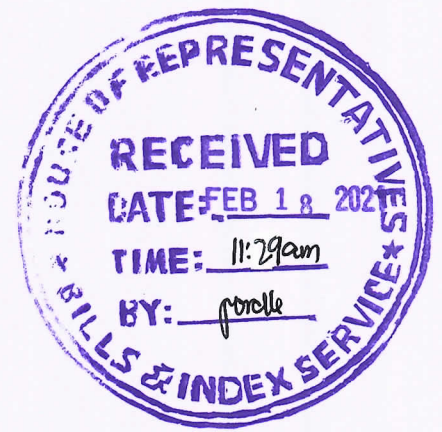


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

18th Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8771



Introduced by Rep. Erico Aristotle C. Aumentado

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Trees and forests play a major role in maintaining the balance and stability of the environment. They absorb and store much of the carbon dioxide that otherwise would be contributing to climate change. Forest ecosystems are homes to a wide range of plants, animals, microorganisms and other species.

Unfortunately, the Philippines today is currently facing two main environmental issues – deforestation and forest degradation. One of the key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in the Philippines is forest products extraction. In a study conducted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in 2013, logging whether legal or illegal was identified as a direct driver of deforestation and forest degradation.

Illegal logging is the harvesting of wood in violation of national statuses and regulations such as harvesting timber from protected areas. This bill seeks to curb illegal logging by promoting Tree Farming, which is defined under this Act as a systematic program of conservation and reforestation which at the same time ensures the continuous and sustainable commercial production of timber. Through this Tree Farming Act, selected individuals and cooperatives are granted the right to use, occupy, possess and manage bare timber lands for the exclusive commercial production of Timber. Tree farming seeks not only to restore deforested landscapes but also to provide additional livelihood.

Therefore, premises considered, the approval of this Bill is earnestly sought.



ERICO ARISTOTLE C. AUMENTADO

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**AN ACT MANDATING LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS TO
IDENTIFY AND DEVOTE BARE TIMBER LANDS TO BE UTILIZED
FOR TREE FARMING**

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

Section 1. *Short Title.* – This act shall be known as the “Tree Farming Act of 2021”.

Section 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature. It is scientifically recognized that trees play a crucial role in maintaining the well-being and stability of the environment. It is for this reason that it is necessary for the State to undertake preventive measures to arrest widespread deforestation and forest degradation by curbing one of its main causes which is illegal logging.

Towards this end, it is hereby mandated that all provinces, cities and municipalities with their component barangays shall be required to identify and allocate bare timber lands located within their jurisdiction, which right of use occupation, possession and management for the commercial production of timber shall be granted to selected private individuals or cooperatives for the exclusive production of commercial timber.

Section 3. *Definition of Terms* – as used in this Act

1. *Bare timber land* refers to those lands of the public domain classified as timber lands but presently are not covered with timber trees.
2. *Grantees* shall refer to those private individuals or cooperatives, which shall be granted the right to use, occupy possess and manage bare timber lands for the exclusive production of timber.

Section 4. *Creation of Tree Farming Cooperatives/Association.* – In implementing the intents of this Act, there shall be created in every province, city and municipality in the country Tree Farming Cooperatives/Associations, the composition of which shall come from the local farmers in coordination with the Local Environment and Natural Resources. The members shall preferably, be composed of field officers of various government agencies, based in the locality, but not limited to the following:

- a) Local Sanggunian;
- b) Local Environment and Natural Resources Office;
- c) Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);
- d) Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI);
- e) Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG);
- f) Department of Agriculture (DA);
- g) Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR);
- h) Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH);
- i) Department of Tourism (DOT);
- j) Civic organizations;
- k) Sangguniang Kabataan (SK); and
- l) Liga ng mga Barangay (LnB).

Section 5. *Funding.* – The local Sanggunian shall provide for the allocation of resources pertinent to the implementation of this Act at their respective local government level.

Section 6. *Supply and Distribution of Seedlings.* – The BPI shall supply and distribute the tree seedlings to the Tree Farming Committee for distribution to the grantees.

Section 7. *Areas Covered by the Tree Farming Act* –

The tree farming activities shall be done in any of the following areas:

- a.) Public school grounds, gardens or other available areas within the school premises;
- b.) Idle or vacant public lands;
- c.) Public parks in urban and rural areas; and
- d.) Private schools, parks and lands with the consent of the owner thereof.

Section 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DILG, in coordination with the LGUs, the DENR and the DA shall promulgate the rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

Section 9. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act or any part thereof be declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall continue in full force and effect.

Section 10. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, proclamations, executive orders or regulations and other issuances inconsistent with the provisions and/or purposes of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

Section 11. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) newspapers of general publication.