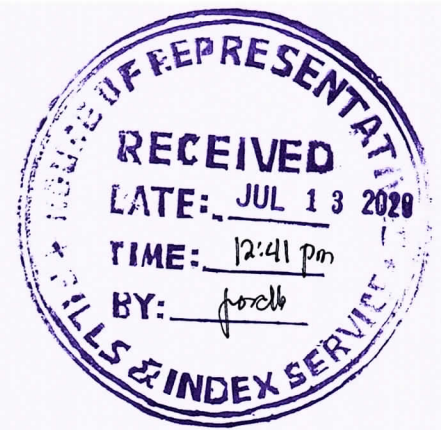


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Eighteenth Congress
Second Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 7090

Introduced by Honorable Mark O. Go

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The city of Baguio is celebrated as among the country's premier tourist spots as it offers sojourners an experience unlike most other destinations across the country. Known as the "City of Pines", Baguio has fostered an image of harmony in nature, culture, climate, and progress through the imposing walls of Benguet pine growing throughout the city.

The distinct scent, together with the iconic silhouette of the pine tree has become synonymous with the city itself. The tree has for so long embodied the solid bond between the residents of Baguio and the local natural environment. This identity however, is currently being threatened by urban expansion.

Currently, only about a quarter of the city's entire territory is left with forest and green cover. A recent inventory, as ordered by DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, revealed that the City of Pines has only 2.5 million trees left, and of these, only less than 500,000 are Benguet pine.

Apart from serving as the quintessential branding tool for the city's tourism efforts, ecological considerations would call for more radical responses to the city's dwindling forest stock. Given the city's natural topography and its growing urban land use, many areas across the city are susceptible to landslides induced by earthquakes or heavy rainfall. With fewer trees to prevent or mitigate such hazards, residents are continuously under the threat of losing priceless lives and millions of pesos worth in damages to properties. The decimation of local forest stock further leads to water insecurity due to degradation and poor management of watersheds, food insecurity due to soil erosion, destruction of indigenous cultures and serious threat to local biodiversity.

Ultimately, the tree stock of Baguio, particularly the Benguet pine, is an environmental heritage passed on through generations, which demands the strongest protection for its cultural, economic, social, and ecological values. Consistent with both national and local governments' campaign for sustainable development, an imposed moratorium on the cutting of trees in Baguio city for a period of ten (10) years, would facilitate local progress without sacrificing the needs of future generations of Baguio residents. Over the next decade, the said moratorium will allow the rehabilitation of the city's

tree stock, and will display the creativity and resourcefulness of the local government and the real estate industry in incorporating the tree stock in the design of the city and its development plan.

The constitutionally protected right to a healthful and balanced ecology must be enjoyed not only by the preceding generations but by future generations as well. Millions of Filipinos all over the country treasure a shared experience of Baguio that they knew of, the image of the city they grew up with, and the local environment that made their every summer memorable and special. For this reason preserving the country's "City of Pines" is a concern of national significance.

In view of the forgoing, the immediate consideration and approval of this measure is earnestly sought.



MARK O. GO



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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Eighteenth Congress
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HOUSE BILL NO. **7090**

Introduced by Honorable Mark O. Go

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR A 10-YEAR MORATORIUM ON TREE CUTTING IN THE CITY
OF BAGUIO AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to protect and advance the right of the Filipino people to a balance and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature.

Towards this end, the State shall continue to promote, as a policy, the preservation and conservation of trees as part of a healthy environment and as an indispensable element of a sound ecological community.

SEC. 2. *Moratorium on Tree Cutting.* – The cutting of trees in Baguio City, whether in private or public land, is hereby declared prohibited for a period of ten (10) years. No tree shall be cut, remove or excavated except for dead trees and infested trees that are beyond reviving or may infect other live trees. Live trees that pose danger to life and property and tree branches that encroach on power and utility lines, as determined by appropriate government agencies, may be cut or trimmed in accordance with existing local ordinances, executive issuances and pertinent laws, rules and regulation.

SEC. 3. *Construction of New Structures.* – Real estate developers, construction firms, government institutions and private property owners must ensure strict compliance to the preceding section of this Act. The construction of residential and commercial structures and buildings, and government projects shall take into consideration the inclusion and preservation of existing trees in the drafting and implementation of its structural blue print and design.

No construction permit shall be issued without the necessary compliance to the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 4. *Survey and Inventory on Location of Trees.* – The City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO), in coordination with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), shall conduct a survey and inventory on all existing trees in Baguio City with its description and location.

SEC. 5. *Penalties.* – Any person or entity found guilty of violating the provisions of this Act or any rules and regulations issued pursuant hereto shall, upon conviction, be punished by imprisonment of not less than two (2) years but not more than six (6) years, or a fine of not less than One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) but not more than Three hundred thousand pesos (P300,000.00) for every tree, or both, at the discretion of the court. Provided that, if the offender is a corporation or a juridical entity, the official who ordered, or allowed the commission of the offense shall be punished with the same penalty.

SEC. 6. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DENR shall issue, within a period of ninety (90) days after the effectivity of this Act, the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 7. *Separability Clause.* – If, for any reason, any portion or provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 8. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, issuances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 9. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.

