

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **5474**



Introduced by **MAGDALO Party-List Representative**
HON. GARY C. ALEJANO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article 11 Section 16 declares that the State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature. Despite the government's good intentions, rapid population growth, urbanization and industrialization have far outstripped urban environment services and weak natural resource management systems have led to rapid degradation of those environments too.

Rapid conversion of forestlands and grasslands to urban use is depleting these natural systems. Agricultural yields in lowland areas are stagnating and population pressures are stimulating cultivation of fragile upland areas, causing serious soil erosion. While estimates of deforestation differ, forest cover in the Philippines has certainly been significantly reduced over the last forty years due to increasing urbanization, illegal logging, and forest fires. Reforestation efforts by the government have been erratic, with low tree survival rates. Marine resources are heavily stressed by over-exploitation and pollution. While we cannot totally undo this environmental upheaval, we can to some extent reverse the severity of the damage, accordingly cushioning its inevitable impact.

It is in this light that this bill seeks to establish a basic policy for nature restoration in the country. Ecological restoration, the attempt to guide damaged ecosystems back to a previous, usually healthier or more natural condition, is rapidly gaining recognition as one of the most promising approaches to conservation. It is hoped that with the passage of this bill, we shall be able to redeem our troubled relationship with nature and sustain the God-given finite resources of this country for the subsequent generations of Filipinos to come.

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


GARY C. ALEJANO

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AN ACT
PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT THEREBY ESTABLISHING A BASIC
POLICY FOR NATURE RESTORATION, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** - This Act shall be known as the "*Nature Restoration Law of*
2 *2017*".

3
4 **SEC. 2. Purpose.** - This Law establishes the basic principles of nature restoration,
5 defines the responsibilities of concerned government agency, and stipulates necessary matters
6 for the implementation of nature restoration, including the establishment of the Basic Policy
7 for Nature Restoration. This is done for the purpose of pursuing the comprehensive
8 implementation of measures concerning nature restoration, thereby securing biodiversity in
9 support of efforts toward realizing a society that is in harmony with nature, and contributing to
10 the conservation of the global environment.

11
12 **SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.** – As used in this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- 13 A. "*Nature restoration*" means the conservation, restoration or creation, and maintenance
14 of the conditions of rivers, marshes, tidal flats, seaweed/seagrass beds, community-
15 based woods, rural landscapes, forests, and other natural environments, with the
16 participation of various actors in the community, including concerned governmental
17 agencies, concerned municipal governments, local residents, specified non-profit
18 corporations, and individuals with specialized knowledge of the natural environment,
19 with the objective of recovering the ecosystems and other natural environments that
20 have been damaged or destroyed in the past.
- 21 B. "*Nature restoration project*" means a project to be implemented with the objective to
22 restore nature.
- 23 C. "*Landowner, etc.*" means an individual who owns a piece of land, woods, or bamboo
24 thicket or the right to the use of and profits from a piece of land, woods or bamboo
25 thicket; or the fishing rights or common of piscary to an area (excluding special
26 facilities and other facilities clearly known to have been set up for temporary use).

1 **SEC. 4. Basic Principles. –**

- 2 A. Nature restoration shall be carried out appropriately for the purposes of maintaining and
3 passing on a sound and bountiful natural environment to future generations, realizing a
4 society in harmony with nature through the protection of biodiversity, and contributing
5 to the conservation of the global environment.
6 B. Nature restoration shall be carried out with the cooperation of various actors in the
7 community including concerned governmental agencies, concerned local governments,
8 local residents, specified non-profit corporations, and individuals with specialized
9 knowledge of the natural environment in a voluntary and active manner. Efforts shall
10 be made to ensure transparency.
11 C. Nature restoration shall be carried out based on scientific knowledge, taking into
12 account characteristics of the natural environment in the area and the delicate balance
13 of the ecosystem, as well as nature's ability to recover.
14 D. Nature restoration shall be carried out in such a way that, even after a nature restoration
15 project has begun, the state of nature restoration is monitored, the monitoring results
16 are assessed scientifically, and the assessment results are reflected in the project.
17 E. Due to the important need for people to learn about conservation of the natural
18 environment, hereinafter referred to as "natural environmental learning", arrangements
19 shall be made to utilize the nature restoration project as a venue for natural
20 environmental learning as it is implemented.

