

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **4805**



Introduced by **DIWA Party-list Representative Emmeline Y. Aglipay – Villar**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The level of urbanization in 2010 was 45.3%, which means that there were 41.9 million Filipinos living in urban classified areas.¹ With an annual growth rate of 4.0%, urban population is expected to reach more than 50% of the present population.²

The recent urbanization trends make it rational to promote and develop urban agriculture not only because of its economic importance but for its inclusive social benefits on food security, nutrition and poverty alleviation as well as for ecological and environmental gains.

Urban agriculture may have a minimal impact in our economy however it can provide food security as it can be a good source of nutritious food for urban dwellers at minimal costs or no cost at all. Vegetable prices in urban areas are highly volatile since it can spike up or go down almost daily. When there is a typhoon or natural calamity in vegetable producing areas, prices of vegetables can double and oftentimes can even be more expensive than chicken or fish, making it less and less affordable to the masses especially the urban poor. More Filipinos, especially the informal settlers in urban areas, still suffer from hunger. The Third Quarter 2016 Social Weather Survey (SWS), reported 10.6% or an estimated 2.4 million families experiencing involuntary hunger at least once in the past three months due to lack of food to eat. The population is growing and urban agriculture can contribute to food security, especially to urban dwellers.

Problems of malnutrition among many city dwellers can also be addressed by urban agriculture. Food production for the household consumption will also promote diversified diet for the family. The availability of fresh fruits and vegetables within the comforts of their home will encourage them, especially the children, to consume more fruits and vegetables and provides healthier options for food in their tables.

Urban agriculture also presents sustainable poverty alleviation program as it can augment household income and improve their living condition. Agricultural produce from urban agriculture

¹ <https://psa.gov.ph/content/urban-barangays-philippines-based-2010-cph>

² Ibid.

can eventually propagate to be able to supply not only the household's own-consumption but also the commercial market demands. It can provide business opportunities to the family and promote micro/small/medium enterprise (MSMEs). Urban communities can make livelihoods from urban agriculture that will promote its sustainable and inclusive growth. This will not only generate jobs and provide additional household income, but can also make significant impacts on poverty alleviation and women empowerment as well since most women in the household remain at home to care for the children and attend to the household needs.

City farming also contributes to environment conservation as the limited space in the city can urge proper management of waste and recycling. To save space, vegetables can be planted on recycled plastic bottles, sacks or basins hanging over plots. While kitchen waste and other garbage can be converted to organic fertilizers. Urban agriculture can also improve the environment in urban communities as city farming with sustainable agriculture methods can improve local food system infrastructure and can aid as natural air filter.

Despite the many benefits of city farming, the state of urban agriculture in the Philippines is still underdeveloped. The biggest challenge is lack of political mandate to require the local government units to support urban agriculture programs. There is a need to institutionalize promotion of urban agriculture to support the research, extension, and training for enhancement and proper implementation of projects relative to urban agriculture.

This legislative measure - filed as a counterpart of Senate Bill No. 141 with the support of its author, Senator Cynthia Villar - aims to provide food security and improve nutrition while at the same time contribute to poverty reduction through urban agriculture.



EMMELINE Y. AGLIPAY – VILLAR
Representative, DIWA Party-list

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AN ACT
MANDATING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO PROMOTE URBAN
AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRY'S METROPOLITAN AREAS,
TO ADDRESS FOOD SECURITY. AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. This law shall be known as the "Integrated Urban Agriculture Act of 2016." 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. Towards this end, the state shall endeavor to achievement self-sufficiency in food production and the building of climate resilient communities in metropolitan areas through the promotion of key reforms for the development and promotion of modern, appropriate, cost-effective and environmentally safe agriculture technologies in order to ensure food security, promote a healthy citizenry and advance an improve quality of life for urban dwellers.

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

- (A) "Food Security" refers to a situation wherein food staples are available at all times, and where all people have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.
- (B) "Integrated urban agriculture" refers to the developmental paradigm that encompasses principles, management, technologies, and the policies relating to the practice and application of agricultural production of food and goods in urban areas.
- (C) "Urban Agriculture" refers to the practice of cultivating, processing and distributing of food in or around a village, town or city including animal husbandry, aquaculture, agro-forestry and horticulture.

- (D) "Urban Farming" refers to any act of farming in a city using land or the space of a building, including the roof of a building that is partially or completely covered with vegetation through the use of any growing medium such as pots, plots, and membranes.
- (E) "Vertical Farming" refers to the method of farming that is brought to the urban space by employing concepts of indoor agriculture in skyscrapers and other modern buildings.
- (F) "Community Gardens" refers to any piece of land gardened by a group of people using either individual or shared plots on public or private land with the consent of the owner, to produce edibles, such as herbs, vegetables, fruits or ornamentals. Community gardens may be found in neighborhoods and schools, or connected to institutions such as hospitals or located on the grounds of shared housing such as tenements, apartment complexes and shanty towns.

SECTION 4. Office Urban Agriculture. The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture shall establish within the Department an office to be known as the Office of Urban Agriculture.

- (A) Purpose. The Office of Urban Agriculture is established for the purpose of coordinating activities throughout the Department related to urban agriculture.
- (B) Specific Responsibilities. The Office of Urban Agriculture shall be responsible for coordinating Department activities and conducting oversight in the following areas:
 - (1) Ensuring that Department authorities are used to effectively encourage agricultural production in urban communities to combat hunger and food insecurity.
 - (2) Ensuring that Department authorities are used to empower communities, especially communities in urban areas with a large percentage of low-income residents, to eliminate shortages of affordable, fresh food products, increase the local production and sale of food, and create sustainable food systems.
 - (3) Developing a unified strategy to link the agricultural production and nutrition programs administered by the Department as a tool for economic development in urban communities in a manner that addresses local conditions and engages local residents through agricultural economic development.
 - (4) Conducting systematic and regular reviews of Department's authorities and making policy recommendations to Congress and the Secretary on new authorities or regulation changes to assist urban communities to combat hunger, poor nutrition, and food insecurity.
 - (5) Ensuring that the programs established by this Act are implemented in a manner consistent with the goal of poverty reduction, food security and healthy eating habits in urban communities.

