

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 7526

Introduced by Hon. Salvador B. Belaro Jr.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

According to the United Nations (UN) Population Division, world population is expected to increase to 9.1 billion by the year 2050 during which period 70% of our population will be living in urban areas.

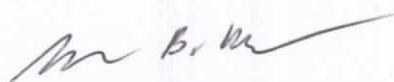
On the other hand, the UN Human Settlements Program (UN Habitat) estimated that around "250 million hungry people in the world live in cities" and that "low income urban dwellers spend between 40%-60% of their income on food each year." Also, "hunger, poverty, and environmental degradation were identified by the United Nations Development (UNDP) as "the problems that most urban areas in developing countries are facing."

"Farming in the city" or urban agriculture is one solution suggested by the UNDP. Urban agriculture, as defined by the Food and Agriculture organization (FAO), is "an industry that produces, processes and markets food and fuel, largely in response to the daily demand of consumers within a town, city or metropolis, on land and water dispersed throughout the urban and peri-urban area, applying intensive production methods, using and reusing natural resources and urban waste to yield a diversity of crop and livestock.

Urban agriculture, as claimed by the UNDP, “has the potential of providing much higher nutritional improvement, hunger reduction, income-generation, enterprise development, and environmental improvement to the city.”

This bill proposes the institutionalization of integrated urban agriculture and vertical farming in the country in order to ensure food security, to promote livelihood, and to regenerate ecosystem functions in metropolitan areas through integrated urban agriculture and vertical farming.

Hence, the passage of this legislation is earnestly sought.



HON. SALVADOR B. BELARO, JR.

Representative

1-Ang Edukasyon Party List

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AN ACT
PROMOTING INTEGRATED URBAN AGRICULTURE AND
VERTICAL FARMING IN THE COUNTRY, APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* — This Act shall be known as the “Integrated Urban Agriculture and Vertical Farming Act of 2018”.

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. It is also a primary policy of the state to achieve self-sufficiency in food production and building climate resilient communities.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* — For the purpose of this Act, the term

- a. “Integrated Urban Agriculture” shall refer to the practice of cultivating, processing and distributing of agricultural products from animal husbandry, aquaculture, agro-forestry and horticulture in or around a metropolitan village, town and city;

- b. “Vertical Farming” shall refer to the method or practice of indoor agriculture growing produce in vertically stacked layers in skyscrapers and modern buildings using geponic¹, hydroponic² or aeroponic³ growing methods.

SECTION 4. *Comprehensive Research on Integrated Urban Agriculture and Vertical Farming.* — The Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), are hereby mandated to conduct comprehensive research and development on the promotion of integrated urban agriculture and vertical farming.

Key reforms towards the research and development of modern, appropriate, cost-effective and environmentally conducive agricultural technologies are hereby encouraged in order to ensure food security, to promote livelihood, and to regenerate ecosystem functions in metropolitan areas through agriculture.

Idle and/or abandoned government lots and buildings owned by either national and local governments or available land resources in state universities and colleges shall be considered conducive for growing crops, raising livestock and producing food using said methods, provided that these are compliant and subject to safety standards such that of DOST and other pertinent agencies.

SECTION 5. *Inclusion of Integrated Urban Agriculture and Vertical Farming in the Curricula.* — A subject on integrated urban agriculture and vertical farming shall be included in the academic curricula in the primary and secondary schools, public or private, including its research and practical application.

For universities, colleges and training centers, both public and private, integrated urban agriculture and vertical farming shall be required as an advanced elective course for students pursuing Agriculture, Practical Arts, Home Economics, and other agriculture-related courses.

¹ Geponic or geaponics refer to growing plants in a normal soil or an aggregate medium.

² Hydroponics is a subset of hydroculture, which includes the growing of plants without the use of soil. It uses mineral nutrient solutions in a water solvent.

³ Aeroponics is the process of growing plants in an air or mist environment without the use of soil or an aggregate medium.

Utilization plans shall be formulated to maximize the space and other resources available to schools, universities and colleges. Instructional materials and facilities shall also be provided and developed without incurring costs to students.

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

- a. Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA), as Chairperson;
- b. Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST); as Vice Chairperson
- c. Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), as member;
- d. Secretary of the Department of Finance (DOF), as member;
- e. Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), as member;
- f. Secretary of the Department of Education (DepEd), as member;
- g. Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED)
- h. Director-General of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), as member;
- i. Representative from a People's Organization (PO), as member;
- j. Representative from a Non-Government Organization (NGO), as member;
- k. Representative from the National Urban Poor Sector Council of the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NUPSC-NAPC), as member;
- l. National President of the League of Cities of the Philippines, as member;
- m. National President of the League of the Municipalities of the Philippines, as member;
- n. Representative from the private sector who has an expertise in urban agriculture and/or vertical farming, as member.

SECTION 7. *Role of Local Government Units.* — The local government units shall formulate a policy on the practice of urban farming, utilizing spaces and idle lands. This shall require the enactment of local legislations institutionalizing integrated urban agriculture and vertical gardening in all levels of local

government, enacting ordinances and other measures to allocate budget appropriations therefor.

All cities and urbanized municipalities shall extend assistance to urban practitioners and farmers to practice urban farming and for them to benefit from incentives under this Act.

All homeowners associations, neighborhood associations and community and/or people's organizations are encouraged to participate in urban farming activities within their areas. The concerned local government units shall grant necessary incentives for the benefits of the members of the concerned associations or organizations.

SECTION 8. *Appropriations.* — An initial amount of One Hundred Million Pesos (P100,000,000.00) necessary to carry out the provision of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriation Act of the year following its enactment into law.

SECTION 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* — The Department of Agriculture (DA), in coordination with the members of the Urban Farming Council (UFC), shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

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

SECTION 11. *Repealing Clause.* — All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 12. *Effectivity Clause.* — This act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,