21
22 **SEC. 5. Responsibilities of the National and Local Governments. -** The national and
23 local governments shall strive to provide the necessary assistance to facilitate the
24 implementation of nature restoration projects undertaken by local residents, specified non-
25 profit corporations, and other private organizations.
26

27 **SEC. 6. Responsibilities of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.**
28 – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources, hereinafter referred to as the DENR,
29 who undertakes a nature restoration project pursuant to this Law, shall strive to take the lead in
30 carrying out the nature restoration project based on the basic principles.
31

32 **SEC. 7. Coordination with Other Public Interests. –** Nature restoration shall be carried
33 out taking into consideration the need to coordinate such efforts with the conservation of
34 national land and other public interests.
35

36 **SEC. 8. Basic Policy for Nature Restoration. –**

- 37 A. The government shall formulate a basic policy for comprehensively promoting nature
38 restoration measures, hereinafter referred to as "Basic Policy for Nature Restoration".
39 The Basic Policy for Nature Restoration provides the following:
40 1. Basic direction for the implementation of nature restoration;
41 2. Basic matters concerning the committee detailed in Section 9 of this Act;
42 3. Basic matters concerning formulation of the overall plan for nature restoration;
43 4. Basic matters concerning the promotion of natural environmental learning
44 concerning nature restoration; and
45 5. Other important matters concerning the promotion of nature restoration.
46
47 B. The DENR shall draft the Basic Policy for Nature Restoration, consulting with the
48 Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Minister of Land,
49 Infrastructure and Transport and shall call for approval from the Cabinet;

- C. The DENR shall seek public opinion when drafting the Basic Policy for Nature Restoration;
- D. The DENR shall, without delay, make public the Basic Policy for Nature Restoration when a Cabinet decision is made in accordance with the provision in Paragraph 3;
- E. The Basic Policy for Nature Restoration shall be revised approximately every five years in accordance with progress in the implementation of nature restoration projects; and
- F. Provisions from Paragraphs A to E are applicable to changes to the Basic Policy for Nature Restoration.

SEC. 9. *Nature Restoration Committee.* –

- A. To administer the matters provided in the following paragraph, the effector shall form a nature restoration committee (hereinafter referred to as "Committee") with concerned local governments, concerned governmental agencies, and other parties who intend to participate in the nature restoration project or activities related to the project to be carried out by the effector, including local residents, specified non-profit corporations, individuals with specialized knowledge of the natural environment, landowners, etc.

The Committee shall administer the following matters:

- 1. Draw up the overall plan for nature restoration;
 - 2. Discuss the drafted implementation plan of the nature restoration project; and
 - 3. Conduct communication and coordination for implementing the nature restoration project.
- B. The overall plan for nature restoration, hereinafter referred to as "overall plan for nature restoration", determines the following matters in line with the Basic Policy for Nature Restoration:
 - 1. Areas subject to nature restoration;
 - 2. Goals of nature restoration;
 - 3. Names of organizations and individuals to join the Committee and their responsibilities; and
 - 4. Other necessary matters for facilitating nature restoration.
- C. The Committee decides the necessary matters related to the organization and management of the Committee.
- D. Members of the Committee shall cooperate in promoting nature restoration.

SEC. 10. *Implementation Plan of Nature Restoration Project.* –

- A. The effector shall formulate a plan for implementing the nature restoration project, hereinafter referred to as the "implementation plan of the nature restoration project", based on the Policy for Nature Restoration;
- B. The implementation plan of the nature restoration project shall provide the following:
 - 1. Name of effector and name of the Committee to which the effector belongs;
 - 2. Areas subject to and contents of the nature restoration project;
 - 3. Relationship between the area subject to the nature restoration project and its local natural environment, and the significance and effect of the conservation of natural environment; and

1 4. Other necessary matters related to implementation of the nature restoration
2 project.
3

4 C. In drawing up the implementation plan of the nature restoration project, the DENR shall
5 fully discuss the draft with the Committee beforehand and draw up the plan according
6 to the results of the discussion;

7 D. The implementation plan of the nature restoration project shall be in conformity with
8 the overall plan of nature restoration; and

9 E. Upon drawing up the implementation plan of the nature restoration project, the DENR
10 shall promptly submit a copy of the plan (including copies of documents attached to the
11 implementation plan of the nature restoration project; hereinafter the same) and a copy
12 of the overall plan of nature restoration for the nature restoration project
13 implementation plan (including copies of documents attached to the overall plan for
14 nature restoration; hereinafter the same) to the local government official under whose
15 jurisdiction the area covered by the nature restoration project in the implementation
16 plan lies.
17