SECTION 5. Natural Resource Conservation Service Technical Assistance in support of backyard

and community gardening programs. - Authority to Provide Assistance. The Secretary shall provide technical assistance in support of backyard and community gardening programs involving 'small-scale subsistence and personal use agriculture for the purpose of achieving expanded and improved production; and implementing conservation methods related to small-scale and personal-use production.

SECTION 6. Creation and Composition of Urban Agriculture Council (UAC). To carry out the purpose of this Act, there is hereby established an Urban Agriculture Council of the Philippines (UACP) which shall be attached to the Department of Agriculture. Its task is to promote urban agriculture in the country. The Council shall meet every three (3) months or as often as necessary. The UAC shall be composed of thirteen (13) members:

- (A) The Secretary of the DA who shall serve as the Chair of the UACP;
- (B) The Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);
- (C) The Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST);
- (D) The Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);
- (E) The Director General of the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA);
- (F) The Representative from the National Urban Poor Sector Council of the National Anti-Poverty Commission; (NUPSC-NAPC)
- (G) The National President of the League of Cities;
- (H) The National President of the League of Municipalities;
- (I) The Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Food of the Senate;
- (J) The Chair of the Committee on Food Security of the House of Representatives;
- (K) The Representative from the Academe;
- (L) The Representative from the private sector who has the expertise in urban farming; and
- (M) The Lead Convenor of the Urban Agriculture Practitioners Network of the Philippines.

The Office of Urban Agriculture which shall be under the Office of the Secretary of the Department

of Agriculture shall be the secretariat of the Urban Agriculture Council.

SECTION 7. Powers and Functions of the Council - The Council shall have the following duties, powers and functions:

- (A) Formulate the implementing guidelines, programs, and operating principles of this Act;
- (B) Study and make recommendations regarding the impact of urban taming in metropolitan communities;
- (C) Monitor and carry out the implementation of this Act;
- (D) Submit to Congress a report of its findings and recommendations;
- (E) Exercise all powers and functions necessary for the objectives and purpose of this Act.

SECTION 8. Comprehensive Research on Urban Agriculture. - For the purpose of this Act, the respective Secretaries of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the academic community shall develop research agenda on urban agriculture and vertical farming in the country's metropolitan areas as an instrument to address food security concerns and regenerate ecosystem functions in the country.

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

Safety standards, good agricultural practices and good handling practices must be emphasized and promoted at all times, such that DA, DOST and the Local Government Units together with other pertinent agencies should see to its implementation in the promotion of urban agriculture to minimize risks of microbial food safety hazards.

SECTION 9. Inclusion of Urban Agriculture in the Educational System. Urban agriculture and vertical farming as used in agricultural production shall be integrated in the academic curriculum for elementary, secondary and tertiary level students of both public and private academic institutions for those studying in Agriculture. Practical Arts, Home Economics and/or other subjects related to agriculture.

A course curriculum on urban agriculture shall also be developed and included into the regular curriculum of both elementary and secondary education.

All elementary and secondary schools public and private shall implement urban agriculture and

include in its curriculum practical or hands-on application.

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

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

SECTION 10. Local Government Units Responsibility. -The local government units shall formulate policy on the practice of urban agriculture, utilizing unused spaces and idle lands consistent with its existing policy on the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) and zoning ordinances. This shall require the enactment of local legislation institutionalizing urban agriculture in the LGU and also the enactment of measures or ordinances that will include urban agriculture as a regular component in the annual appropriations of the LGU.

All metropolitan LGUs are required to provide assistance in the form of training as well as other benefits or incentives under this Act to residents who adopt urban agriculture. Towards this end, a model or demonstration urban farm/garden shall be developed and which shall be open to public for visitation and educational purposes.

All homeowners' association, neighborhood associations, community associations, and people organizations including local business establishments shall be encouraged by the LGU to participate in urban agriculture activities. The concerned LGU shall grant necessary incentives under existing laws for the benefit of the members of the concerned associations or organizations engaged in urban agriculture.

SECTION 11. Information and Education Campaign. In order to raise public awareness, and provide education on urban farming, the Department of Agriculture (DA) shall engage the Assistance of the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), the Public information Office of the urban cities and municipalities in coordination with the DILG, the DepEd and the CHED to undertake a national education information campaign.

SECTION 12. Appropriations. The funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included and incorporated in the annual general appropriations of the Department of Agriculture under the Office of the Secretary. A minimum of fifty million (P50,000,000) pesos shall be appropriated yearly for this program.

SECTION 13. Tax Incentive and/or tax credits. The owner of the building or a parcel of land utilized for urban agriculture, as defined in this Act, shall receive a real property tax credit for every square meter, consistent with existing tax laws.

SECTION 14. Implementing Rules. Within six (6) months from the date of effectivity of this Act, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Science and Technology shall promulgate such implementing rules and regulations necessary for the proper implementation of this Act.

SECTION 15. Separability Clause. If any provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional, any other provision not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 16. Repealing Clause. All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, issuances, rules and regulations, or parts thereof contrary to or inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SECTION 17. Effectivity. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation or in the Official Gazette.

Approved,