. The concerned LGU shall grant incentives for the benefits of the members of the concerned associations or people's organizations who are actively participating in urban farming activities.

SECTION 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, the DA, the DOST, the DepEd, the CHED, the DILG, and the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) through the National Urban Poor Sector Council (NUPSC), and other stakeholders shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 9. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to implement the provisions of this Act shall be included and incorporated in the Annual General Appropriations of the various agencies of the government involved in the implementation of this Act.

SECTION 10. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 11. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SECTION 12. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,