18 **SEC. 11. *Agreement on Maintenance.*** - In order to conduct maintenance related to
19 nature restoration on all or part of the area covered by the nature restoration project, the effector
20 may carry out the maintenance by concluding an agreement with the landowner of the area.
21

22 **SEC. 12. *Establishment of a Consultation System for Effecters.*** - The competent
23 minister shall set up the necessary system to provide proper consultations to effecters.
24

25 **SEC. 13. *Consideration for the Implementation of Nature Restoration Projects.*** -
26 When asked for permits or other legally prescribed actions for the implementation of a nature
27 restoration project based on the implementation plan of the nature restoration project, the heads
28 of governmental agencies and concerned local governments shall give proper consideration to
29 enable the smooth and speedy implementation of the nature restoration project.
30

31 **SEC. 14. *Announcement of the Implementation Status of Nature Restoration***
32 ***Projects.*** -
33

34 1. The competent minister shall announce the implementation status of nature restoration
35 projects annually.

36 2. The competent minister shall make an announcement upon the receipt of a copy of the
37 implementation plan of the nature restoration project and a copy of the overall plan for
38 nature restoration which was submitted pursuant to the provision in Article 9, Paragraph
39 5 (including the case when Paragraph 7 of the same article is applicable).
40

41 **SEC. 15. *Reporting Progress of the Implementation Plan of the Nature Restoration***
42 ***Project.*** - Pursuant to the competent ministerial ordinance, the competent minister may request
43 the effector, who carries out the nature restoration project according to its implementation plan,
44 to report on the progress of the implementation plan of the nature restoration project.
45

46 **SEC. 16. *Financial Measures, etc.*** - The national and local governments will take the
47 necessary measures, financial and otherwise, to implement nature restoration.
48

1 **SEC. 17. *Other Measures Related to Nature Restoration.*** - The national and local
2 governments will take the necessary measures to promote natural environmental learning
3 regarding nature restoration and to expand public awareness activities to promote nature
4 restoration.

- 5
6 1. The national and local governments will take the necessary measures to promote natural
7 environmental learning regarding nature restoration and to expand public awareness
8 activities to promote nature restoration;
9
10 2. The national and local governments will make efforts to provide appropriate
11 information on nature restoration to facilitate nature restoration activities carried out by
12 local residents, specified non-profit corporations, and individuals with specialized
13 knowledge of the natural environment, etc.;
14
15 3. The national and local governments will pursue research and development on nature
16 restoration, disseminate the results, and promote other science and technology for
17 nature restoration; and
18
19 4. The national and local governments will pursue agriculture, forestry, and fisheries in
20 harmony with the local environment in conjunction with the implementation of nature
21 restoration projects.

22 **SEC. 18. *Nature Restoration Promotion Conference.*** -
23

- 24 A. The government shall establish the Nature Restoration Promotion Conference made up
25 of officials from Department of Environment and National Resources (DENR),
26 Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)
27 and other concerned governmental agencies to carry out communication and
28 coordination in order to implement nature restoration in a comprehensive, effective,
29 and efficient manner; and
30
31 B. The DENR, DA and DPWH shall establish the Nature Restoration Expert Panel, made
32 up of individuals with specialized knowledge of the natural environment, to consider
33 the opinions provided when the communication and coordination provided in the
34 preceding paragraph are carried out.
35

36 **SEC. 19. *Competent Departmental Secretaries, etc.*** -
37

- 38 A. Competent Departmental Secretaries in this Law are the DENR, DA and DPWH
39 Secretaries; and
40
41 B. Competent ordinances in this Law are orders issued by the DENR, DA and DPWH
42 Secretaries.
43

44 **SEC. 20. *Implementing Rules.*** - The Secretary of the DENR shall issue the pertinent
45 rules with regard to this Act, including but not limited to the application for termination of
46 suspension and lifting of suspension of the Program.
47

1 **SEC. 21. *Separability Clause.*** - If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or
2 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain
3 valid and subsisting.

4 **SEC. 22. *Repealing Clause.*** - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive
5 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to, or inconsistent
6 with, the provisions of this Act, is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.
7

8 **SEC. 23. *Effectivity Clause.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
9 complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general
10 circulation.

Approved,