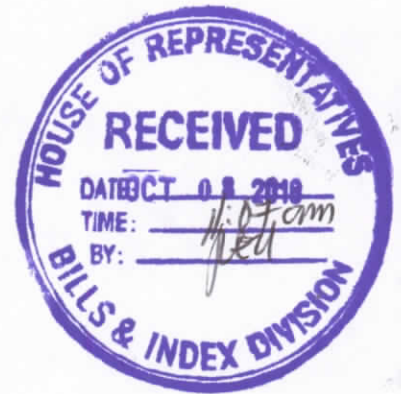


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

Third Regular Session

House Bill No. **8375**



Introduced by Representatives Rico B. Geron

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to reconcile the different definitions of the term *agriculture* in all levels in the land use or conversion in the Philippines. There are about more than six (6) laws and rules with differing definitions of agriculture which had placed Filipino farmers into at disadvantageous sector.

It has always been the thrust of the government to strengthen the country's food security. However, such objective would be highly improbable to achieve if most if not all of the farmers will be landless and unempowered.

This representation finds it imperative to reconcile all the agriculture definition and to criminalize the unilateral land conversion. This bill, however, considered that should the conversion is inevitable and necessary, the agricultural farm land owners shall be given preferential right to occupy the land in subject.

Approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



RICO B. GERON
Partylist, AGAP

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

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8375

House Bill No. _____

Introduced by Representatives Rico B. Geron

**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A UNIVERSAL DEFINITION OF THE TERM
"AGRICULTURE" FOR THE PURPOSE OF ALL LEVELS IN LAND USE AND
CONVERSION IN THE PHILIPPINES**

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

Section. 1. Title. - This Act shall be known as "**Universal Definition of
Agriculture**"

Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy. - It shall always be the policy of the State to promote and protect the rights of the farmers by recognizing all the necessary and incidental activities they have been engaged into with the end view of providing for the country's food security and global competitiveness.

Sec. 3. Definition of Agriculture. - Agriculture shall be synonymous with agricultural enterprise and agricultural activity. These terms shall mean the cultivation of the soil, propagation of planting materials, planting of crops, growing of fruit trees, manufacturing of feeds and animal health products used in the growing or breeding of livestock, poultry, fish, or aquaculture, raising of livestock, poultry or aquaculture animals, including, but not limited to, the harvesting, drying, cutting, processing, producing, manufacturing, recovering, buying, brokering, packing, marketing, selling in retail or wholesale, and processing of such products into food products of every class and description, as wells as the operation of biogas from poultry, swine and livestock, use of water treatment plants for use in agricultural related activities, and other farm activities and practices performed by a farmer in conjunction with such farming operations done by person whether natural or juridical.

Sec. 4. *Application of the Definition.* – The definition of Agriculture under Section 3 of this Act shall reconcile the different definitions provided under the following laws:

1. Sections 3 and 20 of the Republic Act No. 6657 otherwise known as Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law
2. Chapter 1 of the Labor Code of the Philippines
3. Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Republic Act No. 6727 otherwise known as the Wage Rationalization Act
3. Republic Act No. 8435 otherwise known as the Agriculture and Fishereies Modernization Act of 1997.
4. Section 4 of the Republic Act No. 10611 otherwise known as the Food Safety Act of 2013.
5. Section 129, 130, 133 of Republic Act No. 7160 otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1997
6. Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Memorandum Circular No. 23 Series of 2017.

Sec. 5. *Prohibition on Unilateral Conversion of Agricultural Land.* – It shall be unlawful for any person or entity to convert any identified agricultural lands into any other types of land without the written consent of the agricultural land owners. Any person or entity who committed any violation of this Act shall be punishable with six (6) years and one day to twelve (12) years in addition to administrative penalty of removal or dismissal from public service and perpetual disqualification from public office in the case of public officer or employee offender.

Sec. 6. *Compulsory Conversion of Agricultural Land.* – In cases where the conversion of the agricultural lands is inevitable in the interest of public safety, interest or order, the agricultural land owners shall be given preferential rights of occupancy over the subject land.

Sec. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The Department of Agriculture and other related agencies shall promulgate such rules and regulations as are necessary to implement the provisions of this Act

Sec. 8. *Repealing Clause.* Any provisions of law, presidential decree, executive orders, rules and regulations contrary to the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Sec. 9. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.